

REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 4

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

CORRECTED PROOF

At Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney on Tuesday, 6 September 2016

The Committee met at 9:15 am

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 (Deputy Chair)

The CHAIR: Welcome to the second 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. I also pay respect to the elders past and present of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginals present.

This is the second of three hearings we plan to hold for this inquiry. Today we will hear from representatives of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Regional and Public Galleries NSW and the Council of Australasian Museum Directors. In the afternoon we will hear from Local Government NSW, Museums Australia and the Western Sydney Director of the Sydney Business Chamber. We will finish with representatives of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance and Museums and Galleries of NSW. Before we commence I will make some brief comments about the procedures for today's hearing.

Today's hearing is open to the public and is being broadcast live via the Parliament's website. A transcript of today's hearing will be placed on the Committee's website when it becomes available. In accordance with the broadcasting guidelines, while members of the media may film or record Committee members and witnesses, people in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photography. I remind media representatives that you must take responsibility for what you publish about the Committee's proceedings. It is important to remember that parliamentary privilege does not apply to what witnesses may say outside of their evidence at the hearing. I urge witnesses to be careful about any comments you 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 an action for defamation. The guidelines for the broadcasting of proceedings are available from the secretariat.

There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time or with certain documents to hand. In these circumstances witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. I remind everyone that committee hearings are not intended to provide a forum for someone to make adverse reflections about others under the protection of parliamentary privilege. I therefore request that witnesses focus on the issues raised by the inquiry's terms of reference and avoid naming individuals unnecessarily. Witnesses are advised that any messages should be delivered to the Committee through members of the Committee staff.

MICHAEL ROSE, Chair of Trustees, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Would you like to start by making a short statement?

Mr ROSE: It will be a very short statement because what is in our submission is really what we as trustees wanted to bring to the Committee. We thought our views might be valuable for a few reasons. Firstly, we are an organisation that operates 12 museums, historic sites and historic landscapes. Some of those are larger scale museums in the centre of town; others are house museums which are located in suburban Sydney and regional New South Wales. We have a regional exhibition program that goes throughout the State and in that process we collaborate with smaller regional galleries in 11 centres across New South Wales. Because of the nature of our own organisation, which does not have big collections, we necessarily are a very collaborative organisation when it comes to working with other institutions, utilising their collections for our exhibitions and working with them on joint exhibitions.

Our submission focuses on five areas from the inquiry's outline or terms of reference and they are the five areas where we think our expertise allows us to offer an opinion. We have not offered views on those aspects of the terms of reference which are outside our own expertise and knowledge. Other than saying those things I am very happy to take questions on our submission.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I note in your submission you do not address the sale of the Powerhouse Museum and the proposed move. Am I right in that?

Mr ROSE: That is right.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That is a key point in this hearing. Why do you not make a suggestion or offer an opinion on that matter?

Mr ROSE: As trustees we have not formed a view on the sale of the site in Ultimo or the move of the Powerhouse Museum. Those things are beyond our roles as trustees of the Historic Houses Trust. We have obviously paid attention to what is happening. We are familiar with what is happening and we have turned our mind to what the implications for our site in Parramatta might be, but we have not formed a view otherwise on the sale of the Powerhouse site or the transfer of the museum.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: As you would have read and heard, this site is one of the key sites in the city. Given your role, would you not think that you would turn your mind to what use of the site would be if the museum were to move to Parramatta?

Mr ROSE: Not as trustees of the Historic Houses Trust. Our role as trustees of the Historic Houses Trust is to perform our obligations and duties under our Act. We obviously pay attention to the wider cultural and museum space so that we are aware of what is occurring in it, but it is not necessary for us to do our job to form a view on decisions made by the Government about another institution.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of your role in the Historic Houses Trust, through the trust and as trustees you have responsibility for certain properties under that trust—is that correct?

Mr ROSE: That is correct.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And it is not a broader role in terms of the definition of historic houses or heritage in the city; it is about certain properties that fall within that trust.

Mr ROSE: Absolutely. Our role is to be the custodian of properties that are placed into the trust by the Government. The Act sets out for us obligations to hold, preserve and conserve those properties, to make them open to the public, to make their collections accessible to the public and to do anything else which is necessary to do those things. So the ancillary business of museums and house museums is authorised by the Act. But we do not have a broader heritage role—that is not what we do.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Rose, in response to Mr Moselmane's first question you made reference to implications for your Parramatta site. Can we explore that, please? What did you mean by that?

Mr ROSE: You have in Parramatta a large number of heritage sites, some of which belong to us, some of which belong to Western Sydney University, some of which belong to the National Trust and some of which belong to National Parks and Wildlife Service. One of those properties, Elizabeth Farm, belongs to us and is one of the most important historic properties in Australia.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Probably in Australia.

Mr ROSE: Yes. So we are always looking at how that property is accessible to people, what people might now be in that neighbourhood who wish to visit it, what people might be in that neighbourhood in the future who wish to visit it, and what the transport links might be now and in the future. Obviously a significant plan for Parramatta—and it is not just the move of the Powerhouse; it is all of the plans for Parramatta—will ultimately have significance for the ribbon of heritage properties. So we have thought about that and we have thought about what opportunities and challenges that might present for us in the future.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How do you think the current Government and future governments could maximise, utilise or enhance Elizabeth Farm?

Mr ROSE: The opportunity that exists in Parramatta is to ensure that all of the heritage and other cultural assets that are in Parramatta are known to people, accessible to people and coordinated in their offer to the public. By "coordinated in their offer" I suppose I mean consistent in their offer to the public in terms of their opening hours and in the future looking at things like whether you might be able to acquire a single ticket which would take you to all of the institutions in the Parramatta area, for example. They are all the sorts of things that we have turned our mind to, but they are necessarily long-term issues because of the longer term nature of planning in the Parramatta area.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: If you introduced the single-ticket concept, for lack of a subtle question, would there be enough for a family to do in Parramatta from nine in the morning to five at night?

Mr ROSE: Without being facetious, I think it depends on the family. It would depend on the family and on the programming. But there are many people now who probably start their day at Old Government House, spend some time in the park and then walk between the different properties. At the moment those different properties are owned by different entities. Enthusiasts might be able to find their way between each of them, but people who are going with perhaps less of a plan would find it more difficult to find their way between them.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The North Parramatta Residents Action Group yesterday were critical of the move of the Powerhouse to Parramatta. They said Parramatta does not need something imposed upon them from the city. They said Parramatta's wealth of Aboriginal, colonial and migrant heritage offers more than enough to create world-class institutions and attractions. What do you say about that view of Parramatta's heritage, built form and attractions?

Mr ROSE: I agree that Parramatta has a rich history and significant heritage assets, but I do not think the existence or quality of heritage assets on the one hand is necessarily a very good indicator of what else might be useful in a part of the city on the other hand.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: No, but they are a great base to work with, are they not? If we had a creative government with a vision to work with those assets in Parramatta, the North Parramatta Residents Action Group were saying the best option would be to start with those assets and build up an institution in Parramatta. Do you think that would be a good view—to start with those assets and build up an institution in Parramatta?

Mr ROSE: As I said before, as trustees of the Historic Houses Trust we have not sought to critique the Government's decisions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am not asking you to critique that. I am asking about the better option.

Mr ROSE: Rather than answering as Chairman of the Historic Houses Trust. I will answer as someone who has an interest in urban policy for Sydney. One and a half million people will live in the area west of Parramatta in the next 20 years. I do not think it is feasible for the city to assume that all of the cultural offerings for the people of the city and for visitors to the city can continue to be concentrated on the eastern edge of the city. There are strong arguments, not just for Parramatta but for other places, to ensure that we look carefully at where the future population of the city will be living. The allocation of investment in cultural assets needs to reflect the reality of what Sydney will look like 20 or 40 years from now.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I was in south-west Sydney last night talking with locals in the southern part of Campbelltown. They said it is much easier for them to get to the city than to Parramatta and that to suggest that putting an asset in Parramatta is giving them greater access misunderstands the geography of much of south-west and north-west Sydney. What do you say to that?

Mr ROSE: It may misunderstand the current geography of south-west Sydney. It is for organisations such as the Greater Sydney Commission and others that are looking at the long-term planning of the city to consider where people will be and where they will be connected to in 20 or 40 years. I am not seeking to evade

the question; I just do not think it is possible to answer a question about the positioning of a major cultural asset only by reference to factors that exist today. It has to be considered by reference to what is coming for the city.

The CHAIR: Your submission talks about—as did submissions from witnesses yesterday—how the Government's focus on continued efficiency dividends in the budget of your organisation are having a deleterious effect on the development of the organisation. Would you like to talk to that?

Mr ROSE: Certainly. I said in the submission that the efficiency dividend can have negative and unintended consequences. I think the word "unintended" was not a very useful choice of word because it may be that they are not unintended. In any organisation you make a choice, when you choose to save money, about where you are going to allocate your expenditure. It happens all the time in business. You know you have to cut costs, so you cut them, and that means you then have to prioritise where you spend your money.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It happens in families too.

Mr ROSE: Exactly. The impact of the efficiency dividend for the Historic Houses Trust has been that we have become more efficient. The efficiency dividend has driven us to restructurings that I think have made us more efficient. This is demonstrated by our numbers. I do not just mean our costs and expenditure numbers; I mean our attendance numbers, our philanthropic numbers and our sponsorship numbers. We have got better at what we do. The impetus for getting better has been the efficiency dividend. However, at some point, if priorities change or if there is a recognition that to be globally competitive our cultural institutions need to do some things that they are not currently doing, it will be appropriate to ask whether the efficiency dividend might be ameliorated in some way so that organisations can choose to invest in what will ultimately produce growth in the future. That is the point I was seeking to make.

I refer in the submission to the fact that there were things that we wanted to do which we have not yet done. The Historic Houses Trust probably would have brought on additional staff to work on philanthropic development if we had not been seeking to manage the efficiency dividend in the way that we did. That is the choice we had to make. We could have pulled curatorial staff back in order to employ development staff. We chose not to do that. In an ideal world, if we had been able to have a moratorium on the efficiency dividend for a year we might have done it.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: For how long has the dividend been applied?

Mr ROSE: I do not know the answer to that question. I have been the chair since 2010 and it was certainly in operation when I became the chair. I take it from the terms of reference that it has been applied for 10 years.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Thank you.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Rose, do you collect figures on where your visitors come from, whether overseas, interstate and Sydney?

Mr ROSE: Yes, we do.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What do those figures show?

Mr ROSE: I cannot answer that question for you today.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Would you take it on notice?

Mr ROSE: I can absolutely do that. We collect postcodes from Australian visitors and we identify foreign visitors, so I can get you that information.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Proposals for some of the Sydney assets that fall within your remit have been reported recently. Potentially moving the Museum of Sydney up to Macquarie Street is one that has been mentioned. From your perspective, is the Museum of Sydney attracting the sorts of visitor numbers that you would like to see?

Mr ROSE: The Museum of Sydney is an interesting site, for a couple of reasons. First, it is an extremely important historic site. It is the site of the first Government House, so it was the administrative capital of the continent for the first 60 years of European occupation. It was the site of most of the significant early interaction between Europeans and Aboriginal people, so it is a critically important site. When the rest of the block was developed, back in the late 1970s to mid-1980s, decisions were made about how to preserve that site and how to make it accessible to the public. What we have ended up is the Museum of Sydney. From a museum perspective it is quite small, which limits the kinds of exhibitions that can be held there and the kinds of crowds.

Would we like more people to visit it? Yes, we would. Having said that, we achieved record attendance figures at the Museum of Sydney for 2015-16 and 2014-15 by changing the programming, concentrating very heavily on programming for children during school holidays. It is one of those sites where the historical and heritage value is so significant that you sometimes end up with a museum outcome that is the best that can be achieved there, although it could be better if you could have whatever you wanted there. Does that answer your question?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It does. Is it correct that you have two properties on Macquarie Street?

Mr ROSE: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What you think could be done to improve visitor access to those facilities and provide more education and museum space within the premises?

Mr ROSE: We have significant education programs running at Hyde Park Barracks right now. If you go there any day of the week you will see groups of schoolchildren there all day. We currently have plans to enhance what we offer at Hyde Park Barracks by using some of the buildings that surround the barracks. There is the building where the café used to be, for example. There is an old registrar's building—not the former Registrar General's Department building but an old court registrar building—between the barracks and the Mint and there are some other outbuildings around the barracks that we can use as the beginning of the visitor experience.

Rather than walking through the front door of the barracks people could begin the education experience and the visitor experience in some of the side buildings and therefore experience the barracks in a more contemporary way. When I say "contemporary" I mean the technology that we use, the educational approach that we adopt and the interactive nature of what we offer schoolchildren and others. So we have a plan, within the existing envelope, for the enhancement of the offering at Hyde Park Barracks. We also have submitted to government some proposals for a new museum building at the back of the Mint and the Barracks and that is being considered, as I understand it, as part of the broader review of cultural infrastructure in New South Wales.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Thank you very much for being with us. I wanted to talk about the point you made in your submission about Sydney Living Museums organising touring exhibitions to visit cities and towns in regional New South Wales and other centres.

Mr ROSE: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Could you tell us a little bit about the work you do in terms of those touring exhibitions in regional New South Wales specifically?

Mr ROSE: Sure. Wherever possible we design our exhibitions on the basis that they will tour after they leave our sites in Sydney. Sometimes what happens is we will have an exhibition that is at the Museum of Sydney. It might then go to our property at Rouse Hill briefly and then it might go on the road. When it goes on the road it goes usually to regional public galleries or regional museums and we integrate our statewide education program with those exhibitions as they tour so that schools in the region to which it is travelling know about it and can take their students there. We will often have those exhibitions touring for 12 months or more after they have been folded here in Sydney.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: And is the reception good in the regions?

Mr ROSE: Yes. There is a reference in the submission to how many people visit those exhibitions?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: It is 280,000?

Mr ROSE: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Which is fantastic. There has been a suggestion in some of the submissions that some of the facilities in museums in regional New South Wales are not really up to scratch. Have you found that is a problem in being able to stage exhibitions in museums around regional New South Wales?

Mr ROSE: I am afraid I cannot answer that question. I personally do not have any knowledge in relation to that. What I do know is that we hold ourselves to fairly high standards of curatorial practice and we look to ensure that our exhibitions are good and attractive to the public wherever they are. All I can say is I understand that our people are satisfied with the—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Spaces?

Mr ROSE: —organisations that we partner with but I could not offer you any more detail than that.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Would you agree that it is a valid aim for your excellent exhibitions to be able to be viewed by as many people in regional New South Wales as possible?

Mr ROSE: Absolutely. It is actually our statutory obligation.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Indeed, it is. What else do you think can be done to maximise the reach of your exhibitions?

Mr ROSE: There are two approaches. One is you take the exhibitions to the region, and that is what we do. As I mentioned in the submission, we go to 11 regional towns and cities. The other is that we bring people to us. One of the programs we have had running this year, and it is referred to in our submission, is a program called Unlocking Heritage, where we have funding set aside for low-income schools, schools in low-income areas and schools in remote and regional areas, to bring their students to our exhibitions. Very often those students are travelling to Sydney for programs, but not always. Sometimes they are travelling to regional centres for the programs and normally the subsidy we provide is a bus or the necessary transport to get the students and their teachers to our properties.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Would you ideally like to be able to do more of that and put on more of those opportunities?

Mr ROSE: Yes, absolutely. We see the outreach component as involving several elements. One is you send the exhibitions out. The other is you bring students in and the third is as much as possible you find a way of presenting what you have in a digital format so that people do not need to move at all in order to have access to what you have. We have had some success with that, particularly in the education space. We have an online education offering for schools but I think there is an opportunity to do more in relation to digitisation.

The CHAIR: What, in your view, would be the heritage value of the former Ultimo Power Station site that now houses the Powerhouse Museum?

Mr ROSE: I am afraid I cannot answer that question. I am not a heritage expert; I am a lawyer, so I would not even know how you would begin that process and I suppose it depends a lot on whether you are talking about do you knock it down or do you have some adaptive use for it?

The CHAIR: Talking about knocking things down, many of your properties would have pretty significant value for property developers if they were knocked down. What do you think the impact of that would be on the trust or on the fabric of New South Wales if that were to happen?

Mr ROSE: I think in the case of our buildings, the cultural and heritage implications of demolishing any of them would be quite significant.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: And not on the agenda.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Rose, do you have a valuation of your buildings?

Mr ROSE: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is the valuation of those buildings?

Mr ROSE: The current valuation in our accounts is about \$275 million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When you consider your properties is that your main asset or is it the collection that they house?

Mr ROSE: No, the properties are our main asset.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Did your organisation undertake those valuations of your sites or was it external?

Mr ROSE: No, they are always undertaken by external experts in accordance with Treasury's audit processes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And that is a core part of being a functioning, competent board of trustees, that you get your individual properties valued, is it not?

Mr ROSE: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And you would expect every board of trustees to have that basic level of competence to get their properties valued?

Mr ROSE: I suppose it depends on what their statutory obligations are.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: If someone is eyeing them off for a sale perhaps?

Mr ROSE: In our case there are very real difficulties in valuing our buildings. How do you value a building which is the oldest building in the country? How do you value a building that is a World Heritage site?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But it is your job to do that; it is for the board to understand the value of your property portfolio?

Mr ROSE: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is the basic function of a board, is it not?

Mr ROSE: I would not say it is our primary function.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is a basic function?

Mr ROSE: We are certainly conscious that we have an obligation when we produce our accounts each year that those accounts accurately reflect the status of the organisation—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I appreciate that, as should every competent board.

Mr ROSE: —and accurately reflect the value of our properties.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: And we appreciate that as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We appreciate you having values of your assets and doing excellent work, Mr Rose.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Thank you for coming. In your submission under point 3 you mention that Sydney Living Museum has a long history of collaboration with other cultural institutions and you talk about that ?

Mr ROSE: Yes.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: How many of those institutions, and if you can name them, are located in Western Sydney?

Mr ROSE: Some will be. For example, we will have done things with the Casula Powerhouse in the past. Bear in mind some of our properties are located in Western Sydney. For example, we collaborate with Parramatta City Council for events at Elizabeth Farm last year during the Parramasala Festival. We had events at Elizabeth Farm. We collaborate with the Festival of Sydney so to the extent that the Festival of Sydney expands across into Parramatta now, we are engaged with them.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I understand that the institutions you have listed here are obviously the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Australian Museum, National Maritime Museum, the State Library of New South Wales, the Royal Botanic Gardens, National Parks and Wildlife Service and various other State departments. In terms of significant institutions in Western Sydney, with the exception of the ones you have spoken of, there are no major iconic institutions in Western Sydney you collaborate with?

Mr ROSE: Western Sydney University, I suspect, would be the only other one we would have collaborated with.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: So clearly if the Powerhouse were to be relocated to Parramatta that would be a major institution for you to collaborate with in Western Sydney?

Mr ROSE: Certainly there would be opportunities for us to collaborate—both in terms of physical proximity and otherwise. The other thing I should mention—I am not sure if it is in the submission and I am not sure whether you regard Castle Hill as being in Western Sydney—is that we have a major collaboration going with the Powerhouse Discovery Centre and the Australian Museum at Castle Hill right now.

The CHAIR: Mr Rose, if you had a wish list for Government on policies for museums and galleries, what would be in that list and what would be at the top of the list?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is Christmas time!

The CHAIR: I said it was a wish list; I did not say you had to deliver it.

Mr ROSE: There are two things. Firstly, I am very conscious that right where we are sitting now we are surrounded by one of the richest cultural precincts in the world—certainly the richest cultural precinct in the Southern Hemisphere. At the one end of Macquarie Street you have the Opera House, which is a World Heritage site. At the other end of Macquarie Street is the Mint, which is a World Heritage site. There is also the

State Library of New South Wales, which is one of the top five libraries in the world, and the Australian Museum and the Royal Botanic Gardens, which are the two oldest scientific institutions in the Southern Hemisphere. There is also the Art Gallery of New South Wales and our buildings as well.

You have there a collection of cultural and heritage assets which is quite extraordinary and which I do not think, as a State, we value sufficiently. I do not believe they are presented to their full potential to visitors and Sydney citizens alike. If this was Berlin this area would be the Museum Island. If this was Barcelona this area would be Montjuic, and it would be so compelling for tourists. So there is more that we can do to enliven the jewels that sit right here.

That was my first wish-list item. The second wish-list item is what I said to you before. I am very conscious that the epicentre of our city has already moved from where we sit today to Parramatta, and that the growth that is coming will be west of Parramatta. As Sydney considers its cultural offering in the future we will increasingly need to recognise that people who live in Sydney live there, and people who visit Sydney may be staying there. One of the things I think that Airbnb will do is dramatically distribute tourists to the city across a footprint which is far different to where they come now. So, my second wish is that as we plan for 20 and 40 years into the future we plan carefully around where people will be, and, as I said in answer to an earlier question, where people will be able to travel and connect themselves to the institutions of the future.

The CHAIR: That is an interesting segue because my next question is: What role does cultural development policy play in your role as Chairman of the Committee for Sydney? You might give us a bit of a run-down on it.

Mr ROSE: At the Committee for Sydney, we think that the city's cultural capacity and cultural offering is absolutely vital to its continued role as a global city. People often look at the cultural offering of the city and think about it in terms of visitor economy. We look at that visitor economy point but also look very carefully at other factors, such as talent attraction. This is picked up in the last paragraph of the submission. If you want to have a smart city with creative industries, and you want to attract high-quality people to live and work in the city—people who have a choice to live in Melbourne or Adelaide, or Singapore or Hong Kong—then you need to have a sophisticated and competitive global offering.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you saying that we do not want low-quality people?

Mr ROSE: No, I am saying—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What does "high-quality people" mean? It sounds extremely elitist.

Mr ROSE: I am sorry if you think that. That is not my intention. What I was seeking to express was that if we want to attract to our city the creative industries of the future, and if we want to attract and retain people who want to work in those industries, we need to realise that those people are highly portable and will choose where to live based on a variety of factors over and above their employment. All the research shows that those factors will include the cultural offering of a city. That cultural offering is not just its museums, galleries, orchestras and libraries; it also includes a city's multicultural heritage, for example.

Sydney is, in my view, incredibly well placed in terms of its global competitiveness because of what it has. In answer to the question about what role our cultural offerings play, I would say that they play a very important role. It sometimes gets hidden behind our lifestyle and climate branding, but we think it is critical. Looking carefully at our cultural offering into the future, and investing carefully in that, is absolutely critical to the future prosperity of the State.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It sounds very much as if we should build our city for a cashed-up, portable elite. That sounds deeply troubling; I have to be honest.

Mr ROSE: Once again, I am very sorry if you have misunderstood.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you saying that we should build a city to attract an elite? That is not what I think most people in Sydney would want our city built for.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Rose, what you are saying—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Let Mr Rose finish answering the question. He can defend himself better than you.

Mr ROSE: Firstly, I apologise if I am being so obtuse that you cannot understand me.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I think the rest of us can understand you very well, Mr Rose, and the point that you make.

Mr ROSE: I am not intending that Sydney should be built for an elite. What I am hoping to suggest is that if Sydney is to be a good place for people to live and work, and if the city is going to create the prosperity in the future, it needs to remain an attractive place for people to live and work.

The CHAIR: Just getting back to what you were talking about before, in relation to Western Sydney, I do not entirely agree that all the development, or the largest part of the development, is going to occur in Western Sydney. I live in Ashfield and I look at what is going on in and around Ashfield and the inner west going right out past Burwood and Strathfield to Liverpool. There is a lot of urban infill going on. So talking purely in terms of the west and the City of Sydney is probably wrong. I think eventually we will see a situation where there will be a large population extending all the way through. My question is: if we want to enhance Western Sydney as a cultural capital—I think that is where you are going with what you are saying—what other infrastructure needs do we need to put in place to improve access from and to that geographical area? Have you turned your mind to that?

Mr ROSE: That is an enormous question, in a sense. You are asking what the infrastructure needs are for Sydney for the next 40 years. That really is the work of the Greater Sydney Commission.

The CHAIR: Keep in mind that you are talking about building on the obvious historical and cultural assets of Western Sydney—for example in and around Parramatta, where the Historic Houses Trust of NSW assets are centred. How would you improve access for that area geographically?

Mr ROSE: Your point is about how you build upon cultural assets. The first thing to note is that cultural assets do not sit there as a sole destination. If they are to be valued parts of the cultural fabric of the city they are integrated in that city. They include buildings which are still being used for very contemporary purposes. In Parramatta, for example, amongst the significant cultural assets are the Western Sydney University buildings.

In Liverpool you have very significant cultural assets which are being used by the hospital. You have a ribbon of cultural assets in Western Sydney. Ensuring good integration of those assets in the fabric of the city, and ensuring good access to those assets across the city, requires really careful long-term planning around transport infrastructure. As I say, that really is a very significant planning job, which goes beyond anything that the Historic Houses Trust can do.

The CHAIR: That being said, do you think that the Historic Houses Trust should be merged into some other organisation with similar but larger and more broadscale goals?

Mr ROSE: For what purpose?

The CHAIR: In terms of talking about the integration of the delivery of cultural assets, I suppose, to the people of New South Wales.

Mr ROSE: I am sorry, I am not sure I understand the question. What I was saying about integration is that when you have heritage assets the true value of them comes from their genuine integration in the fabric of the city. I was not talking about integration of ownership of them; I was talking about them having real uses and being places that people visit every day. If you take Hyde Park Barracks, for example, the number of people who buy a ticket and go inside is one number but the number of people who sit in that square, cross that square, walk through there during different times of the day is 10 times the number that go inside. That is because that square has become an integrated part of the city. That was the point I was seeking to make about integration.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: One of the sites that you manage is in Nowra, if I understand correctly.

Mr ROSE: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Could you tell the Committee about that site and its importance to the local regional community?

Mr ROSE: Our property in Nowra is called Meroogal. It is a former, I think the word is manse. It was a house attached to a church in which the minister lived. It has significance in the local history of Nowra and has other significance in that for the last 10 or more years it has been the site for us of the Meroogal Women's Art Prize, which has become a significant art prize for women artists in New South Wales. That is the sort of signature event we have at Meroogal each year.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Is it well supported by the community?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We have run out of time.

Mr ROSE: Very much so.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Is it an important cultural anchor for the community?

Mr ROSE: I am not able to comment on that, but we would hope so.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: In your personal opinion?

Mr ROSE: I cannot, from my own direct experience, tell you the answer to that.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Rose, your testimony has been very helpful. I note that you have taken some questions on notice.

Mr ROSE: Can I just check them? I believe what I took on notice was a question around foreign and local visitors. Was there anything else?

The CHAIR: Visitation, yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The secretariat will contact you.

The CHAIR: The secretariat will contact you with the details of what is outstanding, and you have 21 days to respond to questions on notice.

(The witness withdrew)

JOHN CHEESEMAN, President, Regional and Public Galleries NSW, and Director, Mosman Art Gallery, sworn and examined

PAUL BRINKMAN, Vice-President, Regional and Public Galleries NSW, and Director, Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, sworn and examined

LEE-ANNE HALL, Committee member, Regional and Public Galleries NSW, and Director, Penrith Regional Gallery and the Lewers Bequest, sworn and examined

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

Mr CHEESEMAN: Yes, thank you. We are here today to represent the executive committee of Regional and Public Galleries NSW. Regional and Public Galleries represents the concerns of its members to professional and public galleries and the visual arts sector of New South Wales. To prepare our submission we developed and distributed a questionnaire addressing the terms of reference of this Committee to all members. We received 28 responses from our 48 members. The results of the survey were subsequently discussed and analysed at a half-day forum at member organisations. Our key findings are as follows: of the respondents, we had roughly 60 per cent from regional New South Wales, 20 per cent from metro Sydney and 20 per cent from Western Sydney. The majority, in terms of institutional funding, around about 80 per cent, of our members receive funding from the New South Wales Government. Regarding Arts NSW and its performance, on balance our members are less than satisfied with the current performance and effectiveness of Arts NSW across many areas of operation.

Regarding Museums and Galleries NSW, on balance our members are satisfied with the performance and effectiveness of Museums and Galleries across a range of service areas. Regarding council amalgamations, around 25 per cent of our members are affected by council amalgamations. Regarding access to State-based collections, the Art Gallery of NSW is by far the most important institution for our members to either have direct or online access to their collections. Regarding the Powerhouse Museum, on balance our members considered that the sale of the Powerhouse Museum site and the relocation of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to Parramatta was not in the best interests of the cultural sector in New South Wales.

To clarify in terms of infrastructure, we posed the question putting 10 areas of what we saw as the most important infrastructure questions in New South Wales to members to be ranked. Of those, regional concerns came out on top—either refurbishing regional galleries or new facilities in regional New South Wales. When we took out the regional factors, the most important areas that were nominated were the provision of a major Aboriginal cultural centre for New South Wales and also funds for new technology facilities within existing infrastructure in New South Wales.

In our discussions about Sydney Modern, the sector reflecting on that at the forum saw that this was a vital piece of infrastructure for Arts NSW and the galleries sector of New South Wales, and we supported that. Regarding tertiary arts education, there are dire things happening for the sector regarding the arts schools in Sydney. We certainly condemn those moves and we are also very concerned about TAFE in New South Wales and how changes in funding have decimated the sector, which is really the training ground for artists across the State. We supplied some attachments—just a document describing who we are as Regional and Public Galleries NSW, a copy of the blank survey and also a copy of all our survey results including the comments from all our member organisations.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am Labor's shadow spokesperson for the Arts. By coincidence, I have actually visited in the last six weeks all three of your galleries, and I enjoyed the experience. You mentioned in your opening statement council amalgamations. How do council amalgamations affect regional galleries? What are the concerns that have been raised by your members?

Mr CHEESEMAN: This was a subject of the survey, so I will go from that first and then anecdotally. Because only 25 per cent of our members were associated with amalgamations, it reflected low down the number of concerns. But when you looked at within that what were the most important issues that were raised, they were the potential impact on arts infrastructure and arts advocacy.

In descending order, other issues are access to local government funding, arts policy, and access to State Government funding. Anecdotally, it is still very early days in the amalgamation process. The council I represent, Mosman Council, is not currently amalgamated. However, it is under threat of amalgamation subject to the courts. As it turns out, no regional gallery in New South Wales will be amalgamated with another council area that has a public gallery. So, it is not so bad. That was the case when Mosman was going to be amalgamated with Manly. That would have been the only case of that in the State. It is very limited in that way.

Again, there is a lot of confusion within the councils that are amalgamating at the moment in terms of new people, busyness, and trying to come to grips with what all that means. Some councils have not felt an impact on culture so far. Other councils are taking advantage of the moneys offered through the amalgamation process. Councils like Cumberland in Western Sydney are looking to utilise a lot of those funds for a combined centre that would include a new regional art centre along with library and community facilities.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In your submission and in your opening address you said that your members had concerns about the move of the Powerhouse to Parramatta. Are those concerns related to the sale of the Ultimo site or the actual move itself?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: He cannot answer that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The witness can answer as he sees fit.

Mr CHEESEMAN: I think concerns were raised in both of those areas. Some respondents commented that it was a cash grab. It was seen in that way. Others were worried about the integrity of the museum itself, and whether that could be transported to Parramatta. Others believed—it was a minority view, but a strong minority view comprising about 25 per cent of respondents—that it was a good thing to move to Parramatta and they were open to giving it a go. They thought new facilities and a new twenty-first century museum could be a terrific thing for Parramatta and Western Sydney. However, on balance, and we are here to represent our members' views, it was not seen as being in the best interests of the cultural sector in New South Wales.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Brinkman, you represent the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre. Would your centre not benefit from the Powerhouse Museum being in Parramatta? Would it not be a logical progression for people doing a cultural tour to go to Parramatta and in the afternoon to go to the Blue Mountains?

Mr BRINKMAN: Our visitor numbers and the statistics we have from visitation to the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre indicate that the majority of tourists who come to the Blue Mountains come a straight from the centre of Sydney. They do not stop in Western Sydney because they see the Blue Mountains as a destination point. Whether if a new cultural institution or attraction were established that would attract people on the way, again I think it would relate to transport corridors. Many people when they visit the Blue Mountains see it as being an hour and a half from Sydney, and it is a destination that can be reached and returned from in a day. Whether a trip to Western Sydney on the way would fit into a day schedule would be a big factor.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Dr Hall, what would be the impact on the Penrith-Nepean area?

Dr HALL: It would be similar to Paul Brinkman's situation. At this stage, when we have city visitors they are coming directly to the gallery. We are very close to the M4 and it has been our experience that people do not habitually turn off the M4 to come to the gallery if they are on their way to the mountains and so forth. We would welcome a major cultural institution, and a number of cultural institutions already have a presence in Western Sydney. The concern is that the inner-city should not pay the cost of that by removing a major cultural institution. Sydney is a growing city. It is enormous and it deserves a number of such developments to service its growth.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: If you are against the Powerhouse move, what other cultural institutions or options would you like to see in Western Sydney?

Dr HALL: A number of models could be considered. One is an institution and the second is that there are already a number of regional galleries across Sydney, Penrith being one, along with Blacktown, Casula, Campbelltown and so forth. There is a very real need for infrastructure development and redevelopment within those places. That is one model. The existing facilities might be upgraded and expanded. Another model is moving or creating new cultural institutions. However, an institution like the Powerhouse is already active in Western Sydney. Certainly, the discovery centre in the north west is part of that.

MAAS are already working with Penrith Regional Gallery. We have just launched a major show with the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [MAAS], which we have been very actively engaged with for the past 20 months, and we have signed a memorandum of understanding. It is one of three different projects that the Powerhouse has committed to with us. That model is not only about touring; it is also about working at a very deep level with the resources of that institution across curatorial, collection, registration, exhibition design and so forth. We have just delivered on that show, as of Saturday, and it will run for three months. We have extensive public programs and education programs that are supported by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and the Sydney Observatory. We are also working with Western Sydney University on that in a major partnership. That is one distinct model that we favour in that regional museums are working very hard with

every cent they have. The resources of all of the major institutions in New South Wales should be brought to bear and be very active in the regions.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Cheeseman, in your opening statement you made reference to budget cuts to TAFE affecting rural and regional areas. What has been the impact of TAFE budget cuts on regional artists or the development of regional artists?

Mr CHEESEMAN: I have done no research. However, I have spoken to gallery directors about how it affects their operations, and they say it is a slow dwindling of resources, of the local arts base, and of the development of the local arts base that can feed through into exhibitions and other cultural programming. It is the same with the wider tertiary sector. When I was director of Blacktown Arts Centre and Western Sydney TAFE closed its arts facility, it did not have an immediate impact, but over time you could see a dwindling in the support of what had been a very dynamic scene in Western Sydney. It is still very healthy, but it is dwindling and it will continue to dwindle as long as there is no flow-through from the tertiary sector.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Anecdotally, did you have any regions come to your attention?

Mr CHEESEMAN: TAFE is spread throughout the State. I was down at Hazlehurst the other day and there was a TAFE across the road and they said how it is affecting them. I have also been out to Broken Hill. It is across State. Wherever you go, and where there is a TAFE—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is a constant theme.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Yes, it is a constant theme.

The CHAIR: You talked about representations made to rural members of Parliament about increasing regional arts funding in the past four years. Who have you approached and for what purposes?

Mr CHEESEMAN: We did not say that we approached any regional people for increased arts funding.

The CHAIR: You did not?

Mr CHEESEMAN: No.

The CHAIR: I beg your pardon. I thought representations had been made.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Not from Regional and Public Galleries as an organisation. It may be from our members but not from the organisation itself.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Is it fair to say that the majority of the organisations you represent are from regional New South Wales?

Mr CHEESEMAN: Yes, but we also have quite a few others. The Museum of Contemporary Art [MCA] is a member, and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am not suggesting that you do not represent some in Sydney, it is just that it is appropriate for you to speak with authority on behalf of regional organisations because the majority of your component members are from regional galleries including Bathurst, Cowra, Orange, Lismore, Goulburn and so forth.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Therefore it is not surprising that the number one issue of concern in your survey was the provision of funds for existing arts infrastructure in regional New South Wales.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Correct.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Could you elaborate on specifically what issues would be of most concern in terms of existing arts infrastructure and continuing or further support?

Mr CHEESEMAN: I think in regional Australia these organisations are largely run by small local government areas with a small funding base. Whilst many of them get some support from Arts NSW not all of them do to maintain their facilities. The last speaker talked about touring exhibitions. To maintain climate control to enable significant touring exhibitions is a major factor. They have a small number of workers that are doing a great job but they have a desire and potential to grow and they do not have the resources to do so largely. Looking at the resource base, a greater capital base and a recurrent base of support would be—funding is the key, really, with appropriate policy in place.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Would you agree that regional galleries, which you represent, are of particular importance in anchoring the cultural life of regional communities?

Mr CHEESEMAN: Absolutely.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: They provide not just a space to show art; they hold other functions and events and therefore can be seen as a cultural hub. They should potentially be supported more than even urban galleries for that reason, because of their outsized importance to the community. Would you agree or do you have any comments on that?

Mr CHEESEMAN: I think wherever these institutions are they are important for the community. They do maintain civic functions. They might host concerts and performances. They are often the hub for a range of cultural events, projects and happenings that go beyond just the visual arts. Because they in most cases have paid staff members to direct things as well as a dedicated volunteer base they are usually in probably uniquely the best position to channel cultural development in regional areas. They provide a great base that could be expanded in that way. They are certainly vital in regional New South Wales. I would not like to diminish their importance for city areas.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I was not trying to do that. I was merely trying to focus on their importance in regional areas. The second ranking of your infrastructure projects was the provision of funds for new infrastructure in regional New South Wales. Do you have any suggestions or ideas about what sort of new infrastructure you are thinking about?

Mr CHEESEMAN: Often we have found in regional New South Wales that in a sense it is personality driven. The new developments down at Albury, up at Tweed and so on have required particular arts leaders to be there driving the change. Where they have not been there the change has not occurred in quite the same way. Places like Bega at the moment have a dynamic director who has gone down there and is enlisting the resources of the council and the general manager to look at a whole range of sites to really redevelop that centre to provide a new regional art gallery in perhaps the old hospital building. They are looking at a few different areas. At the moment it often takes a leader to do this because the policy settings are not there that are driving it so much. It is actually personality based, the people and where they are on the spot and how they can best leverage the advantages that they can get from that place.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Your organisation is Regional and Public Galleries NSW. You are from Mosman, Dr Hall is from Nepean and Mr Brinkman is from the Blue Mountains.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are any members of your executive actually from regional New South Wales?

Mr CHEESEMAN: Yes, from Orange, Grafton and a whole range of areas across the State.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I just wondered if your position as regional Sydney would differ from regional New South Wales?

Mr CHEESEMAN: We wanted to make sure that we were representing the wider views of the organisation. We were very conscious of that. That is why we undertook a survey and had forums and discussions with our members to make sure that we could actually put forward the views of our members.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: First of all, can I thank you all for the work you do in your day jobs and the additional regional work you do, which I am sure is an added duty for which almost zero remuneration is paid. We really appreciate it. We know it is an extra burden but you being an advocate for the sector is essential. Could you explain how you came up with this submission and the consultative process you went through to produce it?

Mr CHEESEMAN: We looked at the terms of reference of the Committee. I personally developed the survey and put it to our committee members for their feedback to see if it adequately reflected the range of questions that we wanted to ask. I had feedback and incorporated those changes into the survey. We sent the survey out to all our members. We sent reminders out to our members to make sure that we got a substantive number back so that it was a statistically significant sample. We received just under 60 per cent back, so that was a fairly good result from a survey. We then wanted to make sure that we had a chance for all our members to analyse the results of the survey so we conducted a half-day forum where all our members were invited. It was attended by around 20 members and we took those additional comments into account when we compiled this submission. It also went around to the wider committee again for consultation.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: For the draft submission?

Mr CHEESEMAN: For the draft for other comments before it was finally submitted to the inquiry.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you available for hire to the New South Wales Government for community consultation by any chance?

Mr CHEESEMAN: We are happy to assist the sector in any way that would be appropriate.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One of the things that stands out in your submission is your infrastructure investment rankings. Basically, if your members had the money available from the New South Wales Government that is being proposed for the relocation of the Powerhouse—a couple of hundred million dollars—you have essentially set out how you would go about prioritising an infrastructure spend. Can you take us through the 10-point ranking and explain why those things are important?

Mr CHEESEMAN: Certainly.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is on the second page at about point 3.

Mr CHEESEMAN: That was not the order that it was originally listed in. Those 10 points are based on how our organisations see the sector but are also from speaking over time to senior figures in New South Wales Government and so on about things they might be working on, things that have just been in the air for lots of time as well, and to make sure that we were looking at the geographical spread across New South Wales as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How did you prioritise it? Was it as a result of rankings or the number of people who supported—

Mr CHEESEMAN: It was ranking. We asked people to rank one to 10. It was out of the result of the rankings from our members. We thought it was important, because to ask the Powerhouse question in isolation—is it important or not—is one thing, and yes, it has merits or dismerits, or whatever it is, but how does it fit within a whole range of the suite of things that are needed in New South Wales?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: This is you trying to put the issue of the Powerhouse in the context of all the other demands that happen around the State.

Mr CHEESEMAN: That is correct.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And so the provision of funding for existing arts infrastructure was viewed as the top priority—to actually make the existing arts infrastructure work—is that right?

Mr CHEESEMAN: Yes, particularly in regional New South Wales. That is correct.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And then provision of funds for new infrastructure in regional New South Wales was put forward.

Mr CHEESEMAN: That is right, which is not surprising when a majority of members are from regional New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But was that kind of a—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: And 60 per cent of the respondents came from regional New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I was going to ask you about that. Was that kind of a consensus position across the board or was there very clearly a regional focus on that? Did members generally agree?

Mr CHEESEMAN: I think everyone sees the need for more infrastructure in regional New South Wales. But I think people also understand where they are coming from and are trying to put their best foot forward and to advocate for their own turf, if you like. But it is very needed and we are absolutely here to represent our members—and that is what our members put forward.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Number three is building a major Indigenous gallery or cultural centre in New South Wales. When I read that it is so obviously a huge gap in our cultural landscape. What did your members have to say? Maybe Dr Hall could speak from a Western Sydney perspective and Mr Brinkman from a Blue Mountains perspective.

Dr HALL: As you say there is an absolute recognition that there is a major gap and it is long overdue. It should probably be positioned in Sydney. There have already been some ideas about where that would happen, but it is long overdue. Aboriginal art is perhaps the major art form recognised internationally and in Australia as very distinctively Australian. Why do we not have such an institution that values it, upholds it and presents it at its very best?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: As more than a wing of a more traditional gallery—as a standalone, unique, essential cultural identifier.

Dr HALL: Yes. And I think that is probably because institutions do so much more than just exhibiting work. They are collecting, researching, educating and interpreting—it is a much bigger story that is going on in these institutions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And that would be Aboriginal controlled and Aboriginal run—a genuine Indigenous Aboriginal institution. Is what you have in mind? Is that right?

Dr HALL: I am not sure that we could comment on that.

Mr CHEESEMAN: We would hope so.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I suppose I could run through this list, but you have got 10 projects and relocation of the museum of applied arts and science, known to the people of New South Wales as the Powerhouse, to Parramatta comes in dead last at number 10—is that right?

Mr CHEESEMAN: Yes. That is correct.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Regarding your survey, we are in politics and we understand surveys and how you can do those.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: And digital marketing [DM] polls.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: And DM polls particularly. I just want to point out that I think it is compromised a little bit in that the only question you asked on the Powerhouse, which is question number 12, says: "Do you agree that the sale of the Powerhouse Museum site and the relocation of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to Parramatta is in the best interests of the people of New South Wales?" It would have been better and more helpful to me if you had separated those two issues. The sale is a separate emotive issue and brings in other issues for people concerned about the Government selling assets and privatisations.

The relocation of the museum is a fundamentally different issue in my view. It goes a little to what Dr Hall said in regards to the cannibalising of the inner city. There is a finite pie of funding. Your organisation rightly doing your duty wants it grown. In an ideal world we would all like to see it grow. But we recognise the Government lives with constraints. Do you see my point that it might have been better if you decoupled those two issues and talked about relocation separately to the sale?

Mr CHEESEMAN: I can see the merits in separating that—yes, certainly. In putting the survey together I was very aware that it would be great to do a whole lot of other research to actually really fine tune some of these things. This is a blunt instrument in many ways. There is scope to do further research, but it is important that we ask some questions and delve further—that would be a great thing.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: To the member's point, for example, in number 4 of question 13 where you asked for further information it says: "Admirable in terms of creating new opportunities for Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. However, planning to sell existing site without a publicly known plan and funding model creates unnecessary concern." So I guess I am backing up what Mr Mallard said in terms of perhaps splitting those issues.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: "Visitation will plummet" is another comment you forgot there, Mr Franklin.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I did not forget anything, Mr Shoebridge.

The CHAIR: Now that we are talking about questions, for question 14 the highest ranking—as to be expected, of course—at 34.62 per cent was provision of funds for expansion of existing arts infrastructure in regional New South Wales.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I think we would all back that up.

The CHAIR: What representations have you made in relation to getting any extra money, or have you indeed made none? That is what I was trying to get at before when I was questioning you about rural funding and extra.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Okay.

The CHAIR: It is one thing to talk about needing extra money and doing surveys, but what have you actually done to outreach or represent yourselves to government—to go and talk to your local rural members, for example—to get that extra?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Or the Minister.

The CHAIR: Or the Minister.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Earlier this year we had a two-day conference where all the leaders of Arts NSW and the Ministry of Arts from the Federal Government were invited where all these sorts of issues were highlighted and where we looked at the benefits of infrastructure in regional galleries throughout the State and provided case studies and so on. There was an open call to anyone that wanted to come but certainly we have made representations on those matters to the leaders of the arts organisations in that way.

The CHAIR: Have you gone and knocked on the Minister's door?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Hard to get to.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Individual gallery directors do. As I say, a lot of that is driven. I think we could do more in terms of being advocates in that way for the sector. This survey was only done in relation to the inquiry so we have not had a chance to follow up those types of things, but it certainly raised a lot of points that we want to follow up with.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is a powerful tool and makes your submission so much stronger when you come with that sort of evidence-based survey from your members. I really commend you on it.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Thank you.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I have a follow-up question about the survey. Thank you very much. Your survey and the results of it clearly indicate where the members stand except on this point that was raised earlier by the Hon. Shayne Mallard about the delineation between the sale and the relocation. While 61 per cent oppose the sale and relocation you say that 25 per cent support the initiative. Do they support the initiative of relocation as well as the sale or do they support the relocation separately to the sale?

Mr CHEESEMAN: It was put as a package deal, I suppose, in the way that it seems to have been presented. That is the impression that we have—that both go together—so in the question both went together. Perhaps they are separate issues and could be separated out. I agree that it would be better to delve into that and to separate those issues.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Do you think it might change the results?

Mr CHEESEMAN: I would not like to presuppose.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One of the comments sheds some light on the concerns of your regional members. It is answer number 14.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Mr Chairman, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane was still asking his questions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Might I ask this, Chair?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You go ahead.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The comment is: "For regional audiences"—and Western Sydney is not regional—"the move will essentially mean visitation to the Powerhouse Museum will be much more difficult and suggests that this sector of their visitation will have a sharp drop. This will likely have the same impact on international and interstate visitation." Could you unpack that for me a little? What does that actually mean in terms of regional visitors and the concerns of your members?

Mr CHEESEMAN: That is the concern of one member. I suppose what they are saying is that they do not believe that Parramatta will be able to draw visitors in the same way that the central Sydney location would. There is a different demographic. There is not the same visitor experience as in the circuit in Sydney. It is that type of thing. There is also a view that it would take away from the cultural precinct around the existing Powerhouse.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: For many regional visitors it is easy to get to the centre of the city, but it is an additional trip to get out to Parramatta. Is that part of it?

Mr CHEESEMAN: That is certainly what that respondent was saying.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: But respondent No. 11 said:

The current building and site are hard to access for schools and the community and the displays are compromised by the limits of the building. Parramatta offers a fantastic opportunity to give access ...

Mr CHEESEMAN: That is true too.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: My point is that there are a range of different views and it is disingenuous to quote just one.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is a matter of interpretation.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You have presented them in toto, which we appreciate.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Chair, everyone is jumping in without seeking your approval. I have one more question. I commend the organisation for supporting the idea of an Indigenous gallery and cultural centre. It has been spoken about for many years but no action has been taken. Any support for that idea is fantastic. If the Powerhouse Museum moves to Parramatta there is a potential space to be considered. In those 10 points a migration museum was not mentioned. Was one considered?

Mr CHEESEMAN: It was not listed as one of the 10.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Was it part of the survey? I did not see it there.

Mr CHEESEMAN: It could be included if you were looking more generically at infrastructure, whether city based or regionally based. We included the Indigenous gallery because there has been a lot of talk about that over the past few years. If further research were undertaken, I would love to see a survey of our members that asked about infrastructure and unpacked it further.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for coming today.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Thank you for the honour.

The CHAIR: I think you took a question on notice.

Mr CHEESEMAN: No.

The CHAIR: All right. Thank you very much.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thank you again for all your work.

(The witnesses withdrew)

LINDSAY SHARP, Former Director, Powerhouse Museum, affirmed and examined

LIONEL GLENDENNING, Architect of Record, Powerhouse Museum, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: For the information of those present, Dr Meredith Foley was unable to attend today. Dr Sharp and Mr Glendenning will give evidence now instead. Welcome. Do you have anything to add about the capacity in which you appear?

Dr SHARP: I was the founding director of the Powerhouse Museum and have run fairly large museums around the world.

Mr GLENDENNING: Good morning. I am a retired architect and the architect of record for the Powerhouse Museum. I am a former Principal Architect (Public Buildings). I was a director of HBO+EMTB, which designed the National Gallery and the High Court in Canberra. I have been a successful architect for nearly 55 years. I am here to help this Committee reach some conclusions in relation to the terms of reference, particularly the moving of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta.

The CHAIR: Would you each like to make a short opening statement?

Dr SHARP: If I may. I would like to table two documents. They are freedom of information derived documents that were supplied to the *Sydney Morning Herald* in March of this year. My purpose in doing so is to point out that yesterday some of the evidence was not perhaps as forthright as it might have been. It might even have been misleading in some ways. For example, in the redacted copy of the board of trustees minutes from July 2015 one can still read the valuation, the cost estimate—rough, admittedly—of the new museum. It reads \$450 million to \$500 million.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is that the cost of the new one?

Dr SHARP: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the valuation of the current one?

Dr SHARP: The sale valuation of the current site, which they acknowledge is approximate, comes from the Project Control Group meeting on 3 June 2015. That is very clear. It says:

The preliminary anticipated value of the Ultimo site is approximately \$140 million to \$250 million.

I can provide a couple more examples of less than forthright evidence, I contend. For example, retrofitting old buildings to make them fit for purpose for museums is entirely standard operating procedure. We did that in the Science Museum in London. It is not difficult if you put your mind to it and it is not any more expensive. Another thing that struck me as being unhelpful was the fact that a lot of the information you requested from your witnesses yesterday is available. There are 43 suppressed documents. I know that because my second submission nominates each of the documents that the Government or the board has not released. I felt that you could have got further yesterday if the evidence had been more forthright.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Glendenning, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr GLENDENNING: Yes. I prepared three papers for consideration by the Committee. The first I call the elephant in the room. It is a short paper that addresses the move and the impact that that might have on regional opportunities for cultural development throughout the State. I also made reference to the superficiality of the various arguments that have been put forward by proponents in relation to the move. I addressed the misinformation campaign and the default position, whereby anyone who comments adversely on the proposal to move the museum is immediately branded as some sort of strange elitist from the eastern suburbs, which is ridiculous. I simply wanted to address that, and that is what that paper does.

The second paper is on cultural investment in the State. I urge members to read that document. It canvasses my broad experience as Principal Architect (Public Buildings). I was responsible for more than 400 buildings throughout the State, looking for ways to reuse and recycle them. They were all heritage buildings. I was responsible for the restoration of Elizabeth Farm at Parramatta. I am familiar with the Parramatta situation. One of the issues going begging at Parramatta is the implication for the re-use of the heritage buildings within the Parramatta central business district, the Fleet Street precinct and the Cumberland Hospital site—in particular, the Female Factory, which is a Francis Greenway building.

Equally, the ad hoc nature of cultural planning throughout New South Wales became apparent to me. The regional galleries struggled to find funds. Only a month ago I was at the Lewers Gallery in Penrith, a fabulous gallery—wonderful. One of the best Aboriginal exhibitions I had ever seen in the State was held there

about six or nine months back. It had no security. There was one person on duty all day on the Sunday. I was there from 8.00 a.m. to midday. They are struggling. The Government is willy-nilly, in an ad hoc way, engaging almost in vanity projects, not providing any fundamental long-term planning. The paper that I prepared suggests a complete reorganisation of the regional cultural structure, looking to provide a permanent funding process maybe—and this was a thought—providing a one-off cultural grant to allow the construction and development of regional galleries and a supporting grant, which would allow the purchase or the investment in a holding, which would include benefactors in a shareholding of the regional gallery to provide ongoing funding of about \$250,000. I felt that about a million dollar investment in each regional gallery would, over the long term, ensure their future.

I also suggest in that paper an oversighting body made up of experienced past benefactors, directors and people with a great interest in the cultural area as a way of preparing for government, once a year, meeting with regional proponents to provide to government a proper understanding of the needs of regional cultural institutions and the ongoing planning for them. I then prepared paper C, which I called the Urban Design and Architecture. It addresses specifically the location in history in great cities of cultural institutions and their critical role. The Powerhouse has a fundamental primary role as a paradigm for museums of this type in the world. When we constructed and built the building it took us nearly 10 years to put it together—business cases, cultural communication and meetings. It was an extraordinary project that was built on very sound, very powerful and very convincing arguments, as was the recycling of the Powerhouse.

You may know that it has some of the greatest spaces in the world. The Catalina is the first aircraft of its type to be hung in the world. It contains the Boulton and Watt steam engine, which is the reason we are all sitting in this building. The Industrial Revolution began. This is the Mona Lisa of the Industrial Revolution. It is a priceless object. I hate it when people say it is only worth \$500 million. It is priceless. The world cannot conceive that you are about to pick it up and take it 23 kilometres from a site that is adjacent to the redeveloped Darling Harbour, with 40 million visitors predicted.

If the Powerhouse took 5 per cent of those visitors, its visitations would treble. It is ridiculous, and it is on a radial system—and this is what this paper points out in urban design terms; the radial nature of Sydney. There is a fantastic focus of all cities that is derived from the primary urban design diagram of the highest and best uses surrounded by the cultural institutions and my paper addresses that. It then delves into the architecture. What a paradigm. The architecture for the Powerhouse developed from 1984 through to 1988 and opened to unbelievable international acclaim—a Powerhouse that was like no other. It began a process of the Tate, the English development on the Thames of their power station—they even used the same terms: the boiler hall, the Switch House, Tate Modern. There is a simple way of developing core institutions and developing satellites, centres of excellence. This paper addresses that. That is my opening.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thank you, Mr Glendenning. I am sure there will be other questions about what you describe as a vanity project as opposed to a more comprehensive view for funding. Dr Sharp, you have provided some papers, could you also provide the Government Information (Public Access)—GIPA—Act document, the decision document that goes at the beginning that lists the actual document numbers; that lists what the documents are so that we can put it in context?

Dr SHARP: I am sorry, I do not understand your question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You have given us the documents that were produced but in response to a Government Information (Public Access) Act—or GIPA—application, there was also a decision document that goes at the top of it?

Dr SHARP: I am afraid I do not have that but I can send it to you very quickly.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Could you endeavour to find that? It also lists the documents by numbers and will therefore identify the documents clearly for us.

Dr SHARP: Indeed, sir, I will.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thank you. As I understand it—this document—has the board of trustees being told on 22 July 2015 that the rough cost for building a new institution out at Parramatta will be in the order of \$450 million to \$500 million?

Dr SHARP: It is hard to read but that is the case. I read it again last night under a strong light and those are the figures.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have you ever heard the Government or anyone in the board of trustees actually coming out and being honest with the people of New South Wales about what the actual, even this indicative, cost will be?

Dr SHARP: Not to my knowledge, no.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In your experience of running cultural institutions, would it be fair to say that whatever the initial sketched-out cost is, it tends to increase over time as the complexities of the job become apparent? Perhaps you might comment on that, Mr Glendenning, from an architect's point of view?

Dr SHARP: I think if you look at the first paper I did, which is a sort of omnibus paper, there are about five or six pages of detailed calculations based on the information I had to hand, and also not having any other information from the suppressed documents, which shows very clearly that with escalation over a period of years, with unforeseens—and let us just take one issue in regard to the proposed site in Parramatta: flood mitigation. I do not know if you, as a Committee, are aware, but around the world most museums are moving their collections away from flood plains, like in Paris, for the very good reason that it is almost impossible to deal with that. The kind of cost that goes with that is huge.

All I can tell you is that, calculating in three different ways, the best calculations I could make had a lower level of cost at about \$750 million and up to about \$1 billion. I am very happy to have a detailed conversation with people who have done the quantity survey, who have done the architectural blocking and massing, but I do not have that information. As far as I can tell, no-one has come out and said, "This is what it will cost and this is what the escalation will be". That figure, which was in today's newspaper, is not an unreasonable figure and it will inflate over time.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Dr Sharp, you heard or read yesterday's evidence?

Dr SHARP: Yes, I did.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you feel that this Committee had been misled?

Dr SHARP: That is a strong word, but I have to say that I felt that a lot of the inability to answer questions was disingenuous, if I can say that. The word "mislead" may have been unintentional, but, heck, I could read the figures in the board minutes. I assume that the president of the trust could read them. He was there at the meeting; it was presented to him. So disingenuous, not completely forthright—"mislead" if that is the word you want to choose.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you think there would be a case to have them possibly return to maybe jog their memory? They could have time to reflect on the evidence they gave and your comments today and maybe their memories would be jogged?

Dr SHARP: It would be helpful because at the moment there is a tremendous blanket of secrecy really.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Cloak of secrecy.

Dr SHARP: In fact, there are 43 reports none of which have seen the light of day. Not all of them surely can be commercial in confidence; it is nonsense—for example, the fundamental objectives of the new museum. They spent a large amount of money on an overseas consultant, AEA Consultants, and it took them a year to even get a statement of what the purpose of the new museum was. Is that commercially confidential? I do not think so, personally.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, it is not.

Mr GLENDENNING: I was surprised that the brief was in confidence. It is a museum brief. I preface that with the example of the Powerhouse and the brief was described in a feasibility study, which was made public instantly. It was available. It was a public document. There was no secrecy. The discussions around it were robust, profound and there were many, many comments about the issue of recycling and whether it had validity. I remember a financial adviser to Premier Wran. He was very sceptical initially, and did a lot of research and studies. With his economic capacity, he was probably one of the greatest advisers to the Premier of the day. He said that it was a wonderful site, and that the quality of the spaces and the robustness of the structure was such that the building would endure any set of conditions and would offer opportunities for the display of great objects—and it does. People walk into those great spaces and are humbled. They smile to see the great exhibits on display.

I defy anyone to say that the budgets that Dr Sharp has been describing are over-budgets. They seem to me to be very much at the bottom end of what this project at Parramatta will cost. The escalation of the Powerhouse Museum budgets for buildings, development costs and exhibitions, in my estimation, were exceeded. I looked at the budgets a month or so ago and came up with very similar figures at the bottom end for the project at Parramatta. In passing, the issue of flood mitigation is interesting. It is common sense. You are building on a riverside site. That site was proposed by the Parramatta city council—God love them—for the

development, at last, of a cultural institution, leisure and entertainment precinct. That site is about to be taken from them. They made no provisions, over many years—they had great opportunities—to develop a cultural institution. In fact, they closed down their heritage centre only a few months ago. It is ridiculous.

They have made this opportunity and the Government is stepping in and landing an alien spaceship on this site. The site is on a flood plain. That means the water rises and settles again. A flood plain has been there for thousands of years. What does a flood plain represent to an architect? It is a bottomless pit. It is alluvial soils—gravel and mud—that accumulate. God help us! It is amazing what you can find on these sites. I think the building will need massive piling. It will have to go down, I would estimate, a minimum of 20 metres, and maybe 20 or 40 metres. You cannot put basements in the building. If you put a basement in there it would be like building a concrete boat. They would have to tie the damn thing down, because it would simply float up if they prevent the water coming in. The water will come in. The Louvre in Paris—this mega, giant airport of a museum—flooded. We have all walked along the Left Bank and looked down at the Seine. The water was two or three metres above the level where you were walking. This is what is proposed for this site. It does not make a lot of sense.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: With this cloak of secrecy, even if the Government ignores the community and goes ahead with it, what do you think will result with the project at Parramatta?

Mr GLENDENNING: I have said in one of my papers that this project is on the wrong side of history. It really flies in the face of the physical realities of the beauty, strength, robustness and available character at the Powerhouse and its link to the Eveleigh, Redfern, Pyrmont precinct with the communications, high-tech creative role that it plays. In its move from the Garden Palace to the Ultimo site it was partly modelled on the South Kensington developments of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Science Museum.

Dr SHARP: Absolutely.

Mr GLENDENNING: This is the link between education, architecture and science—and the presentation of collections. The collection was developed in the most extraordinary way. It is a great social collection. During the first 10 or 15 years after opening, a number of overseas directors and visitors came here and were absolutely blown away. I will quote the late Steven Weil, who ran the Getty Leadership Institute program. That is the top professional place where great directors go to develop their leadership skills. He came here three times to convince himself that it was one of the great institutions. He would look at me and say, "How did it happen?" I am putting my arm around Dr Sharp because the two of us together worked this process through in the most rigorous way. We were taken to task over every small item. We restored and conserved vast quantities of the collection. The buildings themselves are state of the art. They are designed for a 100-year life. The standards to which they were designed were the highest in the world. It is 30 years old.

I admit that it is a baby. You give it to the people of New South Wales; I am not precious about it. There have been things done to the buildings that have ruined things which I feel, architecturally were easy to solve. There was a need for a pedestrian link coming down from Central railway—the five-minute walk from the radial system that links you to every part of New South Wales. These things are simple architectural problems that are set—day in, day out—by everybody. When I walk here from behind St Mary's Cathedral I face the city and I see 100 buildings that are being restored, repaired, upgraded and modified. It is part and parcel of a building's life that it will go through phases. This building has a 100-year life.

Dr SHARP: Can I add something to that?

The CHAIR: You will get a chance, Dr Sharp, but I want to ask you a question. We know you were involved in the original site selection for the Powerhouse Museum. Why was Ultimo chosen at that time and not Western Sydney?

Dr SHARP: There is a fundamental reason, which is that the Government had a large strategic idea about redeveloping the Darling Harbour facility. Darling Harbour was, at that stage, a major bicentennial project. Prior to that, the Premier had been to Paris and had seen Centre Georges Pompidou, with David Hill, who Lionel mentioned. Mr Wran said, "I want something of truly great international quality. It will be a museum and it will be based on the creative collections of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences." There were other options but he said to us, "Look at this first and see if it will work." I knew quite a few of the very large museums around the world, like the National Air and Space Museum in Washington. When I walked in I could not believe that someone was going to give us these incredible spaces, which are incredibly robust in a way that we could never afford to build them.

I would like to take that a little further. Let us just think about scale. Lionel has mentioned the Boulton and Watt steam engine and the Catalina flying boat but—crikey!—those are not the biggest objects. Look at the No. 1 locomotive and train. That is the core of our transport history. Even the National Railway Museum at

York—which I ran—has not got one like that. The site at Ultimo is 8.23 acres. The site at Parramatta is something like 2.4 acres, according to the figures I have seen. How can you take these huge objects, give them space to be seen and put them onto a site which is 2.3 acres? It is simply not physically possible. That tells you something. If they are not going to put those objects into the museum where will they go? If you move them, and you show more of the collection, is 100 matchbox toys better than a No. 1 locomotive? I ask you. It is just not rational. Anyone approaching this from a professional museological point of view would start, first of all, by talking to the people of Greater Western Sydney—that is the very first point—to make it sustainable socially and in terms of community. Then you would start looking that the options.

One of the great options, in my view, is the Female Factory-Cumberland Hospital. It is the World Heritage site in Sydney. It is unbelievable. There is another factor, which Lionel has touched upon, which is really critical. Yesterday, for reasons I do not understand—I had read the annual report of the board of trustees—the current president was unable to say what the value of the site is. It is in the annual report. It is \$180 million, but that is not a replacement value. I did a calculation based on the information that I had, which showed—it is in my first submission and supported in other places—that the replacement value of the facility, the buildings, infrastructure and so on is about \$460 million. So what are we going to do? Are they going to get rid of those, whatever happens to that site, and then rebuild them? We cannot; we do not have the money. Even now, on the estimate by the Government of between \$450 million and \$500 million, if you look at that, where is that money coming from? If the Government is not going to realise the asset value of the site because it remains as a cultural institutional precinct is the Government just going to print money?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That is the question. To make the difference from the \$460 million that you say is required to redevelop—

Dr SHARP: I did not say that; they said that.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: —and the value of the land, which is about \$250 million—

Dr SHARP: Maximum.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: —to make the difference it has to be a redevelopment site.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Not necessarily.

Dr SHARP: Let me put it this way: If the Government really wants to have a fabulous stoush over heritage—and I have to be fair and say I do not think it does; it is moving back from its original position—to maximise the value of the site, in terms of development, and for my sins I was a developer for two years so I have a bit of awareness about how to cost these things, you have to clear the site or at least just have a few facades left. That will then give you the footprint—probably up to 10 tower blocks, which are currently going at roughly 50 storeys. The kind of money that that would release is really quite substantial, and I believe if the Government sold the site for \$250 million, it would be gift to someone. Even if the Government absolutely maximised the value—knocked down all the buildings and sold the site to the highest bidder—it still is not going to get close to the cost of the new museum.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Do you think the Government will not tender, if it does proceed to the sale of the land?

Dr SHARP: I am sorry, I am not an expert in that field. But Barangaroo was not tendered. There is a whole series of risks here. Another risk is that it really is extraordinary because there are 240,000 objects in the collection. Some of the objects are very big and lots are very small. No-one has put up price on or done a proper study, as far as I know from reading the freedom of information [FOI] documents, of what that will cost. The fact is that I believe, and other experts agree, it could be at least \$150 million to \$200 million just to move the objects. I could go through an endless list of how difficult it would be to move some of those objects. Also, there are huge risks in physically moving these things. The beam engine, which as Mr Glendenning says is why we are sitting here—we have all this technology—is cast iron.

Mr GLENDENNING: The biggest cast of iron in its day.

Dr SHARP: If it was even dropped a fraction and it fractured, it is worse than glass. Somebody, I think Mr Borger, said, "Museums move objects every day". I have to tell Mr Borger that actually to move it from Ultimo to Castle Hill and back we had to go to England and to a guy called Jonathan Minns—who is now sadly deceased. He was one of about three people at the time who had a clue how to move it without damaging it. He has gone and the other ones have gone too, so where does this magical ability to move this incredibly valuable and fragile thing come from? Do you know that the Powerhouse Museum has one of the great Samurai

armour pieces? That is worth a fortune—heritage-wise it is incredibly valuable. It is more delicate than glass. Physically to move it is incredibly difficult. I could go through an explanation for half an hour of how to do it; it would take a lot of time and effort and money.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: This whole initiative was not really well thought out, was it?

Dr SHARP: As somebody yesterday—I do not know who and I was here all the time—said, "They came up with an answer and wrapped a business case around it". You do not start with the answer and then say, "How do I make this work?" I would love to see the KPMG business case—the one that went to Cabinet in March or April. I would love to see about 10 of those key documents. Frankly, if the Government will not hand them over for whatever set of reasons, if you want to find out what was in those documents, ask the consultants. There are six key consultants: There is the quantity surveyor, WTP Partnership; there is KPMG; there is Peter Root of Root Projects, whom I know very well; and then there are two architects, the Murcutt practice and the Cox practice. Just invite them to have a chat, because they will tell you and they will have to tell you the truth, as I am and as Mr Glendenning is. They will have to tell you the truth about the realities. I would really welcome the chance to look at some of those documents and do a proper, professional, supportive piece of work. I am not against a new museum in Parramatta. I think it is absolutely essential.

Mr GLENDENNING: It is a win-win for the Government.

Dr SHARP: Yes, and why not press the pause button, review it properly and come up with a whole series of options that are based on consultation. It is not hard, gentlemen. This is how you do it; it is a straightforward set of steps that any person who has developed museums would go through. There is nothing magical about it, and the Government has done none of it, as far as I can see.

Mr GLENDENNING: I agree. There are quite fantastic examples in the world of museums, core institutions, that use their collections, join them together and build satellites. I have just returned from eight weeks in the United Kingdom. I travelled to the Tate Modern, went to York, went to Tate Margate, where they have built a fabulous little gallery that uses the Turner collections that they have and builds on the local regional context, which is a beautiful old seaport. David Chipperfield, one of the great English architects, has built an exquisite museum project. There is no reason why the same solution cannot be adopted, not just for Parramatta. That is the tragedy of this whole Committee's deliberation: The reality for regional museums is in your hands. You can make the great core collections—think about it: only 5 per cent or 10 per cent of the collections are on display in the core institutions and the other 80 per cent to 90 per cent can be sent to local or regional locations in exquisite long-term buildings that are funded properly without the ad hocery, the vanity project—will live on across the State, giving access to culture at every level.

It seems to me that 90 storeys in Parramatta is the reason for moving the Powerhouse out there. We have a culture-free environment out there, or something. I do not know what the deep, underlying, philosophical cultural reason is not to develop a locally sourced and derived museum and display galleries using the collections of the State in new and unique ways without destroying what you have created, which is an extraordinary constellation of museums in Sydney.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Mr Glendenning, I wish to pick up on a point you have just made, particularly regarding a regional focus. You mention in one of your submissions that it would be preferred to have a managed devolution of regional centres of excellence.

Mr GLENDENNING: Absolutely.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Could you speak to that little?

Mr GLENDENNING: I have to say that I am an architect; you are taking me into fields where I defer to Dr Sharp and to others who have had more experience in these particular areas of cultural development. But as an observer, and one who has dealt with incredibly complex buildings and has worked in both the public and the private sectors—I referred earlier to my public buildings experience—the regional museums have suffered because they try to be local. In a sense, there is a paradox in that—the collections of the great institutions in the cities are not on display. Elements of those collections could very easily be either visiting, as the Powerhouse used to do, regional centres. The Powerhouse had a very strong regional program—in fact, in history they had museums in Newcastle, Bathurst and there were seven or eight regional museums that they were running and the train and the semitrailers. There is great experience, in a sense, of sending the collections out to facilities in the regions.

The real problem is the inability to fund those beyond the capital development. My point is you need to put in place a funding option that allows each regional gallery to have an income and to share the centres of

excellence, the collections, by giving and touring either permanent, on-loan or touring exhibitions. Hazelhurst at this moment has a brilliant exhibition of the great Streeton and other Australian painters who made our history. There are amazing paintings out there at Sutherland—I bet that none of you have been out there. It is worth going into. It is a wonderful thing. That is an example of Sutherland Shire Council working to develop not quite the regional model, but it is certainly an example.

You could easily extend that into regional centres at Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo, Tamworth and so on. They are all crying out for the sort of investment that is relatively easy to provide in terms of collections being available and a disorganised funding process. In funny way, that probably suits the Government's agenda because the projects can be funded almost willy-nilly. I wish it were a more organised process that was derived from a deep policy developed with the sector. I think the institutions would bend over backwards to get their collections out and on public display. The local councils are keen to do this; they would jump at the opportunity. The gallery at Tweed Heads is going gangbusters. It is part of our culture that we take collections to the people.

The Powerhouse did that in Sydney by opening itself up. It literally is a museum that touched all of the people; it really did. It opened up its collections and put them on display. I am not talking about only the beautiful little objects that connoisseurs worry about. We built the great Catalina into the building. It came in in sections and it weighs nine tonnes. I incorporated its weight into the stability of the building. Brick is not a tension material, and by pressing and compressing it we made it strong. The weight of the Catalina holds the building together. It is fascinating.

Dr SHARP: I want to talk about satellites, because it follows on from what Lionel has just said.

Mr GLENDENNING: It is a win-win for the Government.

Dr SHARP: I ran the Science Museum Group in London for five years, from 2000 to 2005. There is a science museum in the centre and in Bradford there was the National Museum of Film, Photography and Television, which is now the National Media Museum. In York there is the National Railway Museum, which is the largest of its kind in the world. There is also a couple of other facilities, including 600 acres in Wiltshire. The people of Bradford and York do not see their institutions as national museums. They are incredibly proud; they are their museums. It is not something we slipped up there because it was neat. Each of those places has its own management committee, and they are 98 per cent independent. I was the big honcho, but if I told them what to do, they would tell me to take a running jump.

The point is that we made sure those institutions were in the hearts and minds of the people who owned them. The sense of ownership was extraordinary. We set up a new museum in northern England, which is the birthplace of the railways. People said we were crazy and that it was 50 acres of wasteland. Our first estimate of visitation was about 150,000 a year. I think during the first year there were 450,000 visitors. We did not have to run it any more; trust me, the locals took over. The idea that somehow the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, or the Powerhouse, is offering some sort of second-rate small thing is absolute rubbish. The collection is so huge that you could construct five museums and you would not use it all.

If you were to talk to the people in all of those multicultural communities you would find that have they have some good ideas about what they want and what they need. I live in the country, a long way from Paddington. Those of us who are supposed to be elitist come up with some great ideas that we could try on the people of Parramatta, but there are whole new ideas and ways of thinking. Why is it assumed that, because we want to keep the greatest piece of industrial heritage that Sydney has in one place that is perfectly attuned—as the National Trust said yesterday—to its function with perfectly attuned objects, we are not supportive of Parramatta, greater Western Sydney and, of course, the regions? Lionel is absolutely right.

If you want to look at a total policy vacuum and a total lack of balanced funding, you should look at the so-called Resources for Regions program in this State. Members should compare that with what happens in Queensland and Victoria. It is a shambles. Western Australia is spending \$428 million to build a tiny facility. By the way, there is absolutely no way that the physical scale of the new building in Parramatta will be as big as the one in Western Australia, which is pretty small. It has only 6,500 square metres of display space versus the 13,000 square metres plus here.

I think the Government is partly motivated by something really good. Two point something million people absolutely deserve a fabulous iconic museum or cultural centre. But it has gone about it entirely the wrong way. It is digging itself deeper and deeper. Eventually it will have to pay for this. As we heard yesterday, it will not come out of the site, so the Government will have to find a great deal of money. I want it to find a solution; I am not against the Government. However, I want to find a solution that works, and I would love to help. In fact, I would do it for free because it is the right thing to do. As you can tell, I do not care at all.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is clearly a great passion.

Dr SHARP: And based on some knowledge, I hope.

The CHAIR: We are talking about the potential relocation of the Powerhouse, but what about the current site being fit for the future in terms of what it does and where it might go?

Dr SHARP: That is a very important point. One of the things that I believe the Cultural Ambassador to Western Sydney said both yesterday and also in an article was that fundamentally it would cost a great deal more to make the site fit for the future versus building a new museum. We all know that that is not the case. Ten years ago we would have been running wires and cables; now it is all wi-fi and so on. Retrofitting buildings is standard operating practice for museums. The Victoria and Albert Museum is more than 100 years old. The Louvre was established in the twelfth century. Try telling the French that they are not making a twelfth-century palace fit for purpose. I am sorry, it is professional claptrap; it is rubbish. It is entirely possible and it would cost a lot less.

In 2014 the board of the museum approved a plan—the 2020 plan—which took into account the air rights over stage one, which is about three acres. Using the funds generated—I think it was about \$150 million—it could have paid for most of the retrofitting of the Powerhouse. The idea that they asked for \$200 million in the Deloitte plan from 2012 and that they did not get an answer is entirely wrong. They were really onto it. It had gone through Treasury gateway processes and it was almost published, but it was stopped. I would love to see that report. I held it in my hands and skimmed through it, but I would love to read it. There are probably some very good ideas in it. There is the Gehry building and the amazing swimming pool. Imagine what we could do on a stage-one site respecting the architecture that Lionel saved.

Mr GLENDENNING: It is interesting. Harris Street has evolved into one of the most striking streets in Sydney in terms of the star architects who are wandering down it creating buildings. There is the Seidler building, Ken Woolley's building, the Cox building, the Gehry building and, humbly, my building. I started it all. The forms are being developed from the Powerhouse form. That is an amazing thing to see in Sydney. I did an environmental studies degree at Macquarie University, and I have always had a powerful interest in sustainability. The building has incredibly sophisticated engineering and environmental standards, and high-loading capacities were naturally built into the existing structure. You can roll steam locomotives onto the floor of the building. It is extraordinary. Any load adds hugely to the cost of structures.

There is a seawater system that is used for cooling the air-conditioning system which was the original cooling conduits used by the power station which run down into Darling Harbour. There were environmental studies. If you want some lovely prawns and oysters that is the place to go. There is amazingly prolific sea life as a consequence of the slightly warmed water that is returned to a small part of Darling Harbour, Cockle Bay. The AMP building and the Opera House use the same system—a titanium heat exchanger—which has a life of 1,000 years. It is indestructible. The air conditioning is designed to the highest museum standards for humidity, dust and gas extraction and temperature control. When someone says the building is not fit for purpose my default position is you are not trying hard enough. It is a lazy, opt-out way of dealing with the wonder and the scale and the extraordinary opportunities. I would say to those people who would say that: You are not thinking through the potential of the asset that you are dealing with.

There are many ways I can imagine how one might colonise the Powerhouse with the latest technologies and maybe technologies that none of us has thought of. For goodness sake, it has a Saturn rocket engine at one end of the Boiler Hall that took men to the moon. It looks like my back garage. It is an extraordinary contraption. The computer that I hold when I make a phone call today is better than the Apollo 13 computer. It is extraordinary. You cannot anticipate fitness for purpose. It is a silly argument. It really is. All around us we are watching buildings being modified, adapted, re-used, recycled and given new lobbies and new interiors. The Law Courts just finished a massive upgrade worth hundreds of millions across the road from here. They are facile arguments, I am afraid, and they really speak to a failure of initiative and inspiration. They really do.

Dr SHARP: Also a lack of experience, to be honest. I hate to say it, but if you look at the kinds of teams that are put together in Paris, London, Washington or wherever, frankly the current team is not the A league and we are dealing with an A league set of issues here. This is one of the most challenging and complex opportunities that this State has ever seen. Creating an iconic cultural facility in Parramatta is a phenomenal opportunity and it really requires great experience and great creativity.

The CHAIR: If you were going to build something in Parramatta, putting aside the flood plain, have you given any thought to where you might do it that would be useful to the CBD there?

Dr SHARP: One of the things about that David Jones car park site is that it is actually reminiscent of San Antonio's River Walk. They have a series of problems with that. You would not put something there which had lots of collections because they are at risk.

The CHAIR: You would put lots of restaurants there.

Dr SHARP: And performance spaces. Remember, we have this Mediterranean climate; it is perfect. You would choose another site, and I happen to believe it is the Cumberland Hospital and Female Factory site if a proper study was done. Shamefacedly, I would say I had not seen it until late last year and I have spent a lifetime looking at heritage sites around the world, including Colonial Williamsburg I might say. I just looked at that and thought the potential of this site for new work as well as recycling, restoring and conserving is so amazing. You can still take whatever number of acres—15 or 20 acres—and put in residential. You create a community which has a cultural heart along with real people.

Has anyone here ever heard of an interactive garden? Do you know what they are like? The United States has several of them. In that location there this is an absolute honey pot for families. Yes, you can interact physically with gardens without destroying them and I could tell you how. I worked on a project in California for three years where we actually designed it. What I am saying is for the options which are available and which are phenomenal I do not think the team is adequate from what I have seen. I think it has been planned rear end backwards and I think the opportunity in Parramatta, particularly at the Cumberland Hospital site, is so extraordinary that no wonder the AEA consultant said, "I've never seen anything like it." That is where he would put it.

Mr GLENDENNING: I agree. I completely support what Dr Sharp is saying in that regard that the existing infrastructure in a heritage sense on that site is eminently useful for exactly this sort of cultural multi-use facility. It would benefit from all of the institutions in Sydney. Sydney Modern, the Australian Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art—you name it—could all go out there and place elements of their collection and create a facility of extraordinary dynamism that would be welcomed and absolutely embraced by the local population, who have an infinite demographic of wonderful subcultures. There is an extraordinary range of opportunities. I was hearing from the previous speakers about the opportunities for the development of an Aboriginal facility. It is a perfect opportunity to explain the history of the Cumberland plain. It is just—

Dr SHARP: The narratives are endless.

Mr GLENDENNING: It is an absolute win-win for the Government and it strikes me that the opportunity which we grasped 30 years ago is being missed at Parramatta and beyond, obviously. There is the \$400 million or \$500 million and Dr Sharp is right: Who has seen a major project not go over budget? We are paying \$50 billion for \$30 billion submarines. Where does it end? Every major project of this type has cost overruns. It is axiomatic and control of that is often non-existent. Unfortunately, it is the nature of big, complex projects. These buildings are one-offs. They are not easy buildings. You are not building an office building like you build across the way that is repeated time, time and time again. You are building a very complex, one-off project. Often they embrace extraordinary architecture, which is fair enough, I have no problem with trophy buildings. It is just that someone has got to pay for them and someone has got to live with them. Often the two are in terrible diametric opposition.

Dr SHARP: If I can also table this small booklet called the *Heritage of the Powerhouse Museum* if the Committee members have not seen it yet. It should be on the record. Finally, my third submission is a proposal for the Museum of Migration, Creativity, Art and Science. It is called MOMCAS. The idea was to try to develop something which could pull all of these strands together—for example, migration history, the history of New South Wales and all of it. The collections in the Powerhouse Museum and all of our collections reflect human creativity, as would an Aboriginal art centre. I think we have not even begun to canvass properly the options, and I am sure there will be a lot more a lot better than that one.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Is that MOMCAS proposal documented?

Dr SHARP: It is in my third submission, or one of the submissions.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. Dr Sharp, if the secretariat writes to you would you supply us with some details of contractors, architects, business plan consultants and any other third parties you think might be relevant for the Committee to talk to in relation to this process of a potential move and/or new facilities at Parramatta?

Dr SHARP: I would be happy to based on the documents from the freedom of information request because I think it might help you a lot.

The CHAIR: I note that you took a couple of questions on notice. You were going to supply some documents. You will 21 days to do that. The secretariat will be in contact with you. Thank you very much again.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

DONNA RYGATE, Chief Executive Officer, Local Government NSW, sworn and examined

SALLY WATTERSON, Arts and Culture Project Manager, Local Government NSW, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome our next witnesses, Ms Rygate and Dr Watterson. Thank you very much for coming. Would you like to start with a short opening statement?

Ms RYGATE: Thank you very much. I will keep it brief. I imagine most of you know that Local Government NSW is the peak organisation for local government in this State. We represent general purpose councils, special purpose councils which are largely county councils, and other local government related bodies including things like the Norfolk Island commission—I think they are called that now—the Lord Howe Island Board and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. We do a lot of work particularly in the industrial space but also in the policy and advocacy space and capacity building for local government and our broader membership.

We note your terms of reference and particularly the reference to the impacts of council amalgamations on their arts and cultural activities. As you will have seen from our submission on that, it is a little bit too early to tell but we would like some greater recognition of the opportunity to spend some of the Stronger Communities funds in this space. You would be aware that the New South Wales Government provides arts funding to us and to councils. You would also note from our submission that one of the issues that we are interested in is getting some greater transparency around government funding to local government. It is a hard thing to get to the bottom of how much arts and cultural funding gets out there.

In terms of our other key issues, we are particularly concerned that the New South Wales Government consults with local government and is transparent in relation to its allocations for cultural funding and infrastructure. On the vexed question of the Powerhouse Museum we are deliberately agnostic. That is because, as I said earlier, we are a membership organisation. We have some members who think this is a dreadful idea, we have other members who think that this is a terrific idea, and I guess we are in the fortunate position of not having to make a decision on that. So I will be upfront with that right from the outset.

You will also note from our submission that we say that if that is the decision that is made we would be particularly concerned that there would be significant consultation with the community and with local government—particularly with the City of Sydney—about the future of the existing site and equally that if the relocation occurs the move is not funded from the \$600 million that is already promised to arts and cultural infrastructure from poles and wires, assuming that the current obstacles to that process are removed. We note in our submission—and you probably saw somebody pick that up in the media last week—that of the \$600 million that has been earmarked more than half of it has already been spent in central Sydney. We do not object to central Sydney, but we do say that about 70 per cent of museums and galleries in New South Wales are outside the Sydney metropolitan area itself. We would really like to see the Government's expenditure on arts and culture funding projects across the whole of New South Wales.

You will see we put some recommendations in our submission, but one of the key things that I would be very negligent not to flag with you is the importance of increasing New South Wales Government funding for libraries. They are absolutely vital community resources. They perform so many functions and the funding profile from the Government has just gone down repeatedly. There was a slight increase recently but it was very slight and nowhere near back to what it should be, so we wanted to really emphasise that point in our opening remarks. Thank you.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I am personally proud that Rockdale City Council has recently built a twenty-first century library but disappointed that the Government did not help with the development of the library.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Helped by some amalgamations, probably.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you very much for coming in. You mentioned that transparency is a very important aspect of the process. Has the Government been transparent in this process so far?

Ms RYGATE: In which particular process?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: In this idea of moving the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. Has there been any consultation with your group and have there been discussions as to the amount of money that is going to be spent, where it is going to be spent and so forth? Has there been any consultation?

Ms RYGATE: I am not aware of particular consultation with us as the peak body. Nor are you, Dr Watterson?

Dr WATTERSON: I am not aware of consultation with us about it, but I am aware that—

Ms RYGATE: But the councils—yes.

Dr WATTERSON: Yes.

Ms RYGATE: The City of Sydney—I do not know but I presume they on your list of people to come and talk to you—and equally our member the City of Parramatta Council as well. I understand that both of those organisations have been in active discussion around the Powerhouse issue, but beyond that I cannot really comment.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: But the relevant organisations that you represent have been consulted.

Ms RYGATE: That is my understanding.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: And of the relevant organisations that have been consulted, I know you said you are agnostic—you do not have a position either way—but what was the majority position? Were they in support?

Ms RYGATE: It is interesting. I was thinking back. I do not recall there being a motion on this issue at any of our annual conferences that I have attended. We establish policy for the local government sector at an annual conference at which all our members are represented. They can put motions and they are debated. You would be familiar with the process I think. I do not recall this issue being a matter that we have got whole-of-sector policy on at this stage. In fact I do not think we have got a motion on it for this year's conference.

Dr WATTERSON: No, definitely not.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: We might get one for you if you like.

Ms RYGATE: We could.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You could safely say that is because there is a geographic divide, as you were saying before. Some of your members—I would presume ones that were located closer to Parramatta or in Parramatta itself—would be very enthusiastic. Those who might be located closer to the central business district would be against those proposals and that would be—

Ms RYGATE: And we have got membership across the State. The point of common interest for all of our members is about making sure that there is adequate government funding through to local government across New South Wales to support the absolutely critical work we do in the arts and cultural space. I include libraries as an integral part of that. Between 1985 and 2014 council expenditure on libraries increased fivefold. State Government expenditure has really not kept up with that. I think at one point the Government was paying about 80¢ in the dollar for libraries. It is now down to less than 10¢. Do not quote me on that, but it is of that order. That has happened over many years and under governments of all colours. I call on all of you to think hard about that issue and about whether there are any recommendations that you could make to assist in that regard.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With regard to museums and galleries in particular, does State Government funding to local government more commonly take the form of a grant for capital construction costs or a one-off grant than recurrent funding?

Dr WATTERSON: The statistics on how and how much the State Government directly funds local government projects are not readily available. We have been looking for them. They would be incredibly interesting. Arts NSW publicly reports its funding to Western Sydney, regional and remote areas and the Sydney metropolitan area, but within those pools the proportion of money that goes to local government projects as opposed to the New South Wales Regional Arts Boards or Museums and Galleries of NSW has not been split publicly. We are working with Arts NSW to try to get that information, if they have it, or to see whether they could get it.

Three main things happen for local government museums and galleries to receive funding from Arts NSW. I am generalising. One is recurrent three-year program funding. That is usually for local government infrastructure that already exists and that needs to be administered and kept running every year. That will be an agreed block of money that is an equal amount for three years. It would usually go to paying for staff, then council would cover the other recurrent costs of the museum or gallery. There is also project funding. It is usually an annual allocation for a specific project. In the case of museums and galleries that would usually be for exhibitions, public programs and development programs. In other arts forms it could be seeding for creative processes. They are a few examples.

The third way that local government taps into State Government arts funding is through capital infrastructure. In the past that has been demonstrated to be an important catalyst for local government to engage in infrastructure building. I generalise, because it is not the only one. It can also be a Federal Government grant, particularly around election time, or it can be community driven. Philanthropy may also play a part. Community drive and philanthropy in Albury and the Tweed have been huge catalysts for local government to create new state-of-the-art cultural infrastructure. So far, research and surveys undertaken by Local Government NSW [LGNSW] indicate that while State Government funding might be an important catalyst it tends to be the community and council that foot the greater portion of the bill for cultural infrastructure. Communities and councils are certainly the drivers that get projects up and over the line. Getting money from the State is often the nucleus for a council to be to build a case to start spending money, to build up on that funding. Garnering State funding for infrastructure also makes a great case to take to the Federal Government when there are funds available.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Dr Watterson, your colleague mentioned the \$600 million cultural infrastructure fund from the sale of poles and wires. From that there is funding of \$2.2 million for the Sydney Opera House, funding for the Powerhouse Museum move and funding for the Sydney Modern Project. There will not be much left out of the \$600 million.

Dr WATTERSON: And the Walsh Bay precinct.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: There will be very little funding left. What are your members' concerns about that? What are they saying about it?

Ms RYGATE: Our members are saying that they would like to see some of that money—whatever is left—allocated outside the centre of Sydney. Councils provide an awful lot of these kinds of services across the State. It seems only fair that they receive some benefit from available funding, rather than it being concentrated only in Sydney.

Dr WATTERSON: Could I add a point of clarification? LGNSW is not clear on whether any of the poles and wires money will be used to assist with the relocation of the Powerhouse.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Indeed. I was about to make exactly the same point.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Nor the Sydney Modern Project. It has not been said.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you against the Sydney Modern Project?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: No. I totally support it, but the poles and wires sale has not been identified as a funding source.

Dr WATTERSON: At this point, what is left of what we know has definitely been allocated is certainly not enough to move the Powerhouse. It is certainly not enough to contribute to moving the Powerhouse and then funding the wonderful local government projects that exist across the State.

Ms RYGATE: In New South Wales 70 per cent of museums and galleries are outside the Sydney metropolitan area. My colleague referred to a couple of local projects when we were talking about funding a moment ago. The Margaret Olley Art Centre in Murwillumbah has been supported by—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I have been there. It is excellent.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: As have I.

Ms RYGATE: It is projected to add \$7.38 million to the economy. Similarly, for the Murray Art Museum in Albury—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: There is also the Orange Regional Gallery.

Ms RYGATE: —the projection following the first year is \$9.6 million. So for small but significant investments there is a substantial ongoing regional economic benefit. There are all sorts of economic reasons, beyond the good social reasons, for supporting this sort of activity across the State.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: So you would advocate for as much of the \$600 million Restart NSW money as possible to be spent in regional New South Wales?

Ms RYGATE: Yes. As you would know from our submission, we would advocate for good consultation on how that is done and to be part of the conversation to ensure that money is spent in the best possible way.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Thank you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How much of that would you like to see go to rural and regional New South Wales?

Ms RYGATE: I have a whole bunch of metropolitan members and a whole bunch of rural members.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I admit I did a bit of Dutch auction there.

Dr WATTERSON: Our members have not expressed an opinion on that, have they?

Ms RYGATE: Not at this stage. We would want to have a more detailed conversation rather than speculate at this table.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Break new ground and say that you want it all.

The CHAIR: The Hon. Walt Secord beat the Hon. Ben Franklin to the punch.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: He was interested to see whether Ms Rygate would go on the record for either her urban interests or her regional interests, but she balanced the two beautifully.

Ms RYGATE: Thank you.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: In your submission you said that it is too early to gauge the funding impacts on arts and culture as a result of council amalgamations. A previous witness from the Regional and Public Galleries NSW undertook a survey of members and found that 25 per cent were concerned and 75 per cent were not concerned because they were not affected. I think we heard evidence that no two regional galleries or galleries run by local government were being moved into one area by fate, although I am sure that could be managed. There are economies of scale and funding opportunities that come from having a larger council, which I know from having been in that sector myself. Would you agree that?

Ms RYGATE: I think there can be, depending on how things are managed. I do not think size is the determinant, necessarily. It's how you run the show that determines whether it is efficient.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: But you have recognised in recommendation six of your submission that there is an opportunity with merging councils to fund the transition of museums and galleries.

Ms RYGATE: Absolutely. There is new money on the table—the Stronger Communities Fund. What we are saying is that although the guidelines are silent in relation to expenditure of that money on arts and cultural activities, we would certainly encourage favourable treatment of appropriate applications for that sort of funding because these things are a really important part of a community's fabric, in the same way as some of the more traditional infrastructure-type things are perceived.

Dr WATTERSON: Could I add to that? From a pure arts and culture perspective, disregarding money, the opportunity that amalgamations afford local government communities is vast. We have been doing research by talking to as many general managers [GMs] in the State as we can around arts and culture. We are about to formulate that report and release it. One of the things that GMs would often say to me at the outset of the conversation was: "No, we don't do it. I would be lynched if anyone saw that I was spending money on arts and culture. I have got potholes everywhere. How could I possibly—blah, blah, blah". You all know the language general managers use.

However, by the end of the survey, when I asked the qualitative question, "What is the value of museums and galleries to local government and to their communities", pretty much all of them said, "Oh, it's essential; it's our identity builder. It's the fabric that binds us. These are the places we go now that the bank branches are shut. We don't run into each other in the bank but we run into each other at the gallery", et cetera. In terms of amalgamations, where maybe the local government boundary is historic, there is a lot of worry in communities around losing identities; for example, the Dubbo-Wellington case where Wellington is small but Dubbo has a strong identity. Do those two identities continue to exist is a big issue in regional New South Wales, but also some of the opportunities around merging collections, particularly local history collections through museums and galleries builds a much stronger identity for those new local government areas [LGAs].

Ms RYGATE: Certainly if they have got some new money to treat those things more effectively, then that has potential, yes.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: And a greater mass of population to support a regional gallery?

Ms RYGATE: Assuming that they can get there and all that kind of thing.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Yes, connectivity. Back to the Powerhouse, in recommendation 12—and here you are balancing two different stakeholders, which we have seen before in many inquiries—you

suggest that if the relocation of the Powerhouse occurs, which the City of Sydney opposes, and it can buy it, and if it involves the sale of the existing site—

Ms RYGATE: We did not say that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That is editorial comment.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I am suggesting; I was a councillor there. Clover has got a lazy \$550 million sitting around at the moment. If it is relocated to Parramatta, which Parramatta council supports, do you recommend that public space should replace the current mass site at Ultimo? What would you suggest would be an appropriate public use for that site?

Ms RYGATE: We have a recommendation that we would like a really good consultative process involving councils and the community and I think that would be the best place to answer that sort of question.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: You are dodging the question again.

Ms RYGATE: That is the answer.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The City of Sydney has a lot of cultural facilities in the area?

Ms RYGATE: Yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: On page 11 you say that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I am wanting a more definite answer.

Dr WATTERSON: Can I just jump in? The reason we use the term "public space" was that our members generally have not put forward opinions on that and their opinion would be our opinion, so we could not form an opinion based on their lack of opinions at this point and we use the term "public space"—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Well, can I ask: What is your opinion?

Dr WATTERSON: You all understand. We are not in a position to put forward any ideas that they have not given us already.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Well, what is your view, not the opinion of members? What do you think should go on that site?

Dr WATTERSON: My personal view is my jury is out. For me, which is also my professional view, is it is all about community consultation. Obviously there have been issues around the process regarding the Powerhouse so far. Parramatta's GM when I spoke to him recently during our research said to me, "Look, it's a done deal. We're working on it now. We're going to make it happen. It's happening; it's big; it's huge. We're going to make it happen." Whatever happens, should the Powerhouse move, should the site be reused, should it remain public land, then the most important thing is that local governments, local communities, wider Sydney communities and the rest of the State are consulted because whatever happens there, that is a huge chunk of our State's cultural space and if the Powerhouse is not on it, the Powerhouse land, its location, its relocation, et cetera, they are all part of a really, really big picture of an arts and culture network across the State and I would not like to see the rest of the State's issues be lost in that either.

So it is about consultation so that the whole of the State gets to say, "If there is big money moving around or big museums, then the whole of the State needs to have a say on that" because it is taking up a huge chunk of our fairly—you know, the arts budget is not the biggest budget at the State level.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I want to give a point of clarification on the libraries issue, which I was concerned about, and have been advised that further consideration to a revised funding model will occur following the future reform process.

Ms RYGATE: That is excellent news.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: So hopefully there will be an opportunity there—

Ms RYGATE: Hopefully with a revised funding model we can take more money.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Yes.

Ms RYGATE: Thank you very much.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: He speaks on behalf of the Government so we will hold him to that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ben, you can revise down.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I understand that.

Ms RYGATE: That is not what he is saying; I am sure that is not what he is saying.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: It was not the implication of what I was saying.

Ms RYGATE: Thank you very much.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You are welcome.

The CHAIR: We had a fair bit of evidence today on touring exhibitions and your recommendation 11 talks about the need to revitalise funding for touring programs for major institutions. Do you want to talk about that for a little while?

Dr WATTERSON: Yes. We made two points in this submission around touring exhibitions. As one longstanding councillor in Tweed once said to me, Councillor Max Boyd—some of you may know him—the art gallery committee was considering bringing an exhibition about motorbikes to the art gallery and the argument against that was that the art gallery had nothing to do with motorbikes. Councillor Boyd made the point, in his words, "We don't get to see these things unless they come to us. A lot of us when we go to Sydney don't have time to go and see these things and when they come to us we get really excited about it". I thought Councillor Boyd made a strong point.

We made a point in our submission that touring exhibitions are vital to the life of local communities. They are actually in some ways also vital to the life of the existing infrastructure in that travelling and touring exhibitions like the Archibald, for example, bring repeat visitation, which is essential for councils to demonstrate to both themselves and to the State and Federal governments that these pieces of infrastructure are being utilised. They also provide educational opportunities for schools.

As some of you who may know regional and remote in particular, or even Western Sydney, a lot of the material that tours would be unavailable to a majority of the State if it did not move around the State. Funding and subsidies for those exhibitions are incredibly important, as is what you would call the support that the big organisations can give to the smaller organisations to make those things happen—to negotiate loans easily, to negotiate travelling, to negotiate insurances, et cetera.

The other point we made was that there are a select and wonderful handful of museums and galleries owned by local government that have huge spaces, temperature and humidity control—environmental controls—as well as the necessary security, lack of flood plain, et cetera. Local government has increased the amount and quality of those facilities greatly in the past decade in Orange, Wagga Wagga, Albury, Dubbo, Broken Hill, Tweed and more, and many in the metropolitan areas. Often there is another band of museums, galleries and local government spaces that do not have the capacity to take higher level temperature and humidity-controlled exhibitions but would dearly love to. We have suggested that there is something in there around the big institutions making travelling exhibitions that suit local government venues rather than suiting their own venue and then being packaged out. There is a potential there for large institutions to consider, for example, that if a Local Government Area [LGA] does not have a big gallery with 100 running metres on which to hang then perhaps the town hall does. I have not said that explicitly, but perhaps the town hall does. Perhaps the library has an incredible exhibition space and the LGA can think outside the square in terms of travelling exhibitions to get them curated in a way that suits local government environments.

Ms RYGATE: That would get them out in front of people who would not see them otherwise.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you know of any of your members who are particularly aggressive in trying to court some of these exhibitions, and approaching the State significant institutions and saying, "We want this. We have a town hall that will be able to showcase this." Is there anyone who does that or is it more a case of waiting for institutions to contact them?

Dr WATTERSON: They do not, because they do not know that they could. There is not that opportunity to do so. When you apply for a travelling exhibition you have to demonstrate your levels of security and your—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Climate control and all the rest.

Dr WATTERSON: All that. You have to demonstrate your ability to insure, your ability to get a crowd and to have running metres et cetera. I would say that there are not those people because it is not something that—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It is not something they even know how to do, and if they did, they would find it too onerous.

Dr WATTERSON: Exactly. It comes back to the point that the big institutions' staff could provide that support. I suppose it goes back to my colleague's comments about the State liaising with local governments. It comes back to understanding the two different beasts and working toward more creative models.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you get representations from your members wanting to expand their permanent collections through acquisitions and things like that? What are the particular challenges for regional and rural galleries that want to create a collection?

Dr WATTERSON: The basic challenge for rural, regional, metro and really big galleries is that there is very little Government funding available for acquisitions. There is increasing pressure on gallery and museum directors—the pressure is greater on gallery directors because the gallery sector has a commercial element to it—to garner substantial amounts of philanthropy, through things like friends' organisations and foundations, to purchase works.

I am talking more about galleries. Museums are a softer economy. Local museums tend to hold collections that do not necessarily have the monetary value that you can easily ascribe to an image or an artwork. Therefore, collecting tends to be more from straight-up donation and comes more from the local community. That is a wonderful thing because museums can have incredibly local history collections. But they can also be burdened with incredibly big local history collections, and not necessarily be able to attract some of the more significant objects.

Of course, a lot of museums and galleries hold works—or, in the case of museums, objects—that have been generated from the local area. In the Tweed, the Margaret Olley Art Trust donated a lot of work to the Tweed Council because Margaret Olley had an affinity with that valley. There was a similar big bequest in Albury. So, in terms of local government and acquisitions it is the community donating to community that garners the good stuff, in a way. It is quite different from the big institutions who collect things that are of high monetary or national and international significance. Those things are not so important at a local level.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Community identity is very important. You were speaking about that before.

Ms RYGATE: Yes.

Dr WATTERSON: I think Margaret Olley is a great example of the way that local government investment in a gallery has garnered an incredible sense of importance and identify in the Tweed community. The council was able to physically relink Margaret Olley—this nationally significant female cutting-edge artist—to a place where she grew up. That has given the local government area incredible pride—so much pride that they did an economic outcome survey of the Margaret Olley Art Centre, which added to their pride, with some of the figures that we have put into the report.

Ms RYGATE: It justifies the fact that the Tweed council was the largest single contributor to the cost of building that thing. There were certainly contributions from the Margaret Olley Trust, the Federal Government and the Tweed foundation—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: And the State Government.

Ms RYGATE: And the State Government to some extent.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I would like to go back to the touring issue, which—I obviously agree with you strongly—is important. Do you know of any instances—or are you aware, anecdotally—where a museum wanted to have a touring exhibition but was not able to because of the quality of the spaces? We hear anecdotally that some of them are a little run down, they do not have the facilities or the climate control or whatever. Is that a significant issue?

Dr WATTERSON: I cannot give an example but my professional background is in museums and galleries. Having worked in or with lots of regional museums and galleries I can confidently say that there would be many examples of that. Often those small to medium galleries would truly benefit from having State collections come into their spaces, but they are painfully aware that they are not capable of doing that. Often that means they have to embark on a generation-long process of applying to the State Government for small amounts of money for things like a conservation management plan, an upgrade to disability access and a new roof and then going back to council and saying, "Arts NSW have given us this, can we also put an extension on?" These are historic projects in the sense that they take so long.

Tweed Regional Museum is a good example of that, where the community banded with council in three really substandard spaces but some really great collections and some incredibly dedicated people. The community gave the collections to council in return for council improving their facilities in order that they could

move towards making a regional museum. Tweed Shire Council last year opened a large extension with a purpose-built exhibition space that can attract those types of exhibitions. That is a recent good-news story. As is the Murray Art Museum, Albury.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Absolutely.

Dr WATTERSON: In answer to your question I would say that if there are up to 500 small to medium museums or galleries in the State, then there would be a significant number of those who would dearly like to attract travelling exhibitions. I will voluntarily bring in the issue of the Powerhouse Museum. The Powerhouse Museum has always had amazing touring, travelling and regional services. That has always been incredibly valuable to rural and regional museums. Any improvement to that would always be welcomed by people in rural and regional areas as well, probably, as some of the councils around the Sydney metropolitan area. Museums and Galleries NSW provides excellent services around its own touring exhibitions and assists local councils' small to medium and larger museums to attract those types of exhibitions—and to get up to a standard that can attract those types of exhibitions. Those State Government services are truly appreciated by local government and do get results.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for coming.

(The witnesses withdrew)

ANDREW SIMPSON, Immediate past President, New South Wales Branch, Museums Australia, affirmed and examined

FRANK HOWARTH, National President, Museums Australia, affirmed and examined,

ALEX MARSDEN, National Director, Museums Australia, affirmed and examined,

The CHAIR: Welcome and thank you for attending today. Would you like to start with a short opening statement?

Dr SIMPSON: I am still involved with the New South Wales branch of Museums Australia as the branch officer.

Mr HOWARTH: Thank you, Chair. To summarise who we are and our position to the inquiry, Museums Australia is a national museum and gallery organisation. We represent both individuals in the sector and a very large number of institutions across the museum, gallery, historical society, keeping place spectrum right across Australia. The particular points that we want to draw the inquiry's attention to are in our submission. As a quick summary, we feel very strongly that there needs to be a more coherent and equitable policy framework for the development and funding of galleries and museums and the like across the sector, with particular attention to the regional museum and gallery sector in New South Wales.

That policy should also note that there is increasing awareness of the intrinsic as well as the extrinsic value of arts and culture, of which museums and galleries are a key part, to a broader and innovative economy, both at the Sydney and the regional level. As a key part of that, digital access to museum and gallery collections is crucial. On a national front, Museums Australia and I co-chair a national coalition of the galleries, libraries, archives, museums and historical society peak bodies, which is working with the Federal Government around digital access to collections. Digital is very important.

With respect to the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum, we note—and this is true amongst our members—that there is widespread concern about the process, or lack of process, in the proposed move. Our recommendation is that the move process be put on hold for the time being, until a more thorough investigation has taken place. We also would like as part of that, if indeed it is the Government's final decision to move the bulk of all key parts of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta, that it look at the impact that would have on the innovation precinct of Ultimo, probably the hottest innovation precinct in Australia, and the key role that design collections play in particular in innovation. One possibility might be leaving part of the Powerhouse's collection, the design collection in particular, in some sort of facility in Ultimo. The crucial thing is that the process be put on hold, and that stakeholders have a hard look at the whole issue.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You propose that the plan be put on hold?

Mr HOWARTH: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How long do you foresee that it would take for appropriate and proper community consultation?

Mr HOWARTH: It would take as long as it takes. The process has not taken place; that is the trouble. I would think three to six months is probably the minimum for an appropriate consultation with the people not just of Parramatta but of greater Western Sydney about their particular needs and interests. Equally the process needs to look at the impact of the removal of the Powerhouse from the Ultimo precinct.

Ms MARSDEN: That would actually have to be part of, as I think you would have noted in our submission, the broader point about having a good cultural plan for museums and galleries throughout New South Wales. The role of the Powerhouse, the role of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, is so significant that it has to be considered as part of a decent culture plan for museums and galleries around the State.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are speaking for your members. Is that the overwhelming view of your members? You must have members who want to see the Powerhouse move to Parramatta.

Dr SIMPSON: I would estimate that in New South Wales, which has about 350 members—I think; it is in the submission—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Three hundred and fifty-five.

Dr SIMPSON: I would estimate that probably—and this is just anecdotal; I have not taken a survey or anything—close to or slightly less than 20 per cent would be in favour of the move to Parramatta. The vast

majority would be against it, but I would also say that the vast majority are in support of intelligently developed cultural provision to Parramatta as a growing region of Sydney.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would the 20 per cent of members be in Western Sydney?

Dr SIMPSON: I really could not say. I would have to do much more research.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Howarth, you nodded.

Mr HOWARTH: No, I am agreeing with Dr Simpson. It is very hard to say.

Dr SIMPSON: That is really just an anecdotal feeling from the email traffic I have got. I could do some follow-up research to see where those members are based.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: If I could jump in quickly. We heard from Regional and Public Galleries NSW, who went through a quite substantive consultation process with members including a survey, which was excellent. I think all members would agree that that allowed us to really understand that they are truly representative of their constituents. What consultation process did you do with your members to ensure that the views in this report are reflective of their views?

Dr SIMPSON: For New South Wales, we convened a number of meetings. We have a committee of 10 and we have subsets of chapters throughout regional New South Wales. We had a meeting of those chapter conveners to discuss the issues and the terms of reference. We also ran a small and very short SurveyMonkey poll of all the membership and asked for basic feedback to the terms of reference and how members would like us to respond to the terms of reference.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: That is great. What was the response to that survey?

Dr SIMPSON: That was forwarded to Ms Marsden at the national office, who coordinated the response.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: What was the response? What was the uptake?

Dr SIMPSON: We would probably have had about 80 responses, I guess.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Eighty out of how many?

Dr SIMPSON: Eighty out of a membership of about 350.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Would you be able to provide us with that information to help us to consider the issues?

Dr SIMPSON: Yes, sure. I would have to go back and trawl through the emails. That we can do.

Ms MARSDEN: Can I also note that a significant member is, of course, the Powerhouse Museum? I want to acknowledge and recognise the difficult situation that the museum is in and the fact that we are a very broad church. We represent a whole range of views, not just on this but on other matters as well. I want to make sure that that is very clear.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Absolutely, which is why I was interested. Did you write to each individual member? How did you advise them about the survey?

Dr SIMPSON: We emailed each member and indicated where the SurveyMonkey site was and invited responses.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: So there was consultation with every member?

Dr SIMPSON: Yes, absolutely.

Ms MARSDEN: I also individually consulted with key members throughout New South Wales.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: To follow up, Ms Marsden, you said a number of members from the Powerhouse Museum also replied?

Mr HOWARTH: What Ms Marsden said was that we have members at the Powerhouse Museum. I do not know whether they replied.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What was their response?

The CHAIR: That might be a bit specific and you might want to take that on notice.

Ms MARSDEN: Yes, thank you.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I was just trying to gauge whether their response would be not to move, which would be contrary to—

Ms MARSDEN: I was pointing out the difficult situation that they are in as a government instrumentality with the decision that has apparently been made.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Your members are of the institutions themselves, is that right?

Ms MARSDEN: Our members are both institutions and individual members. It is an interesting organisation.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you sometimes find—and I suppose this is where the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane is going—a discrepancy between the views that are expressed by individuals who work within an organisation and the organisation itself?

Ms MARSDEN: Yes, there is but that is in any situation which we have been dealing with over the years. For example, efficiency dividends or whatever else you want to talk about, because it is such a broad church there are different views—yes, of course. Our job is to synthesise those and get very clear—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Rather than putting you on the spot, I would invite you if you wish to give any further detail on notice if there are any discrepancies at the Powerhouse.

Ms MARSDEN: Okay, thanks.

Dr SIMPSON: To add to that, if I may, I believe with the individual email correspondence I had with members, I do not think I received a single response from the Powerhouse.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The overwhelming flavour of your submission is that there needs to be a long-term plan and a long-term strategy to inform decisions like the future of the Powerhouse. Is that correct?

Mr HOWARTH: Yes, a strategy which covers the large and the small and which goes beyond the existing more colour and movement focus that Arts NSW produced a couple of years ago. We need something which deals more with bricks and mortar and outcomes and which covers the regional to the large city-based facilities.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: At least one witness has described the proposal about the Powerhouse as a "vanity project"—a big-ticket, shiny project. The implicit criticism appears to be that there was no evident long-term planning to inform it. Do you have any observations about that?

Ms MARSDEN: I would not say "vanity"; that is someone else's word. However, I repeat that there is a need for good museum and gallery long-term planning that covers large and small and volunteer museums and community museums, which are very seldom mentioned in this forum. We need a process that acknowledges the fact that it is an ecosystem and everything is related. You strengthen that ecosystem with elements of specific programs. That is what we are talking about.

Mr HOWARTH: We have certainly seen no evidence of any sort of process that fed into the decision-making around the Powerhouse, certainly any process that included consultation with us in the sector or the public.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yours is one of two peak bodies. What approaches did you have from the department or the Government to get your views before it made this crucially important decision?

Mr HOWARTH: There was no contact whatsoever.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have you made any overtures to the Government? Have you said, "Here we are. We have specialised knowledge and the members"?

Dr SIMPSON: I have not personally made any overtures to the Government. I find out most about the issue by reading the press. I think that the essential issue is the lack of planning. It is a bit like committing yourself to building an airport and then figuring out whether you need to bulldoze a mountain range to make it work correctly. It is extraordinary in New South Wales that there is a desperate need for some sort of coordinated planning around cultural provision. The fact that a thought bubble can become a government policy is evidence of that being what we need.

Ms MARSDEN: Museums Australia has had a presence for more than 70 years in New South Wales in various incarnations. It has repeatedly made submissions, it has conducted several surveys, and planning documents and proposals have been presented to governments of different stripes over the years. So it has been continually presenting proposals.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What has been the outcome of that?

Ms MARSDEN: In fact, 20 years ago there was a survey funded by the ministry that helped lead to the establishment of Museums and Galleries NSW several years later. Yes, it has had an impact over the years.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We are lucky to have you here because you have a national perspective and you know how other jurisdictions are operating. How does New South Wales compare when you look at that mosaic of jurisdictions across the country?

Mr HOWARTH: Most of us in the business would consider Victoria as the most proactive and creative jurisdiction in the wider sense of the word around arts and culture and its role in the broader economy and society. I think that most of us nationally felt that the establishment of Creative Victoria in place of Arts Victoria reflected a good move. It is generally thought that Victoria probably leads. In my view, Queensland is probably the next most progressive jurisdiction. It has a strong sense of cultural precinct development, not only with South Bank but also across greater Brisbane. It also has a strong focus across regional Queensland. Those two States set the benchmark.

Ms MARSDEN: Other States are also looking at how their arts and culture policy might change. Western Australia and South Australia are in the process of doing that. It is timely that New South Wales does the same thing.

Mr HOWARTH: It is worth mentioning Western Australia, because it is a little across the country *deja vu*. Five or six years ago the Western Australian Government made a decision to move the Western Australian Museum to East Perth, to an industrial site. , following community outcry and a certain amount of soul searching, it decided it was not a good idea, and it is now investing \$400 million in redeveloping the museum on the city centre site.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Committee heard evidence from the Powerhouse that the example happening in Oslo is comparable to what is proposed for the Powerhouse. A number of cultural institutions are being brought together under one umbrella on the waterfront in Oslo. Can you shed some light on what the process is and whether it is comparable?

Mr HOWARTH: I am not aware of that. I see a great deal while travelling around the world, but Oslo is not an example of which I was aware. Nearby, Copenhagen has done a lot about cultural precinct developments. It has a number of its cultural institutions located around a city-centre parkland. Each institution co-invested and they set up an independent company that manages collaboration between them. There are several examples of that in the United States, but I am not aware of what is happening in Oslo.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you aware of any international examples of an institution of the size and stature of the Powerhouse being shut in or about a central business district and an arts precinct being relocated 20 kilometres away that has been successful?

Mr HOWARTH: No.

Dr SIMPSON: No.

Ms MARSDEN: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What risks do you see? It is such an important institution, and this seems to be like rolling the dice and hoping it will all work out. That is my observation. What are your views?

Mr HOWARTH: There are massive risks, which is why we have suggest a pause, a rethink and some proper background research. We need a proper exploration of the possibilities and consultation with community groups and other people. We need to develop a proper culture that deals with proper cultural provision, not only for Western Sydney but also for regional New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: At a minimum should we not be asking the Government to establish a business case before making the decision rather than after? Is that not the expected bare minimum?

Mr HOWARTH: It is the process we would have preferred to happen. In terms of the international examples, we thought very hard about this. There are certainly cities that move major institutions around. When it built what is now the Melbourne Museum, the Victorian Government moved it across the city, but did not move it to the edge of the city. A similar thing happened with the consolidation of South Bank in Brisbane. Again, it was an inner-city site. The more prevalent trend in the United Kingdom has been to set up satellites, as the Tate and the Imperial War Museum have done.

The other international trend, which is supported by our colleagues from the Local Government Association, is to look more at touring and making product accessible from those major national institutions into

the regions. One point of view that I personally think would probably have been more constructive in respect of Parramatta would have been to construct what is known in the trade as a "flexible white box" facility that could take exhibitions and contents from the full range of major Sydney cultural institutions as well as internationally.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you explain that concept?

Mr HOWARTH: It involves building a facility which does not collect or which is not focused around a single subject. One version of that in Europe is called the Kunsthaus, or arthouse. It tends to be a purpose-built facility which has all the climate and security controls and the required packing space, but which is flexible with regard to the sort of material it can display. It could take an exhibition from my old organisation, the Australian Museum, from the Powerhouse, or from international institutions. That gives the local community exposure to a much wider range of arts and culture than one specific institution would do.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Where do they exist in Europe?

Mr HOWARTH: Germany is probably the leader in the post Second World War development of industrial areas in particular. I know most about them. To some extent, local government in the United Kingdom has moved more towards that model rather than building local collections. It is trying to move things through. This is not an example of that but probably the finest regional gallery in Australia is Bendigo Art Gallery. It shows what you can do bringing world-class exhibitions into a regional city and making it work.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I turn to some of the recommendations you have made regarding digitising collections, which is very important. I think you used the Victorian example.

Ms MARSDEN: I did as a case study, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What do you see that galleries and museums in New South Wales need to do to preserve and digitise their collections into the future?

Ms MARSDEN: It is pretty fundamental. As Mr Howarth noted earlier, we have been very strongly supporting, pushing, developing and co-leading the galleries, libraries, archives and museums [GLAM] sector approach to this. We have a small amount of funding but most of it is being produced by ourselves to develop a framework and some standards at the top end and then developing toolkits and support and advice for smaller museums and galleries to digitise and provide digital access. There is actually a requirement for some funding support for that process. It is absolutely critical for all sorts of reasons which we enunciate here and we can send you more information if you like. That includes some technology and hands-on support and expertise. That links to one of the other big recommendations, which is providing expert support and advice on the ground for these small institutions.

Mr HOWARTH: There is a substantial national move to unlock the collections held in the humanities, arts and sciences collections across Australia. Museums Australia some years ago was involved in a Federal initiative called the Atlas of Living Australia, which gives digital access to the biological collections right across Australia. It is up to now its billionth access in about 2½ to three years. The Federal Government has a consultation process under way to look at funding amongst other things a capability around humanities, arts and social sciences. That is only as good as the digital availability of the material at that local level, whether it is the Australian Museum or the Tweed art gallery or whatever. We do not believe the State Government has given adequate attention to that availability. To its credit it has in the library sector. It has done very good things with the State Library of New South Wales about digital access to newspapers and documents but it has not matched that in the rest of the cultural sector.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What are the challenges in doing that? Yesterday when we were looking at the collections at the Powerhouse we heard about some of the processes they are going through in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney with 3D scanning and the like. Are partnerships with universities the sort of thing you would be envisaging to achieve that?

Mr HOWARTH: It is horses for courses depending on the nature of the collection. Again, at my former institution, the Australian Museum, the emphasis was on digital access for Indigenous peoples, so a lot of the partnership was with Indigenous communities whether they were Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Pacific Islander communities. In those cases there was a lot of emphasis on 3D access. For other uses 2D access is perfectly adequate. Part of the Commonwealth's consultation was getting to the level of whether a remote Aboriginal community should be able to virtually handle a collection object from the Australian Museum and not only see it but feel it through haptic feedback type technology.

Ms MARSDEN: For our national project at the moment our consultants are going out on the ground. They are in Broome at the moment. They will be doing several on the ground case studies in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. They will be actually sitting down with these local museums and the

regional galleries and saying, "What do you need? What is stopping you?" They will be looking at the arc of people from those who are very willing but have no idea what to do to the ones who are doing amazing jobs and could do more. We are getting all of that information at the moment.

Dr SIMPSON: I think the real challenge for New South Wales is figuring out a program through which we can get smaller collecting institutions to buy into the whole process.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Rather than the State-significant institutions it is more the—

Dr SIMPSON: As Mr Howarth said, it is horses for courses. We would like as much buy-in to the process of digitisation as possible. Victoria has run the Victorian Collections program now for about 10 years. They have good buy-in from a lot of community museums and collections. We are a little bit behind the eight ball in New South Wales and there is a lot of work to be done.

Ms MARSDEN: You will note that the Victorian Government investment in that was almost \$1 million.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One call in your submission is to have increased support for exhibition touring, particularly in regional galleries. We have had a legion of submissions that have suggested that particularly the regional museums have serious maintenance and infrastructure problems. They cannot access travelling exhibitions or loans from cultural institutions because they do not have the temporary exhibition spaces, the climate control, the security or the paid staff. Until that is dealt with as a precondition we are not going to move towards getting travelling exhibitions and enlivening regional galleries. What do you say?

Ms MARSDEN: That is only part of the story. The other part is you can develop exhibitions that are fit for purpose for going anywhere and a local institution can add to that core travelling exhibition. It could be very variable. One of the submissions said to develop exhibitions that are fit for purpose that can actually be used in travel so you have a range that you can prepare. It is not just going to—

The CHAIR: I would expect in regional New South Wales, especially in the smaller museums and galleries, travelling exhibitions would mostly be manned by volunteers.

Mr HOWARTH: Yes.

The CHAIR: How would you describe the infrastructure of volunteer-managed community museums in regional New South Wales?

Ms MARSDEN: I will start and let Dr Simpson continue. They are so often in historical buildings that perhaps have been given or that they have fought hard to save that are falling down and they are desperately trying to keep a roof over the top of it. They have rescued amazing artefacts. Their infrastructure is very variable. Some of them have pulled it together and have been able to get a few little grants over the years and have very good basic infrastructure. Others are really parlous and they have been struggling for years. I think it is a bit of a disgrace that they are in such a condition.

Dr SIMPSON: Quite often for volunteer community museums it depends on the relationships they can engender locally. Even if they cannot get any local council support quite often they can rely on networks and in-kind support from council employees. There is a lot of uncertainty in terms of council amalgamations amongst that particular part of the museum sector. It really is so highly variable that you have to question whether a lot of the volunteer-managed community museum organisations in New South Wales are going to still be around in 10 or 15 years. The situation is that serious. I think a lot of them will just disappear because they do not have any planning for organisational sustainability and there is a lack of a broader plan in New South Wales. In New South Wales we have the Create in New South Wales plan, which is wonderful in terms of arts engagement but it says nothing in terms of capital infrastructure, collection building, collection research and things like that. It is kind of like a bread and circuses document without the bread.

Ms MARSDEN: And it has no link with heritage, which is another element that we pointed out in our submission. These places look after cultural heritage and are often in heritage buildings yet at a policy level there seems very little link at all. Often they fall between two stools. They do not get access to the minimal arts funding that there is for regions and often they do not get access to heritage funding because there are other elements going on there as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: An example is right next to us, the Lucy Osburn-Nightingale Museum. It is an extraordinary building and an extraordinary collection run entirely by amazingly dedicated volunteers without coherent support from State government.

Mr HOWARTH: I think local government arguably has as much if not more to do in these areas by recognising the assets within particular local government areas. Some local governments are exemplary—

Bathurst, Wagga, Albury and Orange—in the facilities, but in wider outreach I think Museums and Galleries of NSW [MGNSW] does as much as it can with very limited resources. Arguably it is a facility that with a modest increase in funding could do a great deal more to help the volunteer-run museums. The biggest challenge to most volunteer-run museums is intergenerational change—or should I say generational resistance to change in some cases. But it is a phenomenal asset for cultural tourism, for economic development and for social wellbeing.

The CHAIR: Further to that, in your submission you mentioned responding to the New South Wales Government's arts and cultural policy framework, Create in NSW. Was MGNSW asked to contribute ideas to this framework?

Mr HOWARTH: No. Well, I do not recall it. Certainly as director of the Australian institution I recall quite a bit of input. But I think at that time I had my Museums Australia hat on as well and I do not recall—

Dr SIMPSON: At a New South Wales branch level, no, we were not approached by anyone.

The CHAIR: Where do volunteer managed museums in regional New South Wales fit into this State program?

Ms MARSDEN: Where should they?

The CHAIR: Where do they or should they? They are not even mentioned.

Ms MARSDEN: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One leads to the other.

Ms MARSDEN: They are not mentioned, which is unfortunate, one could say, or one could say stronger words. They are not mentioned and they should be. They are integral to the communities around the State. I am surprised that one has to repeat that but one does have to repeat that. There is evidence around the country and around the world about the sheer importance and significance of local and community institutions like this. We also do not know about the sheer potential of the collections that they have. There have been some examples of what has just happened with digitising, for example, or access to just a couple of objects that have led to amazing outcomes. So they should be part of it. They should be supported. It is actually not a lot of money in the scheme of things to provide good regionally based collaboratively based support mechanisms and people for these institutions and these communities.

Dr SIMPSON: We believe that there is fantastic potential with a relatively small investment to be able to develop the identity of a lot of these places in regional New South Wales and also to enable and empower them to tell narratives and build economic capacity on the back of that.

The CHAIR: Are you saying that no-one has actually done a comprehensive survey?

Dr SIMPSON: Yes. I do not think I have seen a comprehensive survey.

Mr HOWARTH: There has been one survey—and I believe you will be talking to Michael Rolfe later this afternoon—that was commissioned by Museums and Galleries of NSW around looking at those regional collections and in particular their economic impact. Michael is probably better placed to answer that in some detail. This is where Victoria is again setting the trend: Their investment into Victorian Collections has unearthed the sorts of surprise collections that Dr Simpson was alluding to—collections held by RSL clubs or sporting clubs that do not—

The CHAIR: The RSL is the first thing that comes to my mind, because there are some fantastic collections if you wander around regional New South Wales.

Mr HOWARTH: That is exactly what was found in Victoria. They do not consider themselves collecting organisations but the World War I commemorations unearthed more or less literally a huge amount of material in Victoria.

The CHAIR: It is fantastic. In some of the smaller towns, the towns themselves are dying, and in some of the old RSL clubs they have Boer War memorabilia there. They have everything all the way through.

Mr HOWARTH: The crucial thing to protecting it is knowing that it is there. You do not get things protected if you do not know they exist. Victoria is certainly leading the push with digital discoverability.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Although of course some of those things have been retained simply because they have been left alone. Other RSLs have been knocked over five times. In some ways the reason we have those remaining heritage assets is because they have remained out of view for a while. But now is the time to find out where they are and protect them—is that what you are saying?

Mr HOWARTH: Yes. Hiding things in times of war and turmoil is fine but it is better to know that they are there and to protect them than to rely on them not being known about.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I have heard anecdotally that one of the problems with the lack of cataloguing and digitisation of collections is that in regional areas in some museums things just disappear. Quite expensive or important artefacts have walked. Is that something that you think is an issue?

Mr HOWARTH: It is, certainly in part from the theft. But the bigger concern of ours has been the loss of entire collections through natural disasters such as the Ash Wednesday fires in Victoria, the recent fires in Western Australia and the fire in Nimbin. The entire Nimbin Museum went up literally in smoke and unfortunately not very useful smoke either.

Ms MARSDEN: Do not make that joke.

Mr HOWARTH: No, I will not say that.

The CHAIR: What sort of smoke was that?

Mr HOWARTH: And I certainly did not inhale. The problem with some of those museums was that they had a basic collection inventory on the desktop computer in the back office that went up with everything else. Regarding the notion of actually knowing what you have and keeping that information somewhere safe as well, as I travel around the regions, the strongest message I can put out is that we cannot avert bushfires but let's at least know what has been lost and have detailed information about it. Let's not lose everything as happened in the Ash Wednesday fires.

Dr SIMPSON: And let us have a digital surrogate if it is possible.

Mr HOWARTH: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And let us have the State Government provide that essential infrastructure.

Mr HOWARTH: Yes.

Dr SIMPSON: That would be good.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Because obviously you cannot provide it on site and it should be a basic minimum that the State Government is providing—a basic digital infrastructure to assist that.

Mr HOWARTH: That is what Victorian Collections does because the information is on Museum Victoria's servers, but there are also plenty of cloud based systems that are used by some of the smaller museums so the information would be in the cloud rather than just on the desktop. Either is fine.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I follow on with regard to risk. Your recommendation 4 says:

Arts NSW [should] co-develop a new museum and gallery strategic framework, that recognises and supports in particular the invaluable cultural heritage collections currently at serious risk in regional NSW.

What do you mean by that?

Ms MARSDEN: I think we have been talking around that as we have been discussing. We have got people, particularly in the volunteer and community museums, who are ageing so they are unable to look after them. We have infrastructure and the buildings themselves are often seriously dilapidated or at risk again. We have the lack of disaster preparedness as we have just been discussing. All of those things are all combining—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: They combine to make one holistic risk.

Ms MARSDEN: Yes—exactly right. And when we are talking about needing to have funded regional support officers, they would be helping them to apply for grants, helping to do disaster preparedness plans and helping encourage and support the most appropriate ways they can mitigate that risk, because it is a big risk and it is very worrying. As a cultural and heritage professional of many years standing this is an extremely worrying time.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Finally from me, could you speak to the importance of cultural institutions, particularly museums and galleries, particularly for smaller regional communities?

Ms MARSDEN: I could speak for a very long time, but I will not.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Three minutes is fine.

Ms MARSDEN: No, I will do one. They are integral to identity and integral to health and wellbeing. There have been some wonderful studies done very recently, mainly in the United Kingdom, where they are

talking about the intrinsic sense of value from arts and heritage for an individual's wellbeing in life as well as for the identity of a region and of a city. We have talked about the unexplored potential of those collections and of the art that galleries would hold. We look at all of the spin-off effects. We have not talked about cultural tourism yet or all of those economic impacts that are very significant. In the submission we have references to data and all the rest of it. So it is from the most individual intrinsic sense of a life worth living right up to the power of a region to be a generator of economic impact and social wellbeing. I think there is no case to answer.

Mr HOWARTH: For those of us who happen to watch *Landline*—which I highly recommend as a city dweller—this weekend's *Landline* had a beautiful story about a little town on the edge of the Nullarbor Plain with a name like Penong or something of that nature. It relies on artesian water. The windmills are being replaced with solar panel pumps. A group of the local women and men got together and decided to preserve these windmills because of the technology and the significance to the town and created a functioning windmill museum. There were two positive outcomes from that: the social cohesion within the town—and at least one prevented suicide, by the look of the program—as well as the tourism benefit that they are now getting into that town. That to me is the classic example, and they are occurring all over regional Australia, of little groups getting together to do something that has a widespread and quite diverse benefit.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One concern that has been raised about the proposed new site for the Powerhouse is that it is on the banks of a river. If you were planning where to situate an essential collection like that of the Powerhouse you would probably not start on the banks of a river because of the potential flooding risks. If you do, you are almost certainly adding untold increased costs to flood-proof it. Is there any validity to those concerns?

Dr SIMPSON: Yes.

Mr HOWARTH: I can talk with two hats on, as a former scientist as well as from a museum point of view. There have been some very unwise decisions. The Art Gallery of New South Wales storage facility at Leichhardt is even closer to sea level than the site at Parramatta. Some facilities like my old museum have been around 190 for years. Normally you assume that a cultural institution will last for a while. The amount of storm surge and sea level rise that is likely to occur in that period would make it prudent to choose a higher site. Look at the map of Sydney. We would not put any major cultural facility within reach of what is likely to happen over the next 50 to 100 years.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Dr Simpson, would you put a site next to a river, on a flood plain?

Dr SIMPSON: I endorse what Frank just said. Putting any cultural facility close to a river is unwise. We heard presentations earlier that said perhaps a better use of that landscape is for temporary things such as food outlets and restaurants, rather than irreplaceable cultural collections.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: If you accept that risk, there is a very large building cost if you want to try to flood-proof it.

Dr SIMPSON: I would imagine so, yes.

Mr HOWARTH: The retrofitting that happened along South Bank as a result of the Brisbane River floods was hundreds of millions of dollars because a number of the places had servers and air-conditioning plant in their basements and had to move that somewhere else.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Let alone a valuable collection.

Mr HOWARTH: Yes. Lessons were learned. In a tall building you can perch things up in the air, but that has its own problems.

Ms MARSDEN: They were very collaborative and helped each other out, so that is nice.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Regional and Public Galleries of NSW, in consultation with their members, came up with an infrastructure investment ranking. They put high on their agenda the building of a major Indigenous gallery and cultural centre in New South Wales. What is your response to that?

Dr SIMPSON: My response is that that seems to be a very obvious gap in the cultural offering in New South Wales. I am amazed that we are still thinking about it. I do not know why it did not happen years ago. It is something that New South Wales should have, as the State that was the site of the first contact between Europeans and Indigenous people.

Ms MARSDEN: No, it was not.

Mr HOWARTH: It was the second.

Dr SIMPSON: It was the second, sorry. Parramatta has some wonderful stories about early interaction between Indigenous people and the colonists.

Ms MARSDEN: There are several gaps. That is one of the big ones. Another is a museum showing the history of New South Wales.

Mr HOWARTH: I am not sure whether the inquiry is looking at this, but there was a proposal a few years ago to put a major Indigenous cultural facility under the hill at Barangaroo. It seems to have foundered for a range of reasons, including funding, will and concern amongst the wider Indigenous community about the lack of consultation. Later the National Museum of Australia led a great deal of consultation, all of which said that under an artificial hill by Sydney Harbour was probably not the place for a national Indigenous cultural institution. That does not negate the need for a much better telling of the Indigenous story in Sydney, that is for sure.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much.

Ms MARSDEN: Thank you for asking us to appear.

The CHAIR: I note that you took a couple of questions on notice.

Mr HOWARTH: Yes.

The CHAIR: You have 21 days to respond. The secretariat will be in contact with you. Thank you very much.

Ms MARSDEN: Thank you. We appreciated your questions.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Luncheon adjournment)

DAVID BORGER, Director, Western Sydney, Sydney Business Chamber, sworn and examined

ACTING CHAIR: Thank you for coming along to give evidence. Did you want to make a brief opening statement?

Mr BORGER: Yes, I would like to. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to talk to the Committee today. I think there are some great matters covered in the terms of reference for the Committee. I guess the concern for me, the business community and the broader community in Western Sydney is that we are seeing historically, frankly, a disgraceful split in government funding towards cultural infrastructure and cultural funding within Sydney.

More than two million people live in Western Sydney. Eventually four million people will live in Western Sydney. It is the fastest growing part of New South Wales. One of the things that we did last year was we worked with three councils—Liverpool, Penrith and Parramatta councils—on a report. The reason we did that was that there had been many complaints over many years about underinvestment in cultural infrastructure and cultural funding in Western Sydney. My view was rather than complain about it we should try to gather the evidence and the facts around where the money trail was going and what the region was receiving in return for the taxes that are paid.

So we joined together. We had a reference group and we prepared a report, or Deloitte Access Economics prepared a report, which shows what I think is frankly quite damning evidence about underinvestment in cultural infrastructure. One of the things the report showed was that people have a travel time budget. There is an average distance and time at which people who live frankly busy lives in Sydney, paying off multiple mortgages—there is a maximum time that people will generally travel to access things in life that they enjoy: cultural infrastructure, cultural events programs, concerts and so on.

That report shows that it is only about 20 minutes. Of course some people will travel more often and some people will travel longer distances but generally, on a weekly basis, the averages show that people will not travel very far. We found that the great cultural assets of the State, which have been around our wonderful harbour, have been relatively inaccessible for people in Western Sydney living busy lives because of the time it takes to get to and access those things. Therefore, there was not a great return on the taxes those people were paying. They were not getting access to many of those facilities.

The report showed that 5 per cent, 5.5 per cent of the New South Wales Government's cultural arts funding went to Western Sydney, despite the fact that Western Sydney comprised about a third of New South Wales. At a Commonwealth level it was even worse—less than 1 per cent of Commonwealth Government arts program funding was spent in Western Sydney despite the fact that more than 10 per cent of the Australian population actually lived in Western Sydney. Our report made a number of recommendations about the need to improve programming funding for cultural performance groups, like Urban Theatre Projects that is based in Bankstown; FORM Dance Projects, a contemporary dance company based in Parramatta; the Casula Powerhouse Museum; and CuriousWorks. All these sorts of groups, which are really quite underfunded, do not have scale and do not provide enough professional opportunities.

The report was well received. One of the recommendations made in the report was that we believe the location of the Powerhouse Museum in the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences should be moved to Western Sydney. The issue with the Powerhouse, in my view, is it is obviously a collection that is enormous. It has been built over a century. It contains more than 10,000 objects and those objects do not relate to any particular suburb. They are not a Pyrmont collection. They are actually an international collection. Therefore, the location for the Museum did not have to be in Pyrmont.

Our other concern was that Pyrmont itself was not within walking distance of the other cultural infrastructure within Sydney and also that, frankly, the level of international tourists who were visiting the Powerhouse on a regular basis was not the critical audience group. There were many audience groups but the collection was universal and young people in particular, students, had a real need to actually access this collection to experience and discover the collection. The final point is that the existing building in Pyrmont is an unusual building—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Borger, when you say "Pyrmont", I assume you are referencing Ultimo?

Mr BORGER: Correct. The existing building is a combination of a heritage building and a more modern structure and frankly the building itself over the last few years certainly has not been able to present and show the collection in a new and interesting way that engages new audiences. The view is that a new building in

the heart of Parramatta on the banks of the Parramatta River, in the very geographic centre of Sydney is an opportunity to engage with new audiences throughout the region and to present the collection in a modern, up-to-date way that is exciting and interesting, rather than in what I perceive to be the fairly dark, cavernous environment of the current building.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you, Mr Borger for coming in. I note that you are the director of Western Sydney, Sydney Business Chamber so I understand where you are coming from in terms of your presentation. Is this being presented as a clash between Western Sydney and Sydney? Is that how you see it?

Mr BORGER: I do not think the Powerhouse Museum is a clash between any parts of Sydney.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I am talking about the need for culture and arts.

Mr BORGER: There has been historic underfunding, and there is a need for the population of Western Sydney to have access to the great cultural infrastructure of the State. So, no, I do not think it should be presented in that way. I think that some people have presented it in a very negative way—who would possibly go to Western Sydney? Who would go to Parramatta? Who would schlep out there? There is actually the middle of Sydney, so I think a lot of people would access it in that location.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: When you honed in on the Powerhouse Museum, one of the reasons you say you did that was because it did not have a particular geographic connection with Ultimo. Was that one of the primary reasons?

Mr BORGER: The nature of the collection is universal. The nature of the collection is such that all audiences can engage with it. Therefore its suitability to be right in the middle of Sydney makes a lot of sense.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art does not have any particular connection to Circular Quay. Why didn't you consider that for Parramatta? It is in a State Government owned building.

Mr BORGER: It may be in a State Government owned building but it has raised significant private capital through funding and sponsorship so that it is not a burden on the State finances. I think the board of that group is best able to make decisions about where that should be located.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Why would you not have the funding for the new annex for the Art Gallery of New South Wales put into Parramatta? Why the Powerhouse?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I think there is a big chunk of the community who does not want it over there.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Why not? There is a couple of hundred million bucks for a new annex for the Art Gallery of New South Wales; why not say, "That is a far less contentious argument. Let us take that."

Mr BORGER: I would be happy to add that to the list.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Did you talk with anybody in government about identifying the Powerhouse Museum or did you just come up with it yourself?

Mr BORGER: The idea of moving the Powerhouse Museum is not a new one. It is something that I have thought about for many years.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Was it your idea?

Mr BORGER: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question was: Did you talk to anybody in government?

Mr BORGER: Yes, sure.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who?

Mr BORGER: We had on the reference panel, Steven Brady, the former deputy head of Premier and Cabinet, who was on a steering committee that received feedback on a number of occasions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What steering committee?

Mr BORGER: It was on a reference panel related to our report. We had three mayors and the business chamber jointly funding a report. We had a steering committee which was the funding members of the report. We also had a reference panel, and we had a number of meetings.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What year was that?

Mr BORGER: It was about two years ago.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who was on the reference panel?

Mr BORGER: Elizabeth Ann Macgregor, from the Museum of Contemporary Arts, and Stephen Brady, who was then the deputy head of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Did Mr Brady suggest the Powerhouse Museum?

Mr BORGER: No, he did not. Mr Brady was an engaged person who we wanted to ensure had feedback about the report so that people understood what the recommendations were.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You wanted to co-opt the Department of Premier and Cabinet into your report, at the beginning.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Just to clarify, these were not the people who wrote the report; these were the people who were on a reference panel that you consulted.

Mr BORGER: They were on a reference panel to provide feedback. We presented information and feedback.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It included three mayors.

Mr BORGER: It included three mayors of three major cities in Western Sydney.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: As far as you know, how did the idea of Powerhouse Museum moving to Parramatta come up?

Mr BORGER: I think the idea was possibly independent within Government, but certainly our group had the same idea, and that is why it is a recommendation. We had 200 people on the stage of the Riverside Theatre when the report was launched, including the heads of major cultural institutions, community groups and those Western Sydney groups that are underfunded. They were all there when this report was launched. They thought it was a great report. We still have a number of other recommendations we would like to see implemented. We think one of them is going to be implemented, which is a great thing.

I also think that the new location is going to fit within a broader strategy that, frankly, governments have had over a number of decades, which is to create Parramatta as the second CBD in the centre of Sydney. We have a historic jobs imbalance. There are approximately 300,000 people who travel outside the region every day to access work, and maybe 100,000 in a contraflow. So the barbecue stopper in our region is how far people have to travel to get to stuff in their lives that makes a difference.

We think there are two real opportunities. One of them, perhaps over a longer period, is the new airport. The other one is the corridor from Olympic Park to Westmead, with Parramatta at its very centre. That is a place where we might get knowledge jobs and strong jobs growth. Cities that are successful need more than just office blocks. They need cultural attractors. In fact, we have a number of corporate members whose job it is to try and get some of the talented, bright graduates coming to work in their professional service agencies. They often say that it is important that a city has a cultural offer so that people can do things on the weekend. The Powerhouse Museum fits within the narrative of trying to build Parramatta as a good place for investment.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So Mr Brady came to this reference group with a pre-formed view about moving the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. Is that what happened?

Mr BORGER: No, that is not what happened. Mr Brady was consulted because we thought it was important that the Government understood the evidence that was being developed by Deloitte.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I thought you said that there was an independent determination by Government to go down to the Powerhouse Museum, as well.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That was Government policy that was announced in February of 2015.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Without breaking Cabinet subcommittee in confidence, during my era as chief of staff I can say that—for historical purposes in context—I had heard about proposals to move the Powerhouse Museum before 2010. So let us not try to make it look as if it has just occurred. I am just saying that it is not a new proposal; it has been around since before 2010.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: That is why, Mr Borger, your organisation, no doubt—because it had been floating around—thought that it was a reasonable idea for you. I agree, Mr Secord, that the genesis of it is almost irrelevant.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Maybe for you two it is almost irrelevant, but the community likes to know where it came from.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do not misrepresent me. I just wanted to give historical context before 2010.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Is the proposed site in Parramatta a suitable site for the moving of the Powerhouse Museum?

Mr BORGER: It is a magnificent site. Public buildings are often interesting buildings—iconic buildings—that need to be in important locations. The Opera House is in a very important location. They are buildings that need to be viewed from a distance so that we can fully take them in, rather than being mid-block buildings in CBDs. We think the end of the river connecting the two cities is a great location. There is a RiverCat service, train services and bus services. It is a commuter hub. We think that the location is fantastic. It is also right in the very heart of a very busy CBD.

The CHAIR: Why have you settled on moving the Powerhouse Museum? Why not just make another facility—a new one?

Mr BORGER: I have tried to explain that. I guess from my point of view the Powerhouse contains a collection that is universal in its interest. It is very diverse and it has something for everyone, whether they live in Blacktown or Penrith or Campbelltown or Mount Druitt or Pendle Hill or Seven Hills or anywhere else in New South Wales. Everyone can receive value and education from the collection. We thought it was one of the more accessible of all of the cultural institutions of New South Wales, and probably less reliant on international tourist than, obviously, the Sydney Opera House and the Art Gallery of New South Wales and other places.

The CHAIR: With respect, you actually have not answered the question. Why would you consider a new one? There are over half a million items that potentially could be displayed.

Mr BORGER: Collections take centuries to collect. They cost a lot of money and they are not available off the rack. The view that I have is that the collection does not particularly relate to the suburb of Pyrmont. It is an international collection.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ultimo, It is in Ultimo.

Mr BORGER: I am from Parramatta, sorry.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: If are trying to shut down the Powerhouse, you should at least know where it is.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Pyrmont or Ultimo, is it really important?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Shoebridge, for two days you have been picking on witnesses.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: For six or eight years.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We love the Powerhouse. We do not want to shut it down but to give it a new life.

The CHAIR: Why is it not an alternative to take a part of the exhibition rather than pull apart, for example, the big steam display at the Powerhouse, the Boulton and Watt steam engine? We have been told it is almost impossible to move it. Why would you want to pull that down and move it to Parramatta, or are you saying that it would not need to go?

Mr BORGER: I certainly think that Western Sydney deserves its own tier 1 cultural institution, rather than a small part of a tier 1 cultural institution. My understanding is the Boulton and Watt steam engine has been moved before—obviously, as it was repaired at Castle Hill—so these objects and items do move around. They are curated and people need to be very delicate and careful about how they are handled, but they can be moved.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Mr Borger, first I want to congratulate you on your report—I know it is now two years old but it is as relevant today as it was two years ago. In the absence of a really clear strategy for arts funding in Western Sydney it is a blueprint to show where the money is coming from. It identified the need and the social argument for it. Can you articulate your understanding of the support in Western Sydney for the proposal to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta? My second question is a broader one. I know

your report came from the business case for arts funding not just for the Powerhouse relocation. Can you tell us about the return on investment in dollars in terms of jobs, direct and secondary, for Western Sydney?

Mr BORGER: I think this movement has incredible support within Western Sydney. Certainly, the business community sees the commercial opportunity for generating more jobs and more employment, diversifying the economy and so on. Kids sitting on un-air-conditioned buses in the middle of summer, who would otherwise have to trek into Ultimo, would certainly appreciate the opportunity to access the great institution closer to home. There are about 300 jobs, which are good jobs, but more important than that is that it is a cultural attractor and it should draw people in from wider afield. The Riverside Theatre is in Parramatta, which is fantastic—not large enough but doing a great job. There is a mini hotel boom going on at the moment—there are three hotels, with one just expanded and two under construction and there are another three that have been mooted. We think it is a good location for hosting tourists.

Tropfest was announced on 11 February, the biggest short film festival in the world, as moving to Parramatta Park. Sydney Festival has had a strong program there for many years. We think it is a good opportunity to improve the visitor economy. The great thing about the location, unlike Ultimo, is that it is right on the doorstep of the strongest night-time economy in Western Sydney. There are more than 100 restaurants and cafes. I think people are looking for experiences. They want to attend museums, but they do not really want them to be in isolated parts of the city where you cannot do other things, particularly if you are on holidays or visiting. Parramatta really does make sense in that sense.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Borger, would you say that part of the reason for your identification of the Powerhouse as one of the key institutions to bring to Western Sydney is the demographic that it attracts compared to, let us say, the Museum of Contemporary Art [MCA], the Art Gallery of New South Wales or even the Australian Museum? Does it attract a family demographic?

Mr BORGER: One hundred per cent. I think that the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences has a very broad demographic and that all of the city and, frankly, all of Western Sydney would fit within that broad demographic. Obviously, people in Western Sydney attend other great cultural events, but some of that is more narrow, more esoteric and it requires certain education experience before people can enjoy all of that. But the Powerhouse is different in the sense that it is very broad, universal, in that it relates to education, science, design, engineering.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Did you study the demographics of all those other institutions for the purpose of your report, or is this just your feel?

Mr BORGER: No, that is my judgement, my opinion.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We have heard alternative proposals—and I think the Chair has put one to you—about facilities. What do you think about an alternative proposal for having a branch of the MAAS in Parramatta, rather than taking out the whole site? What do you think the response of Western Sydney would be to having a branch of an institution, rather than an institution itself?

Mr BORGER: I think it is a bit of a cop-out, frankly, to a region with two million people and one of the largest economies in Australia to say that they are not deserving of hosting, or are not able to host successfully, a tier 1 cultural institution. It is up to government to determine which parts of which institutions are moved, but we think that there is a real opportunity to engage new audiences, to create an amazing new iconic building that can draw in new audiences—young kids coming from overseas, refugees turning up in Parramatta, migrants from all over the world—who might be the great engineers of tomorrow, who might be part of the tech economy. Having such an institution for them on their doorstep, really close to where they can access, is important. Attending museums and galleries can be such a revelation for young people. It can open horizons, change lives. I think it is fantastic that it is going to be in the middle of Sydney and everyone will be welcome there.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Given it has not 10,000, as you said, but 500,000 exhibits, why do you have to view it as a branch? Why could it not be an equal and dynamic and creative space, every bit the equal of the space in Ultimo, but with a vivid, dynamic Western Sydney feel to it? Why does it have to be a secondary branch? I do not understand, given there are 500,000 pieces in the collection.

Mr BORGER: I do not think there is a lot of faith, based on the last century, in funding our cultural infrastructure. I do not think there is a lot of faith about the genuineness of moving just a small part of a collection. I think Western Sydney does deserve its own tier 1 collection.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: No, that is what I am saying to you: It does not have to be a small part of the collection. With 500,000 pieces, why could we not have an extraordinarily large but equal, different,

Parramatta experience out at Parramatta? Why do you keep calling it a branch and say it has to be substandard? I do not understand.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think I called it a branch.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Why do you adopt the view of the Hon. Scott Farlow that it has to be a substandard branch? It could be equal.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Borger, do you believe it is inevitable that more cultural institutions will or should be moved to Western Sydney?

Mr BORGER: Absolutely, because I think a far greater proportion of the population is living there. We know that there are many challenges in the transport system of Sydney, getting around. I think that three million people can get to Parramatta and only two million can get into the city. It is the centrality of location, and we are seeing a wave of interest in institutions and events building a bigger and broader audience. It is in their interest to build bigger and broader audiences. Tropfest is a festival, but it is the biggest short film festival in the world with up to 100,000 attendees. Sam Neill and George Miller made the call in the middle of Parramatta Park three weeks the go, saying, "This is the future". I think others will follow.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you reckon that in the future people will look back on this in the way they look on Darling Harbour? At the time there was uproar, but when it happened there was community acceptance.

Mr BORGER: I do. When they wanted to move doctors to Westmead 30 years ago there was an uproar. It is now the largest health/medical education precinct in Australia with 18,000 jobs.

The CHAIR: You were the member for Granville from 2007 until 2011. Were you also the Minister for Western Sydney?

Mr BORGER: I was.

The CHAIR: Were you advocating this position when you were the Minister for Western Sydney?

Mr BORGER: Privately I was. I was not the Minister responsible for the arts or for cultural institutions.

The CHAIR: Were you advocating this for Western Sydney?

Mr BORGER: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I will declare an interest. When I was chief of staff, Mr Borger personally lobbied for this. I do not want to mislead the Committee.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: A Parramatta community organisation suggested yesterday that there was no public support for the move. Can you provide your view about public support for such a move?

Mr BORGER: There is immense, incredible public support for the museum to move to Parramatta. I have not spoken to one local resident who is against it. I do not know whom that group represents or how many people it represents.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It was the North Parramatta Residents Action Group.

Mr BORGER: Our organisation has 20,000 members and we have approximately 80 chief executives, managing directors and vice chancellors representing more than 500,000 employees within the region. I have not had a single conversation with any of them that has not indicated immense support for the move. There is great support, and it extends across all ages, groups and backgrounds.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The Committee heard evidence yesterday regarding thinking about the future. The ramifications of designing facilities based on our needs today would mean that we would not be able to realise future potential. What do you believe a purpose-built facility in Parramatta would entail for the future of Western Sydney, which I think you said would have a population of four million people?

Mr BORGER: The erection of a building which is permeable and open, and which has technology incorporated into the fundamental design would seem to be a real opportunity to create a new, iconic building on the banks of the Parramatta River. I am excited about and looking forward to the architectural competition that I presume will be held for the site. One of the good things about the site is that it is so well connected to public transport. Parramatta station is the fourth busiest station in New South Wales, and the site is two blocks away. There is also a bus interchange and a mooted metro line. There could be a new metro stop from Sydney to Westmead in the basement of the Powerhouse Museum. That would be an excellent outcome.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have you spoken to anyone who designs new and modern museum buildings about the risks of putting it next to a river?

Mr BORGER: We talk regularly to representatives of architectural, urban design, planning and engineering groups. Many new buildings are being constructed on the banks of the Parramatta River. There are engineering solutions to those challenges. A 53-storey building is now being built next to the proposed site.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But we are talking about a priceless, irreplaceable collection. Have you spoken to anyone who builds museums about the risks of putting it next to a river, the potential loss as a result of flooding, and the cost of dealing with that risk?

Mr BORGER: I am confident that there are engineering solutions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: To whom have you spoken?

Mr BORGER: I am confident that there are engineering solutions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is just a hope. Are you an engineer?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: No, but Mr Borger's evidence is that a 53-storey building is being built next door.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Does it contain—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: And a 53-storey building would have enormous weight. It is not an unreasonable point to make.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Does it contain an irreplaceable and priceless—

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

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Does it contain an irreplaceable and priceless collection?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Mr Shoebridge, you are continuing to make your political point. Mr Borger has answered the question.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You gave the construction of a 53-storey building next door as an example. Does it contain an irreplaceable and priceless collection that would have the kind of security and flood mitigation measures that would be required for a collection like that at the Powerhouse? Yes or no?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: There is an engineering solution.

Mr BORGER: It is not a museum, but it is costing hundreds of millions of dollars to build. It incorporates more than 500 apartments, a hotel, and retail areas. All of these things need to be protected under the building code from flooding and so on. I am confident that there are engineering solutions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you suggesting that the standard application of a building code would be sufficient to protect a collection like the Powerhouse collection?

Mr BORGER: There are museums on rivers. The main museum in Brisbane is on the banks of the Brisbane River, which floods.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for appearing before the Committee.

(The witness withdrew)

NICHOLAS PAPPAS, Powerhouse Museum Alliance, sworn and examined

GRACE COCHRANE, Powerhouse Museum Alliance, affirmed and examined

JENNIFER SANDERS, Powerhouse Museum Alliance, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Do you wish to make a short opening statement?

Dr COCHRANE: We will each make a brief statement. Is that okay?

The CHAIR: Yes, but you should be mindful that it eats into your time.

Dr COCHRANE: There is a reason for doing so, and I will make that clear. I am an independent curator, writer, consultant, and educator in the field of decorative arts, crafts and design. I worked in this area for more than 40 years. For nearly 20 of those years—until 2006—I was at the Powerhouse Museum as a senior curator of decorative arts and design. I maintain personal contact with hundreds of people in Australia and overseas who are relevant to this inquiry, including Museums and Galleries NSW. I have made a list of at least a dozen of them with whom I have had recent contact and with whom I have worked over the past few years. Despite all the tension, I am enjoying the opportunity to hear so much inside information from so many different points of view. The Committee is very lucky to get all that information, and I am enjoying it, too. While we are speaking as members of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance, no one paper could say everything for us, which is why we will each speak briefly.

We have made submissions as individuals on different topics that all add up to a shared view. We have circulated a list of all of our submissions, which has just gone round and which I think you already had. We also added some submissions by colleagues in the wider field. They include people we have worked with before, people we have worked with elsewhere and many of the people you have been listening to over the past two days. These papers all argue to keep the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and to encourage the development of a new cultural facility in Parramatta, one that is relevant to the audiences there and based on their own culture and history and which may take, as people have discussed, touring aspects or whatever from other institutions in the city.

From yesterday's discussion and some of this morning's it was evident that many decisions have been made for both the Powerhouse and Parramatta without any understanding of how museums actually work. What I want to talk about is that there are plenty of people who could have contributed. You can see that reflected in the observations in so many of the submissions. I know that there is whole hoard of people behind me who are very knowledgeable and could have contributed as well. I have a few papers. One which I will not go into in any great length is this one called "Powerhouse and Parramatta: 360 published opinions". This is about the Powerhouse Museum Alliance. It just explains who we are, that we are a group of independent professional individuals and we—

The CHAIR: Have you tabled that with the Committee already?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: She has. It is submission No. 167.

Dr COCHRANE: Yes, it is linked to the agenda. A second one which I will not talk about either is called "For the Record". It was a briefing paper for the Premier in August last year when we finally managed to get a meeting with him where we tried to bring to his attention the fact that there was some opposition to the proposed move and it was seeking a review. We are very grateful that we have got that review here in these two days and for the next few months. We tried to provide options and get him to review it. That is actually also on your website. He referred us to Liz Ann Macgregor and we had a meeting with her. They both made it clear that they really were not interested in looking at any other options for the Powerhouse in the city and that they had decided on this proposed option for Parramatta and they were not going to change it.

I have two other papers which I will not go into now but one of them is "Expectations of Audiences", which was on the website and which you have probably got. That was about really just trying to talk about how important audiences are to particular institutions and particular places and to point out that there are many informed people who can help identify those audiences because they have been working with them for so long that they know what they expect. I thought that was useful but I will not go into that because it is on a paper.

The final paper is the one that has just been circulated because I am not sure whether you had it. It is called "Sustainability". The concern there is the decline in funding to institutions like the Powerhouse Museum over the last 10 years or so which has halved the staff of the Powerhouse Museum since it opened and very much affected the exhibition and public programs there. That is a great issue for institutions to try to do things properly with reduced staff and reduced funding. There are some questions on the final page of that submission

about: If it did go to Parramatta is it really clear who is going to pay for this? It is a State institution but is Parramatta expected to pay for the State institution as well? How much? Does the council know about that? Finally, there are my own recommendations for what should happen.

Mr PAPPAS: Members of the Committee, thank you for hearing us today. I am a lawyer and chaired the Powerhouse Museum Trust between 2003 and 2010, eight years. Before that I was a trustee from 1999. My words will be brief but unfortunately slightly harsh. I have distilled my thoughts down to a couple of points. What concerns me most about this entire process is the abject failure of the trust to deliberate on this issue as they should as custodians of a collection and of real estate on behalf of the people of New South Wales. They have utterly failed. There is no two ways about it. You can dress it up any way you like.

I think the evidence of Professor Glover yesterday betrayed—unfortunately for him because he has only been in the job a very short time—a lack of understanding of the issues involved and an abdication of responsibility. The person who is missing from all of this process, the notable absentee, is Professor John Shine, who was the chairman of the trust after me and who oversaw whatever process has occurred and has effectively, through our examination of trust minutes, abdicated all responsibility to Government.

The most sinister example of that was the presence of Mr Paterson, the Secretary of Trade and Investment, at a trust meeting—bizarre in itself—when he, with fairly sinister undertones, told trustees that it would be counterproductive—and that is recorded in the trust minutes—to oppose the move. I have never in all my years on the trust and representing other government agencies seen that happen. Nor have I seen the statutory trust imbued by statute with a responsibility for not only the people of New South Wales but also the countless benefactors over 130 years who have given their priceless objects betrayed in that manner.

Museums are not government agencies. They are not government departments. They are not football clubs. I chair a football club that has a deep attachment to Western Sydney, the Rabbitohs. We moved the Rabbitohs to Western Sydney in a storm of protest from the eastern suburbs. I do not represent some eastern suburbs constituency either. We moved the Rabbitohs to Homebush because we saw the strength of Western Sydney. This is totally different. You do not move cultural institutions holus-bolus to a new locality. It is not done anywhere in the world. It could only happen in this State. They are my words. I apologise for their harshness and directness but it would be a sad day indeed if the Powerhouse Museum was moved holus-bolus to Parramatta. Parramatta needs its own cultural institutions and we are the strongest supporters of that, but not in this manner.

Ms SANDERS: I had a 31-year career at the Powerhouse Museum. I began in 1978 as museum assistant and was very fortunate to be part of the project—a once in three generations project—to reimagine a museum in a fit-for-purpose building in the location where it was historically settled and is now a leader in that precinct. I then had 20 years as a senior executive in the Powerhouse Museum. All that time I was responsible for the collection, conservation and registration and at times exhibitions, education, the Sydney Observatory, the Migration Heritage Centre, regional programs and publications. I then ended up as deputy director at the museum. I believe I was very fortunate to have a career in such a world-class museum.

Perhaps the panel is not aware of the achievements of this museum. A number of people have talked about its international standing. Perhaps you do not know that it was one of the first museums to sign a memorandum of understanding with the National Museum of China on the basis of an exhibition that we sent there of Indigenous art, music and culture—the first to be in the National Museum of China—along with a group of Indigenous musicians and performers who performed on Tiananmen Square. This is a museum with a truly international remit. It has toured exhibitions to Athens for the Olympics there and that was a cultural exchange of the highest order. It is also a museum that has reached out across the State from its very inception.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Pappas, you mentioned some minutes in your opening address. Are you in a position to provide us with copies of those documents?

Mr PAPPAS: If they are called for.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Consider this a call.

Mr PAPPAS: I do not have them with me now.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Would you produce them on notice?

Mr PAPPAS: They were produced to me under the Government Information (Public Access) [GIPA] Act.

The CHAIR: You mentioned the migration heritage collection.

Mr PAPPAS: Centre.

The CHAIR: What is the status of that?

Ms SANDERS: As I understand, it has been closed down. In your submissions you will find a paper from Mr John Peterson who was the manager of the Migration Heritage Centre and you will find a very excellent example of the type of work that it carried out across the State. I would also like to emphasise that the museum is de facto the State's history museum. From its inception it collected across the State. Earlier mention was made of branch museums—Albury, Broken Hill, Bathurst, Maitland and Goulburn. The collectors, curators or keepers went out and collected objects that talked about the history of this State and collected those in the context of Australia and the world. It was about building up the economic benefit of the State and raising levels of education.

Migration heritage was very much a part of the story when in the 1980s we started collecting the social history. Rather than collecting just from the perspective of the object, we started to collect from the perspective of the communities. In fact, you might remember that the Hyde Park Barracks was the first social history of New South Wales and that was opened by the Powerhouse Museum. We also had the museum of Australian decorative arts in the Mint on Macquarie Street.

The museum has a very strong historical collection. Every object, if you go online to the database, you will see of the 500,000 objects, 70 per cent are available online with full descriptions and statements of significance in terms of their significance in Australian, international or a State context. This is in contrast to the collection of, say, an art gallery like the Museum of Contemporary Art [MCA] which has 4,000 objects, of which 261 are available online. There was a comment yesterday by Ms Macgregor asking if we could look at the cost-benefit of the Powerhouse Museum.

I refer you to the Deloitte study that Mr Borger was referring to because I think it is the sort of study that it is worth examining. I am no accountant but I can do the basic sums. They have a figure in there that shows that the Powerhouse had 917,833 visitors in 2011-2012 and from that worked out a subsidy per attendance of some \$42. However, that failed to include 483,063 offsite visitors, which makes a total number of attendees to the Powerhouse 1,400,896, whether it is in the Ultimo site or seeing an exhibition—the Powerhouse has always led the way across the State or even interstate—which would mean that the subsidy per attendee is \$27.69. I urge the Committee in looking at these various reports to think carefully about how they have been framed. Similarly, in the State infrastructure report of 2014 we have not only apples and oranges but apples, oranges and watermelons. The Powerhouse—

The CHAIR: They are running The Greens, so we are told.

Ms SANDERS: And I am not referring to The Greens, I am sorry.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Green all the way through, nice red tinge.

Ms SANDERS: The Powerhouse is depicted with a really nice little pictogram of a locomotive and it is said that it had 0.5 million visitors in 2013-2014. Again it does not include the offsite visitors to the Powerhouse Museum which makes a total of 1,046,998. Yet other institutions were given the benefit of including the figures of their offsite, non-location visitors. I guess I am saying that what is really wonderful about this inquiry is that I hope there will be a much more transparent, much more intellectually rigorous, much more historically founded assessment of the best plan for culture in this State.

You will have heard that there are such fantastic possibilities. I have a number of papers that relate to that. So I really hope this will be the outcome of the inquiry because the Premier's vision is really laudable. It is fantastic to create a cultural beacon. But out of that, with proper consultation, with the advice of experts and people who understand the business—and you have heard a wonderful range today—you can achieve that in a way that reaches across New South Wales without destroying what is one of the world's recognised great museums.

Dr COCHRANE: By the way, the Migration Heritage Centre was forced to close in 2013. My understanding is that that was as a casualty of budget cuts.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Mr Pappas, in your opening statement you tell it as it is, as you do in your very powerful submission. Can you tell us why the trustee simply put their hand up and complied with the Government? Why do you think that has happened?

Mr PAPPAS: I was not there and I would not impute motives to people I do not know. All I can say is what I have seen and that is a failure to act as proper custodians of a collection should. Cultural institutions have a sense of place, anywhere in the world, particularly ones that have been there for 130 years. They are attached to their place. They are rooted in their place. You cannot lift them and transplant them to another place and expect them to thrive. It will not work. Yes, you can cut off an offshoot and plant it and it will grow and

blossom into something hopefully of the scale of the father or the mother. Why trustees have not embarked on that process at all and have just been captive to the whim of government I cannot answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How long were you on the board in one capacity or another, Mr Pappas?

Mr PAPPAS: It was from 1999 to 2010—12 years inclusive.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And in all that time did you ever have anything that approached the behaviour of a representative of—did you say Premier and Cabinet or Finance?

Mr PAPPAS: Trade and Investment.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Trade and Investment. Did you ever have a representative of Trade and Investment come in to your board and make a statement along the lines of "it would be counterproductive if you did X, Y or Z"?

Mr PAPPAS: Never. And we had an equally bizarre proposal put before us in 2006, as some of you might remember, to merge the Powerhouse with the Australian Museum, which was flavour of the month for a couple of years. It was only because of the actions of the robust trust that I was fortunate enough to lead that that was blocked, supported by a wonderful constituency of volunteers and staff from both institutions who were prepared to speak out and prevented what would have been a bizarre outcome—to merge two totally different cultural institutions, each with their own history and pedigree.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: As a trust I suppose you recognise that to a large extent you are dependent upon the goodwill of the government of the day to keep providing you with basic funding. There is that degree of understanding—is that right?

Mr PAPPAS: And there is a balancing exercise there, of course. For our recurrent and capital funding we are dependent. But we are trustees under a statutory trust for that very purpose—to separate us from the whim of government from time to time, because governments occasionally get it wrong.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The statement to a trust that is largely dependent on government funding that it would be counterproductive to oppose the move I imagine would be read by most board members as, "Our funding and our security might be at risk here."

Mr PAPPAS: Or our tenure as trustees.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And what is the position in terms of tenure as trustees?

Mr PAPPAS: Under the Act there are three-year terms—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: They cannot be sacked.

Mr PAPPAS: They can be removed by the Governor on the advice of the Premier.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It does not happen. I cannot recall it happening.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So that is the situation—on the advice of the Premier.

Mr PAPPAS: Well, I cannot recall Mr Patterson or anyone like him appearing before the trust either.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What would you have done if that had happened in your trust meeting that you were chairing?

Mr PAPPAS: I would have done precisely what we did between 2006 and 2008, and that is lead a public campaign to maintain the integrity of the institution. And thankfully we won.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And probably throw Mr Patterson out on his ear if he makes that sort of proposition to a board meeting.

Mr PAPPAS: Respectfully.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: There has been a bit of criticism levelled at the current trustees and the chairman from yesterday. I am sure that he is keen to come in and address that. I am just looking at the Act. I am coming from the context of having been a trustee for two years on Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust. Every day we looked at the Act and our charter and what our responsibilities were to work out where we stood. The Act does not talk about the requirement to be at Pyrmont—sorry, at Ultimo.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am not laughing.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It was called the Pymont Powerhouse—that is where the confusion occurs.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: We were not laughing, sir.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Pymont-Ultimo was the suburb name for many years.

Ms SANDERS: Excuse me. To be correct, it was the Ultimo power station. There was a separate Pymont power station.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I was not asking questions of you, but thank you.

Dr COCHRANE: Oh, really?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Mr Pappas, the Act does not talk about requiring it to stay in its current location. It does not talk about museum location. The Act requires:

- (i) the display of selected objects arranged to illustrate the industrial advance of civilisation and the development of inventions and manufactures,
- (ii) the promotion of craftsmanship and artistic taste by illustrating the history and development of the applied arts,
- (iii) lectures, broadcasts, films, publications and other educational means,
- (iv) scientific research, or
- (v) any other means necessary or desirable for the development of the natural resources and manufacturing industries of New South Wales.

There is no requirement to stay in Ultimo or in that building. The trustees could interpret that to say that there is a great opportunity for a new audience in Western Sydney. Professor Barney Glover said that yesterday. Would you not agree that the board of trustees could interpret it in that way?

Mr PAPPAS: The obligation on the trustees to have regard to the history of the Ultimo site is not rooted in the Act.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is not in the Act.

Mr PAPPAS: It is not in the Act. It is a founding principle of museums across the world that they have a sense of place.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: But you are talking about their responsibilities as trustees under the Act. You said that.

Mr PAPPAS: The Act being exactly as you describe is the reason we have a major Castle Hill facility, which people overlook. It was one of the first open storage facilities across the world.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: But you agree with me that the Act does not require them to defend the site of the museum.

Mr PAPPAS: Have you been to our Castle Hill site?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Yes, I have. I went to the AIDS Memorial Quilt unveiling there.

Mr PAPPAS: It is the reason we look after the Sydney Observatory and have it within our custodial care. Of course the Act does not prescribe our geographical territory. It would be foolish to do that, but that does not—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I come back to my point. I was a trustee before I was in Parliament. We understood very clearly the responsibilities under the Act: to promote public access to Centennial Park and to protect the parklands as much as we could. There is a very clear definition of what the trustees are to do. The Act does not talk about protecting or maintaining the Powerhouse Museum site. You could interpret (v) as being an invitation to look at new opportunities.

Mr PAPPAS: A statutory trust that oversees parklands that are obviously attached to a geographical location is hardly analogous to a museum trust. There is no comparison, with respect. I will debate you on that any time.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I guarantee you that there are plenty of those discussions.

Dr COCHRANE: It is a question of responsibility.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is not in the Act. That is why am making the point.

Mr PAPPAS: We can see that—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The trust and the chairman have been wrongly accused of not following the requirements for the trust. I cannot see where in the Act it says that he has the responsibility. He was accused not only by you but by other speakers earlier today.

Mr PAPPAS: I will make clear what the trust has been accused of by me.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Please.

Mr PAPPAS: It has failed, as the body with custody of the heritage and integrity of the museum, to properly deliberate on the pros and cons of this process. There has been no analysis by the trustees. That is precisely the reason Professor Shine is not here today.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Are you saying that, if we set aside the issue of the building, it meets the requirements for moving to a new location?

Mr PAPPAS: I made the point earlier that there is no example that I know of in the world where a museum of this age, integrity and international standing has been moved holus-bolus from its traditional location to another location. The undeniable trend around the world is to establish satellite branches of museums.

Ms SANDERS: I will add to that, having supplied a submission on moving museums. I now table some background information that illustrates the models of either establishing a satellite or building a museum from a new community—like Parramatta—nurtured and homegrown. There are plenty of examples of where that works. I added an additional example, which is the Louvre, the national museum of France. It put out a tender to see which region in France would like to have a satellite of the Louvre, where its collection would be displayed. The Pas-de-Calais region was successful and offered five sites for its location. The director of the Louvre and the head of that region worked together to build a museum to showcase the very best of the Louvre's collection.

A number of people talked about that model today. It also allowed the local region to benefit. Since then, the former coalmining area of Lens—and please forgive my French; it is very un-French—has become a UNESCO listed site because of that cultural boost. The then director of the Louvre was Monsieur Henri Loyrette, whom I was fortunate enough to take around the Powerhouse Museum when he visited in 2005. The reason I invited him was that we had sent, just the year before, our suite of furniture by Thomas Hope, who is one of the great Regency designers, to an exhibition in the Louvre entitled *Egyptomania*. He was absolutely amazed at the Powerhouse Museum. The interiors, the collections and the displays in the building were truly inspiring to him. Those sorts of connections are important.

I have moved away from the notion of satellites and homegrown museums, but there are plenty of examples. Yesterday Ms Macgregor gave the example of the Brooklyn Museum, saying that it attracts people from Manhattan to Brooklyn. But there is a big difference between what is proposed here for the Powerhouse and the origins of the Brooklyn Museum. The Brooklyn Museum was founded in 1823 by the citizens of Brooklyn, who aspired to build a world-class museum. With the support of the citizens and the borough, the museum was built. There have been two recent exercises in developing that institution so that it is now a drawcard. It is a museum that is of Brooklyn, by Brooklyn. It is a perfect example of what Parramatta, which has the most extraordinary history, cultures and potential, can achieve.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We have heard the current space at the Powerhouse Museum described as dark, cavernous, not fit for purpose and limited by heritage constraints. I cannot imagine three people with more experience of working with the space than you. What are your observations about it as a museum space and whether it is fit for purpose?

Ms SANDERS: I found that unrealistic. The fact is that over the years the museum has been a leader in presenting exhibitions and new technologies in that space. I can remember going down into the nose-cone of the space shuttle when the *Voyager* satellite was flying past Neptune. I could stand in that space shuttle with lots of schoolchildren and watch the footage beamed straight back from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA] into that shuttle. It is such a flexible museum. You can create theatre; you can create drama. We were one of the first museums to use three-dimensional immersive technology for visitors when we presented the exhibition on the Great Wall of China—which came about because of the memorandum of understanding. A whole wall was the Great Wall of China, from the coast to the middle of the Gobi desert. It was an immersive experience in one of the Switch Galleries.

When we presented the exhibition about the marbles from Greece, as a celebration of the Olympic Games, we used the most sophisticated technology to bring to life the ancient games, using computers, et cetera. In an exhibition about the decorative arts we could create a sense of how glassmaking was done. We also had a

fantastic exhibition about a local circus company. The Flying Lotahs did a trapeze act in the Turbine Hall above the crowd on the floor. A motorbike was ridden across a line between the two planes. It was absolutely outstanding. So I simply do not give any credit to the idea that the Powerhouse Museum is ill-fitted for its purpose. It is the most wonderful canvas. From the tiny to the giant, you can do it there.

Dr COCHRANE: I am sure everyone has either visited or heard of the Museum of Old and New Art [MONA] in Tasmania. It is the museum of sex and death. It is the darkest, spookiest, creepiest place you have ever been. It is the greatest tourist attraction in Tasmania ever. When that remark was made earlier, some of my colleagues reminded me that many museum objects have to be very carefully displayed with controlled lighting.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Every museum would probably be guilty of being dark because it has to be.

Dr COCHRANE: It has to be.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am agreeing with you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We have heard from some witnesses that you cannot create a new institution that is world-class. MONA is only a little over a decade old, but it is an example of how a museum of energy, innovation and creativity that responds to its place can become an almost instant overnight success if it is done properly.

Dr COCHRANE: Yes, except that it was not a State collection that came from somewhere else; it was a personal collection on very personal themes. He adapted a house that had been built at another time. He put it all underground and it is right next to a river so it is very dangerous and he did that because he did not believe that culture should always go up. He is a very controversial person but it is a very effective museum and people love it, despite its darkness and spookiness.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And despite it only being four or five years in that place you can create—

Dr COCHRANE: It is more than that, I think, and his collection is older than that. It is a personal collection too; it is not a State collection.

The CHAIR: I visited it six years ago and what is even more exciting is that he has a boutique brewery on-site.

Dr COCHRANE: He does indeed; a great income generator.

The CHAIR: That is right.

Ms SANDERS: Can I just pick up a point that Mr Pappas made about the custodianship because I do not think it has been addressed enough? There was a question yesterday about it. Somebody asked—forgive me for not realising who—about how the acquisitions in the museum are acquired; where the funding comes from. Of course, benefactors are incredibly important in building up a museum's collection. I worked with the collection ever since I started there and I cannot tell you how important it is that benefactors, both of large objects, of small objects, of low value, of high value, are the lifeblood of a museum.

Since 1984 the collection at the Powerhouse—and this is not a final figure because the records are not entirely complete—more than \$20 million worth of acquisitions or sponsorship has helped build that collection. Over that time of government recurrent funds only \$6 million has had to be used to build the collection so you can see how significant it is. The consequences of the Government's lack of foresight and lack of planning are that benefactors who would hitherto have given significant valuable bequests, I am talking millions of dollars worth, have told me personally that they are now changing their wills; in fact have changed their wills, and those collections will go to the National Gallery of Australia or the National Gallery of Victoria.

The State is losing. The reason they have given me is because they see that the Government has held them in disdain by its treatment of one of the State's most important collections that has only got the value that it has because of the people of New South Wales and sometimes outside New South Wales, beyond this country. Some of our benefactors have been from overseas. They do not have the confidence in the institution because of the way that it is being treated by the Government. For the board to not understand that in their custodial responsibilities is lamentable.

People give to an institution. They recognise the museum for what it is. They go there; they experience. They do not give to a line on a piece of paper. They want confidence in that institution and that has been eroded and I am afraid that with a number of potential benefactors it will never be regained. This is really irresponsible

behaviour because the collection does not belong to the Government; it belongs to the people of New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Were there ever examples that you are aware of where the museum had to reject an exhibition or refuse to collaborate with somebody because the space was inadequate or it could not be accommodated?

Ms SANDERS: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Was that ever the case?

Ms SANDERS: There might have been a reason to reject it because of clashes in timetables but if I think back to the variety of exhibitions, some high-tech, some low-tech, one of the most successful exhibitions that the museum ever mounted was the five Faberge eggs that belong to the Romanov family. It was very simple. Someone said yesterday that objects in glass cases have had their day and that you need lots of high-tech wizardry, which of course the Powerhouse can accommodate but in the end the museum is about the original, authentic object.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And it is flexible enough to have those small intimate spaces?

Ms SANDERS: Flexible, absolutely.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And also the large display spaces.

Ms SANDERS: Yes. There was another exhibition called Knights from Imperial Austria where you walked into that front gallery and in fact the people from the collection in Austria said it had never been presented better. I do not know if members of the Committee are familiar with the main galleria space but as you walked through this exhibition, which was of the Arms and Armour collection from the major Austrian collection, they were against a sky. It was the most vivid and graphic representation of that exhibition there ever could be. A museum which can display locomotives and the beam engine, which is one of the most important artefacts in the world, hang Catalinas such that instead of looking—and I apologise to my colleague Dr Sharp because he was director of the science museum, but there their planes are hanging about to dive into a column—you walk into that view of the boiler hall, it is a flight. It is a flight of aviation.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It does not feel like a disaster waiting to happen?

Ms SANDERS: Yes, it is the most inspiring representation from the Bleriot through to the Royal Flying Doctor Service through to the Catalina.

The CHAIR: Not to mention Dick Smith's helicopter

Ms SANDERS: Yes.

Dr COCHRANE: One of the observations that I would like to make about whether you can put on exhibitions or something could be taken and some that could not are the ones that have not actually been able to remain because a museum like that, in most of our views, needs some collection-based exhibitions—that might change—that show science and technology, decorative arts and design, social history and so on and permanent collection exhibitions telling interesting stories, fascinating stories, not just display storage the way it used to be and also have temporary exhibition spaces.

In the last 10 years there has been a reduction of funding for programs. One of the repercussions has been, as I mentioned before, halving of staff numbers. Another has been the reduction of funding that makes it more difficult to actually put exhibitions on or carry out programs with them. There have been some amazing exhibitions and colleagues behind me have done that, but one of the repercussions was that the exhibition program has changed so that some permanent collection-based exhibitions came out in favour of temporary exhibitions that would bring in finance. I think that has been very compromising to the reputation of the museum. It is famous for its collection. It is also famous for the way it presents things. Of course it brings in exhibitions and of course it sends them out but it has been suffering from that reduction in program funding, wouldn't you say?

Ms SANDERS: It is a challenge.

Dr COCHRANE: It is definitely a challenge. One of the things that was recognised by a previous director was that the museum needed to expand its space adjacent somewhere but definitely in the city linked to the museum just so that there could be the possibility for those incoming exhibitions as well as collection-based exhibitions. I do not think the solution is to separate bits of the collection and dump them out in other places because they are an integral part of the whole and it needs to be mixed and matched in different ways from different times but that reduction in funding has been hugely detrimental to this museum, I know also to the

Australian Museum, and I am quite sure it is the same with others that have been suffering what is known as the efficiency dividend.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for coming today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

MICHAEL ROLFE, Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW, affirmed and examined

JENNIFER BARRETT, Chair, Board of Museums and Galleries of NSW

The CHAIR: Welcome, Mr Rolfe and Dr Barrett. Thank you very much for coming. Do you have an opening statement?

Dr BARRETT: As Chair of Museums and Galleries of NSW I work at the University of Sydney. I am the Director of Culture Strategy in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor in the University of Sydney. I have also been the Director of Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of Sydney on and off since 2001. My recent position takes me into a different role at the university. I have also worked as the Deputy Director of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. My experience before that was also in the cultural sector with NSW Community Arts Association and also in local government. I think I was way too young to be there but I was there several decades ago as an arts officer.

Museums and Galleries of NSW is a service organisation funded by Arts NSW to develop, support and promote regional, community and public museums and galleries across New South Wales. Our support for the sector also encompasses working with artist-run spaces and Aboriginal cultural centres and keeping places throughout the State. Museums and Galleries NSW supports professional staff and volunteers who work in these organisations and with these audiences.

We have a special allegiance to the tiny, the volunteer, Western Sydney, the regional and the remote. As our submission to this committee indicates, Museums and Galleries of NSW has several specific programs that address these particular needs. Museums and Galleries of NSW's strategy and structure recognises the inherent differences, demands and audiences of the sector across the State. To meet these diverse needs we are involved with program delivery, exhibition touring, professional skill development, sector research, small-grant devolved funding programs, and Aboriginal cultural development projects.

Everything we do is designed to improve skills and participation. We work towards growing and promoting the sector activity. We support cultural heritage and the visual arts in the metropolitan and regional areas of New South Wales. Key to that is the integrity of the sector and the integrity of the work that is being done in the sector. In addition to responding to Create in NSW: NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework, our work is well informed by consultation with the sector and from advice provided by selected industry peers, sector representation organisations such as Regional and Public Galleries of NSW and with Museums Australia. We also have very important partner relationships with New South Wales major cultural institutions and local government in New South Wales.

We are a not-for-profit company governed by a skills-based board. Our board has experience that includes a local government general manager, an elected representative from a regional council, a director of a national museum, a director of a regional gallery, heritage consultants working in regional New South Wales, consultants for the public sector, a communications specialist with a major bank and also an academic researching in this field. So it is a diverse board servicing a diverse sector in New South Wales. We welcome this opportunity to talk with you further about the review process.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What was your involvement, if any, before the decision by the Government was made, and as the decision was being made, to relocate the Powerhouse Museum.

Dr BARRETT: Our organisation?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes.

Dr BARRETT: Our organisation has not been involved in the discussion with the Government about the proposed move.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Rolfe, have there been any discussions with you?

Mr ROLFE: Not at all. Our brief is to work with the small-to-medium sector in New South Wales as a service organisation. We are not involved in Government decision-making about major cultural institutions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There have been concerns raised about the capacity of smaller or medium-sized regional galleries to physically house travelling exhibitions. Some of the facilities are older and have maintenance issues. There are questions about the conditions of the galleries—the staffing and the like. Are these concerns that are raised regularly with you by your member organisations?

Dr BARRETT: They are raised regularly by organisations that we service. We are not a membership based organisation.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Sorry.

Dr BARRETT: That is okay; I realise that you are all getting used to what happens in the sector. That is fine.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Three different museums and galleries organisations.

Dr BARRETT: The board has recently been on a tour to Wollongong and Shellharbour. We saw there—it was just last week—a wide range of experiences in that area. Some organisations are well equipped. Those that are supported well by local governments certainly fare better. There were also several small heritage history collections that were relying on a volunteer sector that was stressed and stretched to the limit. So, yes, there are variable sorts of experiences in the sector, and we do get asked to assist. Certainly, some groups apply to us for funding and some groups actually do not have the skills base necessarily to apply for funding. We do try to network in ways across various regions in order to support the sector.

Mr ROLFE: But in terms of touring exhibitions, it is not one size fits all.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: No, we have heard that.

Mr ROLFE: The State's regional galleries offer quite sophisticated environmental and presentation security controls. Generally, that is not an issue; they are able to take touring shows. The smaller museums can, most cannot. They are more focused, and our work with them is more focused, on telling their stories. That is where we find that the support we can provide is best focused.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In terms of the support from local government, from the evidence that we have been hearing it seems to me that there are two reasons that local governments are putting the money and investment into local or regional galleries. One is historical—so a previous council has made a resolution and established a regionally important gallery and they continue to fund it as part of their business. The other reason is when you have some individual, either on the council or in the arts community or the museum space in the area, who basically forces it to happen by their own volition. Would that be a fair summary? It is not so much a strategic, statewide plan but more an accident of history or a result of personality.

Mr ROLFE: Yes. I am a supporter of a statewide plan, but I am not sure that it is an issue of having a plan to enable that to happen. Historically it has been aspirational. If you go back to Broken Hill in excess of 100 years ago, that was the first public gallery in New South Wales outside of the Art Gallery of NSW, I think—but certainly the first regional gallery—and it was really aspirational. It was about a collection that was given to the community and there was a sense of prominence that the city had. Tamworth was the second, and it has a similar story. Significant collections were given to Tamworth City Council, and there was an impetus that was both supported by council and the community to grow the gallery.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Broken Hill is a great example of why a plan would be fundamentally important going forward, because at the time council was flush with cash, it had a booming mining economy. It is now facing significant deficits and it has trouble meeting basic costs. That is a case in point about why a plan and a statewide strategy would really support it.

Mr ROLFE: I do not disagree with you. We are talking about 100 years ago, and the idea of planning these things probably was not a concept. The point I am making is that they have grown from community, and they have grown from community aspiration. That is the case with the majority of regional galleries. More recently, with the Murray Art Museum Albury [MAMA] in Albury and with the Margaret Olley Art Centre in Tweed, there has been a plan. It is very much understood that these places are contributors. The councils are focused on that, and that is where the planning benefits begin to kick in.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The evidence we heard there was that strong local identities pushed and made it happen, rather than some grand plan.

Dr BARRETT: There is an unevenness here where often in local governments you might get, for instance, a local government aspiring to have a particular kind of profile and it will see a gallery as the answer. It might have a fantastically strong heritage and history collection, but there is not necessarily the support available through the State Government, for instance. I could see where maybe addressing some of those issues could be useful across the State. Certainly I think it is generally agreed that there is a difference in how the history and heritage sector is supported through State planning and programs, as distinct from galleries. There is certainly some work that could be done there.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Rolfe, are you familiar with the State Government's \$600 million Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Fund?

Mr ROLFE: Yes, I have heard about it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: No-one has ever seen it.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you making representations to it or talking about it with your members?

Mr ROLFE: We have been talking about it. We have been talking about Mary Darwell, who was the executive director of Arts NSW and who has recently gone to Infrastructure NSW. We have made representation to her with regard to an infrastructure plan that is currently underway. I believe we have also talked to our constituents about what might be possible.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What are their views? What do they want to see?

Mr ROLFE: Like everyone else, we do the sums. We see that an amount has been allocated here and there, and you then begin to think, "Well, what is left?" If there is an amount of money then it would be wonderful if it was regional in Western Sydney. We are still to see how all of that falls out.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Already \$202 million has been allocated from it for the Sydney Opera House, so a third has already gone.

Mr ROLFE: That is right. There have been further conversations about the actual price for the poles and wires. We have picked up on conversations about sports stadiums that indicate that there might be more money for that. There are a number of local councils that have their eye on the ball and have projects that they are talking about. They see opportunities to benefit from allocations that come from that fund.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you think the arts gets a fair shake as against sport when it comes to funding from the State Government?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: From any government.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We will start with the State Government.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Particularly this Government.

Mr ROLFE: No, like a lot of people I do not.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In terms of the analysis that we have heard before about bang for your buck, particularly when it comes to tourists, the tourists coming for art and cultural events seem to greatly outspend tourists coming for sporting events. Do you think there is almost a backward economic analysis that sees the over allocation of funding for sports rather than arts?

Dr BARRETT: I would like to switch the question around, if you do not mind. Because the question you are asking—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Answer it however you like, Dr Barrett.

Dr BARRETT: The question you are asking has been asked many times before. For decades there has been tension around sports and art, and it has not really helped us. There might be another way to look at this and look at the opportunities lost by not putting money into cultural institutions so that you can improve not just tourism but also the life of communities. Rather than seeing it as being an oppositional thing, I think that strategy has not been effective.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I agree it can be a very damaging debate when you say you want to destroy one thing to produce another.

Dr BARRETT: Yes. In one of the earlier submissions we heard that sort of dichotomy being presented in a way that really also did not recognise the cultural pursuits and so on of different communities. I would try to avoid that particular approach.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: How did you come to be aware of the Powerhouse Museum moving to Parramatta?

Dr BARRETT: Read it in the paper.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What was your reaction to the proposal?

Dr BARRETT: I will be really frank, the board has not discussed the pros or cons of the move except what the board has discussed is a concern about process, concern about integrity of the collections, concern about the professional staff. I cannot help but have my academic hat on here too, but it has been mentioned earlier that science specificity does inform the way collections are interpreted. The University of Sydney has an amazing collection as part of the Macleay Museum. The site does inform how the collection is interpreted.

However, that is not to say that you cannot find new meaning from new sites. As I said, our board has not discussed the issue of the Powerhouse in the way you are proposing.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Your submission is very helpful. Point 4 states:

Move needs to ensure that MAAS's **current mission and mandate** – to be Australia's preeminent contemporary museum for excellence and innovation in applied arts and sciences – **are maintained** and that the **integrity of the collection is guaranteed**.

That is not at odds with the trust's position in being supportive of the opportunity to move to Parramatta.

Dr BARRETT: I am not familiar with the trust's position. But with these sorts of presentations there is often a lot of other material behind them. I would have to look at what has been said. However, it has not been taken to the board.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I have not been to the board, so that is the management's considered position.

Mr ROLFE: The position is that if the move has been decided—and it appears that it has—then that is our position. However, we are most concerned that the integrity of the museum and the collection is protected.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The next point you make relates to the opportunities that come from it. We heard evidence of that yesterday. The submission states:

Proposed move signals an opportunity to recast the museum business model to one based on **free general admission**, for both MAAS and the Australian Museum.

Do you think this can relate to that? The MCA did that and there was short-term pain and then gain.

Mr ROLFE: It is important when moving and establishing yourself in a new demographic. Edmund Capon from the Gallery of New South Wales is remembered for many quotes, but one relates to entry fees. When they were mooted for the gallery he said, "Let them in and they can pay to get out." There are all sorts of opportunities. If you are looking to establish yourself in a new community, you do not want to put up barriers to people participating.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is the hostage funding model.

Mr ROLFE: Not at all. But there are merchandising, cafes and all sorts of other options.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: A good example is the Botanic Gardens annex at Mount Tomah. The O'Farrell Government removed the entry fees and the visitation rate quadrupled.

Mr ROLFE: And MCA, as you pointed out. It is an opportunity to do that. As a professional in the sector, I think it is imminently sensible. There are also costs associated with collecting entry fees.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you bring people in and inspire them about the institution and the collection, and then you have an opportunity to talk to them about coffee, tea and collectables.

Mr ROLFE: You encourage their ownership and sense of belonging.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I will move away from the Powerhouse issue. I am a big supporter of local government, and I believe its role in arts and culture in the community is underappreciated. How can we encourage that role to be more structured in local government? It ebbs and flows with the nature of the councillors. One big arts advocate gets involved and there are changes. I would also like you to address certainty of funding. The Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre had short-term funding. It then received a three-year grant and that gave it a lot more certainty. I am sure you are advocates in this area. What is happening?

Mr ROLFE: There are two issues. Of course, local government is a political process. As you would all appreciate, policies and approaches vary from administration to administration and from government to government. We work closely with Local Government NSW to ensure that the concerns of our constituency are addressed. The Committee heard from Dr Sally Watterson earlier, who is a museum professional in this area. We work to ensure that our voice is heard. State Government funding has various tiers. Galleries and museums can apply for a three-year support program. Those that are successful benefit from the certainty involved in knowing that that amount of money is available over that period.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Can you outline the tiers and the certainty of funding?

Mr ROLFE: The tiers are project-based as an entry. Then there is access to annual program funding and then triennial funding. Organisations like MCA and Carriageworks are able to negotiate their funding. I have observed a logic and it works reasonably well from my experience over 26 years of applying for grants—somewhat successfully. The logic is that the project allows you to establish yourself and to effectively acquit

what you said you were going to do with the money. There is also annual program funding, which allows you to further establish. Of course, three years of funding recognises the value of what you are doing.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is a progression?

Mr ROLFE: Yes.

Dr BARRETT: It is, but I would like to go back to the unevenness in the sector and the way that programs have been set up. Again, there are the smaller history museums that do not necessarily have a professional, but there is a connection to the council. Those areas need some sort of support. We can provide some of that through Museums and Galleries NSW, but if those communities and organisations want to move to the next step there are issues. It would be useful to look at the disparity between the different levels of organisations that are receiving funding.

You can look at ways to assist those organisations or local government so that even we could help more effectively in some regional areas. Then they can help their local government or their local government can help them more effectively. It is about building capacity in communities to look after what they have, but also to develop opportunities. We have consistently seen a great deal of unevenness when we have been to regional areas in New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: By and large, local government is a good custodian and a good-faith partner in terms of museums and regional art spaces, is it not?

Dr BARRETT: It is, but that does not mean it cannot be better.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I asked about a state-wide plan because you spoke about unevenness. One way of avoiding that, or partly ameliorating that, would be to have a state-wide plan and architecture. Surely that is the role of the State Government?

Dr BARRETT: It is. From my experience, local communities often want to determine their own destiny. What you need to manage is that difference between the local and the state. You could do something that is effectively to two-tiered. It is all in the implementation.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: When you are working with a local government area that has a significant regional gallery, no doubt there is a long and detailed process involved in making major changes. You work with bureaucrats and the community, you produce some option papers, you report publicly to council meetings, and sometimes there is a public debate. Sometimes there are two or three council meetings. Then you finally get a decision. Is it fair to say that it is a lengthy, thorough and rigorous process?

Mr ROLFE: It is a difficult birth. That is the analogy. Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre was mentioned earlier. I was the inaugural director of the gallery. I came on board just after that process, but I know about the political and community tussle. A great deal of enthusiasm was generated by its arrival.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But it is public.

Mr ROLFE: Yes, it is public.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The public gets to comb through the figures, the councillors are involved in a public debate about the costings and the business case, and then a decision is made. Normally it is a good decision. Hazelhurst is a case in point.

Mr ROLFE: Yes, it is. It was a good decision, and it was a great project.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Given that perspective, do you not find it remarkable that the next level up—the State Government—has done none of that in terms of public engagement, openness with figures, development of a business case, and public scrutiny when we are talking about one of the State's premier institutions, the Powerhouse. The difference between the competence and openness of local government and the way the State Government has gone about implementing the proposal for the Powerhouse must strike you as peculiar.

Mr ROLFE: We have not been involved.

Dr BARRETT: There are many state cultural institutions that many of us would like to know more about. It would be great to see all of our cultural institutions being transparent about their funding pathways and various strategies.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One snippet of the evidence from yesterday was that the Government is in the process of developing its business case for the Powerhouse Museum having already made the decision to

relocate it. Is that the kind of decision-making you experience in your day-to-day engagement with local government, that it retrospectively attaches a business case to a decision?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: If it is an election commitment by a council team it might well be the case.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question was not really to you, Mr Mallard.

Dr BARRETT: Last week with Shellharbour council we saw the museum and library complex being built and they are in a state of flux because they do not quite know what is going to be the outcome of their proposed amalgamation with Wollongong.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is not their fault; they are being merged by the State Government. The State Government acts badly on a variety of levels.

Dr BARRETT: My point is more that people have plans and then other things come in. Our organisation has had a very robust strategic planning process. I can talk to you about that, if you like.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Tell me why you did that. What is the benefit of strategic planning when you are talking about cultural institutions and prized institutions for the State?

Mr ROLFE: We do that so that our work is focused. We do that for the purpose of applying, as other service organisations do, to Arts NSW. Museums and Galleries of NSW has successfully done that now since 1998, every three years. Through a period of review where we were confirmed we do that, yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You would expect no less of an institution like the State Government when it is making a decision about something as important as the Powerhouse, surely?

Dr BARRETT: It would be great if we had integrity across the board.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Are you the umbrella organisation for the 500 or so small to medium sized museums and galleries?

Dr BARRETT: We are a service organisation. Many of those are our constituents, yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You have the terms of reference for this inquiry. We have heard from a number of other organisations about their consultation process with their constituent members. I was just wondering what your process was.

Mr ROLFE: Our process was to draft a response, to discuss amongst staff, to distribute that through our museum adviser network and through to regional public galleries, to receive feedback and to settle it. But it was also based on the work that we have been doing and some of the recommendations considering strategically what would be a good outcome for the sector as a result of this process, particularly by mentioning the focus on the centres of excellence as a way of distributing the resources closer to the need in a regional context as an example of that.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Regional and Public Galleries NSW and Museums Australia sent a survey to all of their members to ask their views. Did you do that?

Mr ROLFE: No, we did not do that. I am a member of the Museums Australia National Council and we are members of the Museums Australia New South Wales branch and we did not receive that survey.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Okay. Under the first dot point you outline a range of priorities that you would like to see implemented. Is this the sort of thing that would form part of your strategic plan for the next 10 years or so?

Mr ROLFE: Our strategic plan covers up until the end of 2018.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Would some of these things be in it, is my question?

Mr ROLFE: Some of these things are in it. Some of these things are further out. We are in a position of having to reapply next year for our next three years of funding. Certainly the outcomes of this inquiry, should they be adopted by Government, would form a lot of the narrative and intention of where we go from here.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: To me there are some great ideas here. As you of course are aware, Mr Rolfe, because we have spoken before, I am particularly focused on how we can promote regional arts and culture through museums and galleries. Do you think it is important that we have a greater focus on museums and galleries within the regions?

Mr ROLFE: A greater and a sharper focus, absolutely.

Dr BARRETT: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Why is that?

Mr ROLFE: Because it needs that care and concern in order to bring to fruition the potential that exists and the concern and the history and the capacity of these places to work within their communities. There is a lot to harness that requires that focus and attention.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Do you accept that they are very important parts of the community in terms of identity, being economic drivers for tourism and so forth?

Mr ROLFE: And they are wellness contributors. They are significant economic generators but they are also important for communities' sense of belonging and sense of wellness.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: We hear comments like Mr Shoebridge made about numbers of community museums that have less than desirable infrastructure. I have heard of some that do not have kitchens, bathrooms or meeting rooms and so forth. You would argue that there should be a greater governmental focus on support for museums and galleries in regional New South Wales. Is that fair?

Mr ROLFE: Absolutely.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One of the great pleasures of travelling around New South Wales is poking into all of the nooks and crannies and seeing the little local history museums. I said before that just next door there is the gorgeous Nightingale museum that I would encourage members to look at. They are often small and not highly visible but they are holding fundamentally important parts of our history and culture. Do you think that there is almost an obligation for one State government at some point to say that we need a one-off statewide capital investment to bring them all up to speed and to promote them? Do we need to set aside some funds and bring them all up to scratch as a statewide initiative?

Mr ROLFE: It should be ongoing.

Dr BARRETT: It would be great if it was not just a one-term government plan but if there was some kind of across-the-board commitment over the longer term.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But there is such a backlog that it needs a one-off big spend and then a commitment onwards to maintain, do you think?

Dr BARRETT: But it also needs to be planned. That is also where the professionals in the sector need to be involved with that. They are the ones who know about museum planning, they know about caring for collections, they know about what it would take to bring a collection into a safer context in terms of environmental conditions and research that is required around it. We are talking a lot of work here. We have got a lot of communities that need that sort of assistance across the State.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We come back to the absence of a plan and not sitting down and working out what the fundamental needs are across the sector. We come back to the absence of a plan, do we not?

Dr BARRETT: Sure, and I think some of the principles in setting up such a plan need to involve the sector very closely. We need to have people who have the experience in working with collections and with museum and gallery development.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The point you were making before is that the State cannot impose a plan, particularly because there is so much local regional ownership. It needs to be a partnership.

Dr BARRETT: It needs to be a partnership but you still need to have that commitment from a State. It would be fantastic if we had it over a longer period of time. Local, State and Federal governments have been partnering in different ways for decades in this field.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is up and down with the politics and the economy of the day.

Dr BARRETT: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Often when you talk to community organisations you hear about the time and effort involved in doing their pitch for a grant or for their three yearly funding or, increasingly, their 12 monthly funding. They spend the last three months of the year working out their funding for the next 12 months and the first three months accounting for that. So much money, time and energy is spent in accessing grants. Is it part of a complaint in the sector that rather than there being an ongoing commitment there is this ad hoc grant funding?

Mr ROLFE: I guess it depends if you get it or not. It is an issue that comes back about the reporting and the compliance associated, particularly then if you are awarded the grant for a successful project. I do not mind competitive grant processes. I think it forces the applicant to think. There is a competitiveness there that grows the quality of the product. Not everyone can be a winner in that sense. It is a two-edged thing. There is some reluctance about the level of reporting once you have been ordained with success.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is that the case? Is it six months doing something but then the next six months applying for the next round of funding and reporting on your project? Is that an unfair assessment?

Mr ROLFE: No. It is public money. The guidelines under which you are applying are in most cases quite wise and they ensure success means that it is a good project.

Dr BARRETT: Mr Shoebridge, am I picking up another idea where you are talking about the fact that there are areas that are not currently supported, where people do not currently have the capacity to develop an application and therefore get on the radar to get on the ladder of success?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Correct.

Dr BARRETT: So we are talking about maybe again—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is part of your job, is it not?

Dr BARRETT: That is right. Standards are an issue, and certainly that is some of the work that we do across the sector. But of course what we can do in that area is limited by what we have at hand to do that. Networking goes a long way but certainly there are many different ways that standards can be developed across the State, but carefully, with the consideration of the broader sector.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But there might be something that is quaint, quirky, wonderful and irreplaceable but not very professional and they just do not get a look in—is that the case?

Dr BARRETT: Yes, that is the case.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And is that not a tragedy?

Dr BARRETT: Absolutely it is a tragedy. Part of what our organisation has to deal with is the limitations. There are great funds available and we do amazing things with them, but certainly there are other areas that could be developed across the State to support diversity in the way that you are talking about.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Would there be a role for an organisation like yours to be out there proactively identifying those bodies and saying, "This is a fundamentally good thing. They have got this essential need. Can we please just get \$15,000 to fix the roof?" without having to go through a wall of bureaucracy to get it and report on it? Could that not be something you do?

Dr BARRETT: We do not have funds for capital funds so much.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You could be putting them in contact with funds.

Dr BARRETT: Certainly.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: May I ask your opinion on point 1.b) about the impact of local council amalgamations on your organisations? What are your members telling you about that? Are they supportive of the amalgamations or are they worried about them?

Dr BARRETT: Some are and some are not.

Mr ROLFE: Consistently, as I have heard sitting through the hearings yesterday and today, in many respects it is too early to tell. There are concerns about some of the smaller museums falling between the cracks in the context of finding themselves in bigger local government areas, but to some extent those concerns are manifest before amalgamation. It is a problem for those places putting their hands up and screaming, "I need attention." The local government environment does not always pay attention. But we are hearing—and again we heard this morning—that Cumberland Council in Sydney's west is looking at using a large allocation of funds that came through the amalgamation process to build a new cultural facility in Granville. The new Armidale council, Armidale and Guyra, has waived a debt for the New England Regional Art Museum and is looking at contributing funds for recladding and photovoltaic cells for the roof as part of that process. So there are positive stories. Anything particularly negative has not come across our radar yet, although—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Once the money finishes you will hear the horror stories.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is not the answer you wanted, is it?

Mr ROLFE: Dr Barrett mentioned earlier the new Shellharbour museum. There is that tension between Shellharbour and Wollongong. We were visiting there last week. Construction of the new Shellharbour museum is well under way. It looks to be very much part of an ongoing local government involvement there.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: That is very encouraging.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Dr Barrett was talking about some uncertainty there—is that right?

Dr BARRETT: About whether they will be amalgamated or not and what that museum and library would look like if that is the case.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do they know?

Dr BARRETT: No, they do not. They are just proceeding as they planned. They are just going ahead. There is another aspect where there are organisations from local government that are applying for funding and I think some of those organisations are uncertain about—they are being asked to respond to—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: "Will you exist?" is the question the State Government asks them.

Dr BARRETT: Well, people are applying for funds and they are not quite sure which council they will be a part of and also whether they should be seeking further assistance for perhaps a bigger local government area. Many people have been applying for funds as if they are in their current area and there is still that uncertainty about whether they will be amalgamated.

Mr ROLFE: Having worked in a number of councils and most recently Sutherland Shire Council, I found working within a large local government entity to be a breath of fresh air in terms of the capacity to do things and get things done.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You found Sutherland Shire Council to be a breath of fresh air?

Mr ROLFE: No.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It must have been a long time ago.

Mr ROLFE: Working within a council that size.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There is a lot of water down there.

Mr ROLFE: It was a fantastic opportunity personally and professionally to work with an organisation that size, coming from much smaller local government.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: So there are potentially upsides for the arts in having larger councils.

Mr ROLFE: Absolutely.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I have had stakeholders tell me that Sutherland Shire Council has done some excellent work, particularly on its Aboriginal history and oral history.

Dr BARRETT: That would be a standard that would be great to see across the State—if all local governments were supported by the State to look at their Indigenous history.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: But they are not.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And if there is an obvious absence in the statewide cultural institutions, it is that Aboriginal run, Aboriginal focused Aboriginal history museum and cultural institution.

Dr BARRETT: Yes. And we are supporting programs and institutions in that area. It is growing too, so even on our visit to Wollongong last week we met new groups who are also now going to become involved with our network, which is fantastic.

Mr ROLFE: It is perhaps our area of greatest need.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Both in terms of regional and local but also an iconic State institution, would you say?

Mr ROLFE: Across the board. Aboriginal cultural ownership, authorship and stewardship is an important issue for everyone to be considering.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I particularly like the point in your submission in which you say all museums and galleries should be responsible for this and that settler stories are not complete until they recognise the place of the first peoples. It is a point all of us would do well to remember.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I ask you to comment on the observation that when it comes to Aboriginal culture, history and artefacts, that should be under the responsibility, control and ownership of Aboriginal people, should it not?

Mr ROLFE: Absolutely.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Rolfe and Dr Barrett.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(The Committee adjourned at 4:32 p.m.)