

Register of involvement of people with Museum or other significant relevant qualifications in the ‘move’ process

Approx. date	Person	Relevant experience	Written records available	Comment
2014	Ms Macgregor	Art Gallery director	No	Suppose to have examined alternatives, no records available. Has not responded to requests (including registered letter 4 April 2019) to restate her position on the ‘movie’ and gave no response.
Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Alliance	Various.	Some art galleries included	No	Main group with whom Ms Macgregor communicated 2014. Now appear to be defunct. See notes below. Ms Macgregor and the Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Lobby
Mid-2017	Mr Doug Hall	Former Art Gallery director	No	Some involvement was claimed by Mr Harwin at Inquiry 29 August 2017 but no details are available
2015 onwards	Mr Peter Root and staff of Root Partnerships including director Penny Hutchinson	Logisticians, experts on moving exhibits and storage	Yes Sections of Business Case and Inquiry testimony	Considerable paid involvement. Ineligible to be peer reviewers but attended meetings on 7 September and 27 September 2017 in that capacity. Mr Root invoked confidentiality concerns at Inquiry 17 February 2017 and gave no relevant evidence re content of his expert involvement
September 2017	Dr J Patrick Green	Art Gallery director visiting Australia for a few years	no	Attendance at meeting of Peer Advisory Group, aka Peer Advisory Panel, 7 September 2017
September 2017	Professor Durant	CEO Questacon, ACT	no	Attendance at meeting of Peer Advisory Group, aka Peer Advisory Panel, meetings 7

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				and 27 September 2017; a few hours of consultation October . November 2017
September 2018	Various Western Sydney arts groups claimed as supporters by Mr Harwin, Inquiry evidence 12 September	Some art galleries included	No	On investigation we found no involvement in the decision making and only one person mentioned has specifically supported the 'move' idea. See notes on Other Western Sydney Arts Organisations below

General notes on expert involvement

We have continually researched employees of Johnstaff NSW , responsible for the 2017 Business Case and not one of the 130+ employees have any significant museum experience or qualifications and only three had any relevant experience in any related arts field.

On 11 July 2019 Mr Jesse Price, Executive Liaison officer of MAAS, mentioned to me that Johnstaff did indeed have a qualified and experienced museum person working on the project. He promised to get me the details but did not do so even after a reminder email on 22 July. I rang his office several times during late 2019. When he was on holidays his PA said she would endeavour to find these details but did not make further contact with me. Early in 2020 we heard that Mr Price left MAAS for a position at the Australian Energy Regulator.

On Thursday December 5 2019 I had a formal discussion with Ms Havilah, and one area canvassed was our perception that there had been no , or very little, involvement of people with museum experience and qualifications in the whole process, despite Mr Harwin's statement referred to above, and no independent assessment involving people with museum experience and qualifications.

Ms Havilah told me that this need is met by a process called 'Deep Dives' conducted by Infrastructure NSW. Internet searches describe the process but we cannot find any examples of the process in action. So on 11 December we emailed MAAS museum (Mr Price, Ms Havilah), INSW, the Arts Minister Mr Harwin and INSW asking for more information:

We would like as much detail as is readily available on this process. For example, since September 2017, how many such investigations have been carried out? What topics have been covered? How is the membership of such investigatory processes been determined? How is it assured that the assessors do not have pecuniary interests in the projects being assessed?

More importantly for our purposes, how many 'Deep Dives' have been carried out regarding the 'move' of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta?

Please confirm that no such process was carried out before the end of September 2017. We have been seeking this information for the past 3½ years and have demonstrated that the proposed ‘move’ has never been researched.

A reply from INSW, received on 11 Februaryⁱ, simply referred us to the so-called *Final Business Case Summary* of 2 July 2017 and stated that the material was ‘cabinet in confidence’ and could not be divulged. Hence the GIPA application of 5 May 2020.

Ms Macgregor and the Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Lobby

The only record of consultation prior to the announcement came from the Inquiry testimony of Ms Macgregor, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art and designated ‘cultural ambassador to the west’ during 2014. Because this consultation forms a major influence in her initial support for the ‘move’ it is analysed in depth.

In her corrected inquiry evidence she stated: *I was very pleased to discover initially that the arts in Western Sydney had come together. It can be rare in the arts that people come together and lobby for one cause rather than everybody asking for their own bit of the pie. So I met regularly with one group—the Western Sydney lobby groupⁱⁱ.* We assume she meant the **Western Sydney Arts & Cultural Lobby**. The inference from her evidence is that the group recommended, or at least strongly supported, the museum ‘move’.

There are two aspects of all this that must be elucidated: who is this group, and what did they say?

The Western Sydney Arts & Cultural Lobbyⁱⁱⁱ included *Artists, Arts Workers, Bankstown Arts Centre, Bankstown Youth Development Service, Blacktown Arts Centre, Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Cultural Arts Collective, Curiousworks, FORM Dance Projects, Information and Cultural Exchange, Parramatta Artists Studios, Parramatta Riverside Theatres, Peacock Gallery and Auburn Arts Studio, Penrith Performing & Visual Arts, Powerhouse Youth Theatre, Westwords, Writing & Society – UWS, University of Western Sydney and Urban Theatre Project*. In its Inquiry submission it stated that *not all views expressed may necessarily be those of all members of the lobby*.

The lobby has never had a website and does not have an ABN. The most significant member groups are closely associated with the University of Western Sydney, and the major media releases by the WSA&CL were made by Medianet, the same organisation used by UWS. These were:

- November 25, 2014 - *WESTERN SYDNEY ARTS AND CULTURE LOBBY WELCOMES GOVERNMENT FUNDING INITIATIVES FOR THE WEST*, (the day before the Premier announced the Powerhouse ‘move’).
- December 16, 2014: *The Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Lobby has welcomed the release of the NSW Government’s long awaited metropolitan strategy ‘A Plan for Growing Sydney’*. This includes (page 91, our underlining) the statement that *the possible relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta may create further opportunities for enhanced arts and cultural facilities’* but the Premier, over three weeks before, had already announced that the ‘move’ would take place. The timing of this release, almost at the same time as the Government document, suggests that it

may be part of a collusive strategy designed to demonstrate public support for Government projects, with the support of the University of Western Sydney.

- February 26, 2015 - *The Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Lobby today endorsed all recommendations contained in a ground-breaking new study commissioned by Deloitte ...* (this report has been shown to be thoroughly incompetent, see our submission #1, Introduction, page 2, point 2. As to timing of this release, similar comments apply as with the previous paragraph).
- April 6, 2017: Media Alert *It's Time: The NSW Government must look West when funding cultural Infrastructure*. The main point is the imbalance of funding and there is also again support for the Powerhouse 'move'. This was the latest statement from WSA&CL that we can find.

On February 26, 2015^{iv} David Capra, as spokesperson for the WSA&CL, is also reported as calling for the Australian Film, Television & Radio School and National Arts School to be relocated to Parramatta. This is a clear recommendation from WSA&CL.

However in their submission to the first Inquiry (12 August 2016) they only support the move of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta (they do not recommend it). Even this support is conditional: the State Government must ensure that the Powerhouse Museum is funded to a standard of its international peers and is of a higher standard than the facility at Ultimo. A key point, also consistently made, was that the commitments to the 'move' project *must not involve the reduction of funding for the operations, artistic and capital programs of cultural organisations in Western Sydney*'.

So, who is this group? As mentioned previously they have no ABN, no website, and since early 2018 seem to have disappeared. In February 2019 we phoned all institutional members for whom we could find phone numbers, seeking contact details and / or information of meeting times and places. We contacted, by phone, email and letter, the Museum of Contemporary Art, asking Ms Macgregor and her office people if they had contact details. We also phoned the Sydney Business Chamber (whose offices also serve the Western Sydney Business Chamber) and sent an email through the website contact form seeking any information they had. No-one provided any information.

Other Western Sydney Arts organisations

In evidence to the Inquiry on Wednesday, 12 September 2018 ^{vi}the Arts Minister gave one of the very few indications that the 'move' had wide support. My underlining:

The Hon. DON HARWIN: What is absolutely clear is that despite what is being said by some, the vast majority of those working in arts and culture in this State think we are doing the right thing too. Let me just name a few. For example, I could name Robert Love, the General Manager of the Riverside Theatre, who thinks we are doing the right thing; or I could name Craig Donarski, the head of the Powerhouse Arts Centre in Casula, who thinks we are doing the right thing; or Michael D'Agostino, the head of the Campbelltown Art Gallery, who believes we are doing the right thing; or the Manager of Arts and Culture with responsibility for the Penrith Regional Art Gallery and the Lewers bequest and the Joan (sic), she thinks we are doing the right thing; and Jenny Bisset, the head of Arts and Culture in Blacktown, she thinks we are doing the right thing; or Rosie Dennis, the head of Urban Theatre Projects, who thinks we are doing

the right thing; or Joanne Kee, the head of the National Theatre of Parramatta, who thinks we are doing the right thing. They are all just the Western Sydney people. There are plenty of people beyond that who are excited about what we are doing. They think finally there is a government that gets cultural equity in this State and is doing something about it and they want us to keep going.

None of these spontaneously supported the cause by making Inquiry submissions or in other ways. The overwhelming majority of submissions from a who's who of artistic and museum experts and organisations and strongly opposed the 'move' idea. This is dealt with elsewhere.

We contacted by email, mail and phone, each person named and asked them to confirm their support for the Powerhouse move, but none did so. Ms Lee-Anne Hall, Manager of Arts and Culture with responsibility for the Penrith Regional Art Gallery and the Lewers bequest, pointed out that she had actually appeared before the Inquiry on Tuesday, 6 September 2016 as part of a group from Regional and Public Galleries NSW, specifically opposing the move. [A MAAS volunteer, highly experienced and qualified in the arts field] discussed the matter at length with [one of the other people mentioned among the names underlined] and was told that the people listed were in favour of having more money spent in the cultural field. They were not in favour of moving the Powerhouse, but were not willing openly to oppose the government^{vii}. (Museum volunteers and employees had been instructed that they must present a positive image of the move, and there is fear that any employees or funded institutions opposing government policy will be victimised, hence the anonymity of the previous sentence).

ⁱ This reply was received two months after the formal request for information, but the fact that we did eventually receive a reply was pleasing as typically such requests have been ignored or a response has been a standardised letter from Create NSW on behalf of the Government simply saying that the 'move' was a wonderful thing.

ⁱⁱ Ms Grasso Inquiry evidence Monday, 5 September 2016 Page 28

ⁱⁱⁱ This information comes from their submission to the first Inquiry, Submission No 36, Date received: 12 August 2016.

^{iv} Sydney Morning Herald, article by Andrew Taylor.

^v Submission, fifth page.

^{vi} Page 18-19

^{vii} We are informed that the director of one of these organisations has recently publicly supported the 'move' but we cannot find details.