

**REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE**

**GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 4**

**INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES**

**CORRECTED PROOF**

**At Jubilee Room, Parliament House, Sydney on Monday, 14 November 2016**

**The Committee met at 1:00 pm**

**PRESENT**

Mr R. Borsak (Chair)  
Mr S. Farlow  
Mr B. Franklin  
Mr S. Mallard  
Mr S. Moselmane  
Mr W. Secord  
Mr D. Shoebriidge



**The CHAIR:** Welcome to the fourth 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 we commence I acknowledge the Gadigal people, the traditional custodians of this land. I would also like to pay respect to the elders past and present of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginals who may be present.

Today we will hear from representatives of the Arts NSW, Save Bondi Pavilion, Port Macquarie Museum, Wagga Wagga City Council, individuals from the arts and cultural community and a former president of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Before we commence I would like to make some brief comments about 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 also remind media representatives that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. It is important to remember that parliamentary privilege does not apply to what witnesses may say outside their evidence at the hearing. So I urge witnesses to be careful about any comments they may make to the media or to others after they complete their evidence, as such comments would not be protected by parliamentary privilege if another person decides to take an action for defamation. Guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat.

Regarding questions on notice, there may be some questions that witnesses could answer only if they had more time or 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 here today that the Committee hearings are not intended to provide a forum for people to make adverse reflections about others under the protection of parliamentary privilege. I therefore request witnesses to focus on issues raised by the inquiry's terms of reference, and avoid naming individuals unnecessarily. Witnesses are advised that any messages should be delivered to Committee members through the Committee staff. Finally, could everyone turn off their mobile phones or switch them to silent for the duration of the hearing.

**SAMANTHA TORRES**, Deputy Secretary, Justice Services, Arts and Culture, Arts NSW, on former oath

**The CHAIR:** I welcome the first witness, Samantha Torres, who has been previously sworn. Would you like to make a short statement?

**Ms TORRES:** I thank the Committee for the invitation to return. I welcome the opportunity to provide further information to the Committee and hope to assist in clarifying matters where I can. I will take the first few minutes to cover off on some issues that have been getting a reasonable amount of attention. Management of contentious projects is often difficult. What quite often makes the difference between an okay outcome and a great outcome is for the opposing sides of the debate to recognise where they share common ground. The real issues can then be worked through. It is important to acknowledge that both sides of the debate are intent on what is best for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [MAAS], the Powerhouse Museum and associated entities.

Groups such as Save the Powerhouse and others who have been agitating around the relocation are well intentioned and truly believe that they have the best interests of the museum at heart and we in government acknowledge that. Similarly, the MAAS management and trust are focused on their interpretation of the best interests of the museum as well. It would help progress matters if we could acknowledge this and change the tone of the discussion to reduce the issues to those that are in contention. The point of difference is how the best interests of the museum are served. It is uncontested that government accepted a recommendation from Infrastructure NSW to relocate the museum from the current site in Ultimo to a site in Parramatta.

Undoubtedly it is a huge opportunity for the establishment of a brand new facility and would see the first tier one non-central business district primary cultural institution in Western Sydney. The trustees and management of the MAAS, Department of Justice and government more broadly are working diligently to ensure the best possible outcome from that decision. There is clearly concern from a vocal group of stakeholders about relocating the museum from its current site. What is not clear to me yet is how much of the concern is about the MAAS itself and how much is about the reuse of the site once the museum is moved.

The trust has obligations under the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act, but the Act itself makes it clear that the obligations are subject to the control and direction of the Minister. The relocation of the MAAS is a clear direction from the Government that the trustees are acting in accordance with their obligations, which is to protect the best interests of the museum in effectively meeting the needs and demands of the community. The final cost and size of the new museum will be determined as part of the final business case. The costs formed part of the Cabinet submission and as such they are Cabinet in confidence. Detailed site investigations include flood modelling and are being undertaken as part of the final business case.

The new museum will be carefully designed and subject to architectural competition to mitigate any risk of flooding and with all exhibitions and collections being located above the flood line. Public and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken as part of the museum's development application and a detailed engagement and communication plan is being prepared to inform this at the moment. All of these parts of the project are normal due process in a significant project of this type. The president of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences wrote to the Deputy Premier on 1 September expressing his support for the new museum at Parramatta, contingent upon the primacy of the museum and the fact that the museum's operations are not undermined by any complementary commercial development.

I would like to take a moment to speak about the current director of the museum, Ms Dolla Merrillees. Ms Merrillees was appointed based on merit selection that considered her skills and experience to deliver a new museum. The panel that recommended her selection included departmental and MAAS trust representatives and she was the clear winner in this process against a strong field of local and international candidates. Ms Merrillees has been subjected to a series of unwarranted personal criticisms over the past few months. During this period she has demonstrated sustained leadership and outstanding achievements through her exhibition development, innovative program development and collaboration in cross-cultural exchanges. The challenge is mitigating the risk to the museum of its relocation and regaining our focus on the actual issues, not the person. Ms Merrillees has ensured that the MAAS remains a leader in innovative program development and she has spearheaded the establishment of a number of initiatives within the MAAS. I again take the opportunity to thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear and I am happy to take your questions.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You made reference to Ms Merrillees. There is a bit of a misunderstanding. It was not a criticism of her; it was a criticism of her handling of the release of public information and her expenditure on overseas trips. While we are on the subject, as you raised it, Ms Merrillees was criticised for trying to charge the Opposition a massive bill to subvert the Government Information (Public

Access) [GIPA] process. When she was at this Committee she promised that she would provide that information on overseas travel to the Committee and Opposition and that never eventuated. I would like to make that statement. Is there any jurisdictional response that comes under you in getting the Powerhouse Museum to adhere to the State Government's GIPA and her commitment to this Committee to release the information?

**Ms TORRES:** My understanding is that the treatment of the GIPA application was in accordance with the guidelines from the Government and that the indication of cost was connected to the scope of the request. The opportunity is always given to applicants under GIPA, if there is going to be a significant impost on the affected department, to either pay for the cost of that or to narrow the scope of their requirement. My understanding is that that is what has occurred. If that is incorrect, I am happy to take it on notice and follow it up.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** She gave a commitment to this Committee that she would release that information. Rather than forcing the Opposition to go through the GIPA process, she gave a commitment to this Committee that she would release information on where they travelled and how much they spent on the various overseas trips.

**Ms TORRES:** There is a twofold response to that. I am not certain of her response to questions on notice. The other aspect, which I can certainly follow up, is to double-check that the issue was handled in accordance with departmental guidelines. I did clarify that before I appeared here today.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you. I will come back to you on that.

**Ms TORRES:** Certainly.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Torres, I think you are right: the purpose of this Committee is, hopefully, to look at the real issues. One of those real issues is what, if anything, will eventuate if the museum is moved to Parramatta. In your opening statement you spoke about Professor Glover's letter of 1 September. Do you remember that?

**Ms TORRES:** I did.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You said that the letter from Professor Glover raised concerns about the new museum being undermined by commercial development. I think that is what you said. Is that right?

**Ms TORRES:** It was not that it raised concerns; it was that the support of the trust always was and remains contingent upon the move not undermining the museum, yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** No. You have your opening statement in front of you.

**Ms TORRES:** I have.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I thought you said words to the effect that it cannot be undermined by other commercial development on the site. You might have the precise words there in front of you.

**Ms TORRES:** I may have ad libbed that bit. I will accept that that is the essence, yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** As I understood from your opening statement, your suggestion was that there could be additional commercial development on the site, provided it was complementary. Is that the position that you were suggesting was put by Professor Glover?

**Ms TORRES:** Not from Professor Glover. It has been debated more than once that there may or may not be commercial options available on that site. Professor Glover was writing to the Government to say that if that occurs any commercial options cannot undermine it.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I do not think you have accurately reflected Professor Glover's correspondence. The words that I have are that the whole site option "is contingent upon the new site being unencumbered by other commercial developments". It is not "undermined by" but "unencumbered by" other commercial developments. You understand the distinction, do you not?

**Ms TORRES:** Yes, I do.

**Ms TORRES:** Which is a true reflection of Professor Glover's position and the board's position—that the new site must be unencumbered by other commercial developments or, as you put it in your opening statement, cannot be undermined by them? They are quite distinct.

**Ms TORRES:** They are very distinct.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I am giving you the opportunity to tell the Committee what you think is the accurate summation of Professor Glover's and the board's position.

**Ms TORRES:** There are two parts to that question. First, in response to the wording I can only go by what is summarised in my opening statement. I do not have the letter in front of me. I am more than happy to accept that that is what the letter said. My understanding from discussions with the trust is that any commercial operations cannot impact upon or undermine the operation of the museum. So it is not unencumbered in the language that we have used.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** With your version, the top eight storeys could be occupied by JP Morgan and the bottom four storeys by the museum. There could be an argument that one does not undermine the other. On Professor Glover's argument, that could never happen because the whole purpose is that it be site specific only for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [MAAS]. Do you understand the distinction?

**Ms TORRES:** I do.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Do you understand how important it is?

**Ms TORRES:** I do.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Are you just relying upon the summary that was given to you by the department?

**Ms TORRES:** I am relying on a summary of the letter. My understanding of the trust's position is from attendance at trust meetings.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You say that the trust's position is consistent with what you have said, which is that eight storeys of JP Morgan and four storeys of museum, provided it is all sweet, will be okay.

**Ms TORRES:** That is one hypothetical scenario. I believe the museum is interested in potential revenue operations for itself. Things like coffee shops and so on that are commercial operations would be part of that site. It is entirely unrealistic to say that the museum, in whatever form it ends up taking in Parramatta, could have no commercial aspects whatsoever.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Professor Glover made that quite clear in his last presentation to this Committee. He was not objecting to coffee shops or a gift shop or things that are entirely complementary to a premier museum site. He made it absolutely clear, as I understood it, that the idea of having co-location with a large commercial venture was utterly unacceptable to the trust. That is the situation, is it not?

**Ms TORRES:** Again, from my understanding, that would depend upon whether the co-location was going to interfere with the operation of the museum. The museum has absolute primacy.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Are you saying that what Professor Glover said to this Committee was not a fair reflection of your observation of the discussions of the board?

**Ms TORRES:** No. I am not making a comment on Professor Glover at all. I am merely conveying my understanding.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So your understanding is that contrary to what Professor Glover said to this Committee, the board is open to having co-located ventures on the site, and that has been the discussion at board meetings that you have attended and witnessed?

**Ms TORRES:** Contingent upon it not undermining the operations of the museum, yes.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** On page 7 of your submission you say:

No decision has been made on the future use or sale of the existing museum site in Ultimo.

Would you tell the Committee what possibilities have been canvassed? That is significant for the understanding by the community and the wider arts world of what use will be made of the site. Would you elaborate?

**Ms TORRES:** It is challenging, as a lot of the information is Cabinet-in-confidence. However, the options under consideration for a divestment strategy necessarily have to consider all of the spectrum. That does not mean that the Government has formed any view on which option to proceed with. The options range from the highest and best use, in terms of government property procedures, right down to retaining current restrictions on the site being used entirely as a museum, and everything in between. It is impossible to pinpoint which one the Government will go with because we have not finalised the work on that.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Is there a list of the possibilities and options that have been canvassed?

**Ms TORRES:** There are a range of options from highest and best use to retaining current restrictions.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I did not catch the first category of option that you mentioned. You said it was government property—

**Ms TORRES:** Property NSW is doing the divestment work for us. There are various elements to the final business case. One of them is the divestment.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So you are saying that the options range from selling it to retaining it as a museum?

**Ms TORRES:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Did you draw up the proposals or was that done by Property NSW?

**Ms TORRES:** They engaged an expert in the area. I cannot recall the name off the top of my head, but I am happy to provide that on notice. That expert has provided a range of workable options. They include various degrees of what would be required, such as planning approvals and changes to zoning, if that were to occur, for the Government to be fully informed about the decision it is making.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So there are more than two options?

**Ms TORRES:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** There is a range, from selling it to retaining it as a museum.

**Ms TORRES:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So selling the site is still one of the options before the Government?

**Ms TORRES:** Absolutely.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Including up-zoning.

**Ms TORRES:** It would be, yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** As is retaining the site as a museum.

**Ms TORRES:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Small grants are one of the regular themes the Committee has heard about from volunteers at regional galleries and museums. They cannot obtain enough grant money to do substantial renovations to their properties to allow them to hold exhibitions that require certain standards. Would you step me through the funding options available? I was confused about the \$1.5 million in your submission. Under the Arts NSW policy, what funding options are available to rural and regional museums and galleries in particular, but also to metropolitan museums and galleries?

**Ms TORRES:** Arts NSW funds several programs for regional, rural and general metropolitan galleries and museums. The \$1.8 million in program funding I think is what you are referring to which is program funding that is not infrastructure based; it is program funding for regional galleries and museums. Then there is \$1.2 million which includes \$300,000. It is very confusing. Regional Arts NSW in New South Wales won a devolved funding model which is different to any other State.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Torres, we have just heard that Troy Grant is resigning as Leader of The Nationals so you might just allow us two seconds of discussion and then we will get back to listening to your answer.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So you can say anything you like now.

**Ms TORRES:** I really cannot.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We will now focus on your answer.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** We are not quite sure who your Minister is at the moment.

**Ms TORRES:** That is okay; we will work just as hard irrespective.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I asked you to step through the funding. Are they annual figures?

**Ms TORRES:** That is devolved funding which is essentially under the control of Regional Arts NSW to assist in determining where the most needs lie. Then you have what is called \$2.1 million in program funding to the Regional Arts Development Board. Overall there was a \$9.3 million investment in 2015-16 in regional New South Wales arts programs which is a 12 per cent increase over the period 2014-15. That total investment included the program funding and various other mechanisms I was just talking about. As recently as two weeks

ago the Deputy Premier—the then Deputy Premier—announced a further \$800,000 in devolved funding to Regional Arts NSW programs. So there is a significant pot of money. The Arts Cultural Development Program that is run overall by Arts NSW is between \$52 million and \$53 million.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Will you take that question on notice as I am still confused. Will you provide a table?

**Ms TORRES:** Yes, a table of the funding.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** What are the conditions? What are the maximum grants? The Committee wants to look at the structure.

**Ms TORRES:** It is probably worthwhile recognising that there are under that program essentially separate buckets of funding. So there are major performing companies and so on that are on a three-year cycle and then there is program funding and then there is small project funding and that splits it.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Will you provide that table on notice?

**Ms TORRES:** Certainly.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** The Blue Mountains Council and its gallery received serious criticism about being able to get recurrent funding because of a requirement that you needed to get program funding for three years before you could get access to recurrent funding. They said if a new premier venture is being started it can almost make it cost prohibitive to start because you cannot get access to recurrent funding. Are you aware of that criticism?

**Ms TORRES:** I am.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Is there any proposal to do something about it so that new premier cultural institutions are encouraged to be established and will get access to recurrent funding?

**Ms TORRES:** Again it is a little difficult, given the change in portfolio that has just been announced. However, I can say there is currently underway—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Do you want to take that on notice?

**Ms TORRES:** I can tell you what is happening right now.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And then take the rest of it on notice?

**Ms TORRES:** Yes. Right now what is happening, because it is already in implementation, is a reform of Arts NSW and Screen NSW, into a single integrated entity. It will also have responsibility for the administration of funding programs. One of the key things we have been asked to do once that new organisation is up and running is to do a review of the way the funding pockets work because they do not seem to be particularly complementary. They also seem to encourage people to apply for greater and longer term funding rather than encourage sustainability. So that is a piece of work that we shall be doing—I believe we shall be doing—but I will take the rest on notice.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Part of your brief is the Sydney Living Museums which is a great initiative. I note the recently held Sydney open which allows public access to specific viewing times of Sydney's greatest built works. Is there any remit for this program to be expanded to Western Sydney?

**Ms TORRES:** Sydney Living Museums is quite oddly, actually, not part of the museum's portfolio. It sits in the Office of the Environment and Heritage as part of the Historic Houses Trust. We do work very closely with them to make sure that their operation as museums is considered in all of the work that we do. There are also ongoing discussions about greater cooperation and collaboration from the Sydney Living Museum's part of that portfolio. It is a bit of a challenge because there is a mixture in Sydney Living Museum's program of the actual museum and then venues for hire which clearly is not part of the Arts portfolio. We are working with them at the moment on how we can strengthen that relationship and make sure that its program is expanded.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Are you working together to expand it?

**Ms TORRES:** Yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I have two questions about regional New South Wales. First, is there a need for an overarching cultural policy for regional New South Wales specifically? I note that it is mentioned in greater New South Wales, and that is great, but it is not a substantive part of that document. Do you think there needs to be a standalone document? If so, who would be best to provide it?



**Ms TORRES:** I do not believe that there is a need for a separate document. I think New South Wales is New South Wales and one of the problems with treating regional differently to cities is you actually create greater division than what there needs to be. I do believe there needs to be greater cooperation between the greater Sydney area and the greater New South Wales area. I believe that the Government is intent on pushing the arts, and extending the reach further into both Western Sydney and the regions is quite clear. So the question is: How do we activate that? That is part of the work we are doing in Create Reforms.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** What sorts of things are you doing?

**Ms TORRES:** The former Deputy Premier announced the establishment of an advisory committee which includes regional membership to look at opportunities to better leverage interest to get better positive opportunities to collaborate better with the Sydney institutions and a whole range of strategic initiatives around that. But also working individually with, I guess, top tier one institutions in the city to work more closely with those outside the Sydney Basin because there is, in my view, a concern that collaboration is more than just sending a collection off once every three months.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Is that the Gretel Packer-David Gonski committee?

**Ms TORRES:** That is not its name but, yes, they are members.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Are there any regional representatives?

**Ms TORRES:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What was the criteria for getting on that committee? I mean no-one can understand it unless you have a lot of wealth? Apart from that what was the criteria to get on the Packer-Gonski committee?

**Ms TORRES:** It is the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee. It is made up of the chairs of the existing cultural institutions and State significant organisations such as the Museum of Contemporary Art and Carriageworks. It also has regional representatives—off the top of my head, Ken Crouch from Screenworks in northern New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But were the ones from outside institutions all Coalition donors?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Ken Crouch would be shocked if you said that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What was the criteria for getting onto the committee?

**Ms TORRES:** To be honest with you, the list was put forward by both Arts NSW and Screen NSW and various other participants made suggestions to the Deputy Premier's office. That was a decision made in the office.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** They are the bureaucracies that the Deputy Premier was attacking when he launched that new committee?

**Ms TORRES:** Attacking?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Did he not say words to the effect that the bureaucracies were out of touch?

**Ms TORRES:** There was a concern that Arts NSW had become inward looking, yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I refer to the Gretel Packer-Gonski committee to which Mr David Shoebridge referred. Did your department make any recommendation involving alternative names?

**Ms TORRES:** A list of multiple names was provided, yes, beyond who was appointed.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Who recommended Gretel Packer?

**Ms TORRES:** Gretel Packer came from an Arts NSW recommendation, I believe. I will take that on notice to confirm. But off the top of my head it was the Arts NSW list that included Gretel Packer, given her philanthropic and other activities in the arts sector.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Many of my questions related to the former Minister for the Arts.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Not until tomorrow.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** He stood down immediately so he is no longer the Minister for the Arts. Will you bring the Committee up to speed on the purchase of the site in Parramatta? I understand it is well behind schedule. Is it on schedule or behind schedule?

**Ms TORRES:** It is a lengthy process. It is currently in negotiation between Property NSW and Parramatta City Council. It has not been resolved as yet and we are aiming to have it resolved by the middle of next year, so it is neither on track nor behind track. At the moment it is in the negotiation process.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I will ask a question about local councils. It has become very apparent to me how critical they are to regional arts and culture. Some governments do extraordinarily good work but some perhaps do not have either the resources or potentially some of the key individuals to drive regional arts and culture as strongly as others.

**Ms TORRES:** Yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** My question is how best can Arts NSW and the State Government work with councils to ensure that all councils, particularly those in the regions, are engaging with their communities, not just where we happen to have some exceptional individuals or a community who activates things from the ground up?

**Ms TORRES:** There are two parts to that. The first part is that some councils have regional arts development officers, known as RADOs, and others do not; they rely more on internal resources. That positions some councils more strongly than others in advocacy and in understanding the benefits of the arts and cultural investment in their space. In relation to what we can do better, once it is established Create in NSW will have a key focus of working better with local councils. In a former role I was responsible for the Food Regulation Partnership across 150-odd councils at the time. A similar approach, insofar as we can extend it, would be useful. It is about getting a uniformity of acceptance of basic principles in the first instance and then working from there. Clearly, we have some work to do but it is certainly a focus.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** In its submission Port Macquarie Museum notes that on the lower mid North Coast from Macksville to Forster there are no paid museum staff and no professional support for museums and their collections provided by councils. In supporting regional New South Wales and those councils, would it not be a starting point to give them some form of professional support?

**Ms TORRES:** Professional support is one thing. Certainly it is not the role of State government to determine what the priorities of individual local councils are. If that council has made a decision that employment of staff and so on in that area is not their priority that is a matter for that council. We absolutely in the future will be working on a more strategic approach and ensuring that they do at least understand the value in terms of cultural tourism and various other aspects of it.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** On a different point entirely, in your answers on notice you were asked on the last occasion whether there were any international comparators to the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. Do you remember that?

**Ms TORRES:** Yes, I was.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** In your answers on notice you said that, yes, you have the National Railway Museum in York in England, the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds in England and the National Arts Museum in Oslo in Norway. On the last occasion when we had Ms Merrillees before us I raised concerns about the comparators with her. I am going to give you the chance now to defend your answer. Given the National Railway Museum in York is not a relocation at all from a metropolitan museum to a regional museum but is in fact a gathering together of disparate collections from all around the country, you would accept it is not comparable, would you not?

**Ms TORRES:** No, I do not think I would. The consolidation of those various museums included both metro and non-metro museums into a single museum.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It was not the shutting down of a central metro museum and a relocation to a region at all. It was the creation of an entirely new institution from a disparate set of collections all around the country. You cannot seriously say that is comparable, can you, Ms Torres?

**Ms TORRES:** I believe we are going to have to agree to disagree, Mr Shoebridge. I do believe it was comparable.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We can agree that an apple is not an orange, can we not; yes or no?

**Ms TORRES:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Then what about the Royal Armouries Museum at Leeds? Again they were disparate collections and the crown jewels—quite literally the crown jewels—of that museum remain in the centre of London. It is totally different.

**Ms TORRES:** Again, I was asked if I was aware of comparables. In my view they are comparables. The Western Australian Museum was left off the list but obviously the Western Australian Museum is also being moved at the moment, which is again similar or not depending on your view.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Comparable insofar as apples and oranges are both fruit. They are that kind of comparable. Is that right?

**Ms TORRES:** I do believe we should probably take that on notice, Mr Shoebridge.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What about the last one, which is about the National Arts Museum in Oslo, Norway? It was not moved kilometres away from the main centre of Oslo but was moved just down to the waterfront. You can go on a five-minute stroll from the centre of Oslo and get to the newly located one. That is fundamentally different from the relocation proposed for the Powerhouse.

**Ms TORRES:** From my recollection, your question was relocation of a museum from one location to another.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** No, one that is comparable to what is happening with the Powerhouse; closing it down in the centre of the CBD and moving it kilometres inland to Parramatta away from the main city centre. You gave three examples, none of which are comparable. Do you not accept that?

**Ms TORRES:** In the view of Arts NSW and in my view they are comparable.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What, if you stand on your head, put a blindfold on, stick broccoli in your ears and hum while you are looking at them? How are they comparable?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Point of order: The question has been answered.

**Ms TORRES:** In our view they are comparable in that they are relocations of existing collections into a new location.

**The CHAIR:** We will call that a wrap now. I note you have taken some questions on notice, which you will have 21 days to respond to. The secretariat will be in contact with you in relation to those questions. We look forward to the answers.

**Ms TORRES:** Before I depart, on a previous occasion I referred the Committee also to the State Infrastructure Strategy for Infrastructure NSW and how we came to the decision. I have brought a marked copy of it for tabling for your information. It is not the full document because that ranges to 170-odd pages and I believed that the members probably did not have time. It is the executive summary and relevant sections for you.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We are grateful for the summary, Ms Torres.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much.

**(The witness withdrew)**

**MADELEINE SCULLY**, Manager Community Services, Wagga Wagga City Council, sworn and examined

**The CHAIR:** Would you like to start with a short statement?

**Ms SCULLY:** Just to bring you into my world I wanted to talk you through the responsibilities that I have managing a multidisciplinary range of teams. They include the regional museum, which is the Museum of the Riverina, the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, the city library, the Civic Theatre, our cultural development and services including the delivery of the city's public arts strategy, visitor economy teams, tourism, events, and the social planning team including Aboriginal and community development officers, youth development and auspiced Home and Community Care [HACC] programs. I am also responsible for the delivery of the Wagga Wagga Regional Family Day Care Service. It is a broad division but within that is a very talented and deep multidisciplinary team. All these cultural and social services areas work together to deliver services to our community and all deliver outreach services or have agreements in place that cover right across our region in the Riverina and have substantial networks.

My career in local government now spans 18 years. I commenced my work in local government working for the newly established regional museum, the Museum of the Riverina, in Wagga. In this role I was the first regional museum officer and I then progressed on to manage this regional museum. I am passionate about museums and feel that I can offer this Committee some working perspectives here today to assist in this Committee's deliberations and research. From my perspective I would like to discuss with the Committee today some key elements of success that the City of Wagga Wagga can share with this inquiry that relate to us as a regional city and how we actually operate as a cultural Hub and Spoke model to service not only the city of Wagga Wagga but also, importantly, our regional colleagues in community museums, galleries, et cetera, across our region.

We have worked really successfully with the New South Wales Government's policy, funding and support settings—previously and currently. We are working towards building our regional museums and art gallery. We are still a work in progress but I would particularly like to talk about employment of specialist cultural workers located in local government areas and what that brings to the mix of what is possible. Most of all, I would particularly like to talk to the Committee about our work with the volunteer-managed museums across our region, which we have a very long-standing and deep commitment to working alongside. The policy settings I want to talk about today are specific to museums and galleries but I also want to talk about the social dynamic and social impact that creative and cultural life in a regional city can afford its community and visitors, and also the impacts we have across the region.

A really big part of the relationship that we have with Arts NSW is a multi-year funding agreement, which was discussed with the previous person. That really helps to stabilise our programs, ensures partnerships and, most of all, sustainability. I want to talk also today about previous policy settings that have indeed been a catalyst and have ceded employment opportunities for the city of Wagga Wagga to take up and employ cultural practitioners. We are really a work in progress over 18 years. It is not something that we are just commencing; we know how to do it and we feel that we can offer some real evidence in terms of assisting the Committee in its deliberations. The current policy settings that tilt policy and funding to ensure regional and rural museums and galleries are taking the lead on projects—for example, the current Arts NSW Regional Partnerships Funding is the way to go and I would like to talk particularly about that as well. It is about regional cities, regional organisations taking the lead and negotiating partnerships, and certainly relationships with metropolitan cultural institutions, but taking the lead. They know what they need and how they want to deliver it and it is important that that policy tilt supports them from the New South Wales Government.

I do also have some concerns that I wish to raise with the Committee today—the deep distress of both myself as a practitioner but also in our State's distributed regional rural museum and gallery workers with regard to the state of our cultural heritage collections, which are under great distress, and the poor built assets that house them. At times there is a disconnectedness of New South Wales policy strategy and funding settings that discuss the cultural ambitions of this State, be it for museums, galleries or arts generally. I congratulate the New South Wales Government on the rollout of the very successful Western Sydney Arts Strategy and now ask that such a strategy be rolled out for the museums, galleries and creative sector living and working in regional New South Wales. I also really want to draw the Committee's attention to the submission of my colleague Kylie Winkworth. Her 16 recommendations are succinct, to the point and, most of all, really resonate with me because I can see as the local government practitioner where I can work in concert with the State and my colleagues based in regional rural New South Wales to really work towards developing our collections and our communities. At the end of it, it really is about recommendations and I truly believe the Western Sydney Arts

Strategy is a stunning success. I think we need to learn from that because it is about looking at the success and not having a deficit conversation—

**The CHAIR:** Ms Scully, could you finish your statement there? The Committee will not have sufficient time to ask you any questions if you continue.

**Ms SCULLY:** Sure, but I could go on.

**The CHAIR:** I understand that.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** As I understand it Ms Scully did not put in a written submission.

**The CHAIR:** But she can submit a paper afterwards.

**Ms SCULLY:** Sure.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But you would endorse each of Ms Winkworth's recommendations?

**Ms SCULLY:** Yes, I would. There are 16 and they really break it down.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** In your opening statement you talk about volunteer museums. Is your organisation taking any steps to help catalogue and assist to protect those volunteer museums? How many volunteer museums are there in your region?

**Ms SCULLY:** For 18 years we have been a regional museum operation and a really important part of that has been our outreach service—it is a continuous commitment to working with volunteer museums across the Riverina. There are approximately 40 community volunteer-run museums in southern New South Wales. A really great example is the work that we are doing on a regional partnerships program at the moment with 10 other volunteer museums and over 18 years I could give you evidence of up to 40 or 50 projects that we have worked on. Collection management and research is certainly at the heart of many of those projects and also the continuous professional support that we offer those volunteer museums.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Can you give us a taste as to what those volunteer museums are like? Are they highly unusual museums?

**Ms SCULLY:** Do you mean in terms of the significance of the collections?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I just want to get a flavour. Are there hidden treasures of Australian pieces of artwork or historical collections in any of these volunteer museums that would disappear if they were not looked after?

**Ms SCULLY:** I think you have pretty much answered the question. Yes, they are substantial and significant and part of our natural distributed collection. They are in distress and housed in very poor conditions generally. There are really fantastic examples of social history collections that span both pre-contact and post contact. Also, I think importantly, there are some really great examples of small local government areas that over the same space of time as Wagga as a regional museum have worked strategically to develop their collections and also their cultural heritage built asset. A really great example of that is Coolamon Shire Council.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What do they do?

**Ms SCULLY:** There are substantial agricultural collections that house incredibly rare and significant large collections that relate to the agricultural histories of New South Wales, environmental history—it spans all—and there are regular relationships and partnerships with larger institutions that loan out because of the rarity of those collections, but they are generally in high distress.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** This Committee makes recommendations as part of its deliberations. Other than simply saying more funding, what key recommendation would you make to us? For example, the Committee could support these volunteer museums or it could support you to support them?

**Ms SCULLY:** I think if you were to look strategically across the State, regional cities such as Wagga Wagga play a really important role, as I have said, in terms of the Hub and Spoke model. I think if the State Government supported the rollout of that strategy across the State there would be exponential growth and support of volunteer collections and their ability to manage their own places and collections.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So you are suggesting a similar setup to what you are doing in your area with other regional areas?

**Ms SCULLY:** Correct.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** You mentioned that you wanted to speak about the key elements of success. What are those key elements of success and how can they be improved upon?

**Ms SCULLY:** One of the key elements of success for the city of Wagga Wagga is that we have committed to the strategic development of the employment of specialist cultural workers—we have strategically developed it; it has not just arrived. A really great example is the Museum of the Riverina, a regional museum, which employs 6.5 full-time equivalent staff, along with casual staff and a volunteer group. We also work regularly and in partnership with a range of other cultural institutions located in the city and, of course, we have the campus of Charles Sturt University as well as the Charles Sturt University regional archives. We have a very active and talented cultural and artistic community and the reason why they can thrive in Wagga Wagga is that they can find ways to be employed. That is a really key part of creating a vibrant and active city, an arts city—realising that creatives need employment. So we are very committed to that at the city, but also we are very mindful of creating partnerships with regional stakeholders such as Charles Sturt University and other organisations across the region to ensure that we not only create great strategies but we actually deliver on them, because you need people and you need specialist people to actually deliver those programs, along with the incredibly talented volunteer force we have.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** First of all, your glass collection down at Wagga—

**Ms SCULLY:** The National Art Glass Collection.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** —is just fabulous and it is a really sort of iconic part of a trip to Wagga. Was that recognised at the time it was being established as a kind of unmet need, a national glass collection, and that it could distinguish Wagga?

**Ms SCULLY:** It actually came out of, I think, 1970s art policy where each regional city defined a particular collecting point for the nation. Because of the glass school located at the former college, it was identified that not only was it a distinct opportunity to collect but also connect it again through to the university's practice.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** That was my understanding, that in the 1970s there was this conscious decision from governments, State and Federal, that they would identify opportunities, distinct cultural opportunities, particularly for regional cities, and Wagga was the benefactor of that, was it not?

**Ms SCULLY:** Absolutely.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And that has been, if you like, a gap in policy really for the last three decades, this active role of government working with regional communities to identify distinct cultural opportunities.

**Ms SCULLY:** I think Mr Franklin was asking the previous speaker about looking at cultural policy and museum planning and cultural planning for regional New South Wales, and that really harkens back to that 1970s conversation around strategy and building a cultural life and cultural collections based and cared for in regional centres.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But re-learning some of those lessons is what we should be looking at?

**Ms SCULLY:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** When you are talking with those other 40 institutions, the volunteer-run institutions, they have some very specific needs: they want the plumbing fixed, they want the roof fixed, they want the electricals fixed, do they not?

**Ms SCULLY:** Yes, they do.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And it can take years to get the most simple maintenance addressed, and sometimes it goes unmet for years, is that right?

**Ms SCULLY:** That is correct, and a lot of those volunteers were not motivated to join their local historical group or arts organisations to worry about the public toilets. Yet they end up being the treasurer and the secretary, and that is where, if they have very little money they are able to fundraise and they need to direct to.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And spend fundraising to fix the toilets rather than display their extraordinary exhibitions.

**Ms SCULLY:** Or plough resources into the care of those collections or research.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So when you see the State Government potentially spending skywards of a billion dollars to relocate one perfectly functioning museum like the Powerhouse 10 kilometres down the road, what sort of frustration does that give regional communities who cannot get \$500 to fix the toilet?

**Ms SCULLY:** It is a reinforcement of a very deep disconnect.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** So we have got to do better is what you are saying?

**Ms SCULLY:** Yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Firstly, can I say it is lovely to see you again. Thank you for being here but, more importantly, thank you for the work you are doing in Wagga, along with your colleagues, as a real leader in regional arts. The hub-and-spoke model that you have implemented there is, I think, outstanding and a great credit to not only you but the whole council and the whole leadership in Wagga. So congratulations. The first question I have is about outreach, which you touched on earlier, which is great and obviously you do a fantastic job. Are there challenges in terms of outreach getting to and reaching perhaps socio-economically disadvantaged individual schools, communities, within your gamut and how do you ensure their access to arts and culture in your region?

**Ms SCULLY:** Yes, there are. There are huge barriers and we are still working through them. I would not say that we have got to a point where we are satisfied with the level and schedule of programming that we can deliver to remote and disadvantaged communities. However, there are some really great projects that we have been working on, whether it be through the Department of Education and arts and schools projects. There is also the outreach project that I did speak to you previously about that the Museum of the Riverina runs and connects with volunteer communities. It is about us being mobile and not fixed in a bricks and mortar mentality within the city of Wagga Wagga. It is really important to understand that we are mobile and we undertake an enormous amount of site visits, whether it be into schools, whether it be into community centres.

Culture is everywhere and we are very conscious of taking the collections, taking the programs to people who are unable to, for whatever reason, come and participate at the main campuses of our institutions. Whether you are in an aged care facility or whether you are living in a small village 60 kilometres from the city of Wagga Wagga, we will find a way through other organisations or programs. Whether it is a facilitated playgroup or whether it is a school holiday program where the theatre, museum and gallery all work to deliver a theatre and museum program, we will find a way to get it on some wheels and get it out to people. We also are committed to a mobile library service through the Riverina Regional Library network. So we are very cognisant of taking the programs and the resources beyond the city centre.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Would you agree that broadly, on a statewide level, those major towns and regional cities, let us say eight or 10 of them, should all be conscious of their responsibility to ensure mobility of their cultural collections and so forth?

**Ms SCULLY:** Absolutely, and, again, I spoke very briefly in my intro about the social commitments of local government. We are very mindful that we need to ask the question: who is visiting the museum, who is visiting the gallery or library, but equally ask who is not, and work out where they are located and find a way to connect.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I move on to engaging with Indigenous communities. You have had great success in doing that in your cultural programming. What are the key learnings that you can define from your experiences and how could these learnings be utilised for other regional cultural areas?

**Ms SCULLY:** I think the success that we have had is based on deep and substantial relationships with the elders, but also the Aboriginal communities living and working in Wagga Wagga and the region. We undertake multiple projects that are well paced and run along, at times over years, and they are based on really positive and deep relationships, as I said before, whether that be in the gallery, the library or the museum. One program and project tends to roll onto another; you start with a seed of an idea and if they are well-paced, well-planned with good communication we can roll out quite substantial projects over the long term.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** What more could government do to support engagement with particularly regional and Indigenous communities?

**Ms SCULLY:** I think it is incredibly important again to ask those communities of interest. For us, we really see great opportunity, for instance, working with Charles Sturt University and the language school and commitment they have there. The schools are an incredibly important part of the mix, as is the other formal learning environments of TAFE and the university. But also it is about the employment of Aboriginal practitioners that is at the heart of it and without—again, I know I am harking on about an employment

strategy—employing people to undertake this work, and in this case Aboriginal people, who should be leading these pieces of work, we will not be able to achieve our ambitions.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I ask a broader question than the one I just asked Samantha Torres, which is: On a macro level, how can State government better collaborate with local councils on arts and culture matters? I appreciate the positive comments that you have given and that is great. I understand your endorsement of Ms Winkworth's recommendations, which are obviously substantive, thorough and thoughtful. I appreciate the concerns that you have expressed to Mr Shoebridge, which are valid, but on a macro level what shift needs to take place to better support regional lives?

**Ms SCULLY:** I think it is a recognition of the work that local government is playing. Stop telling local government what they should be doing; start working with us.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Or listening.

**Ms SCULLY:** Yes. Local government and local communities have their own solutions and they are place based. It is not a generic approach that you can actually run across New South Wales or, for that matter, the nation. In terms of a way forward, I think we do need to go back and look at past successes. Certainly Arts NSW had a focus on what a regional museum meant in the late 1990s and that was a commitment to its region but also as well underpinning that was an employment strategy. There were lots of seeding opportunities and supportive local government to get up and get going with the employment of cultural workers.

On a macro level, I think it is actually about prioritising the commitment to regional New South Wales, as has been evidenced in the Western Sydney Arts Strategy. You treasure what you measure and at the moment you do not know what is out in regional New South Wales. That is why you are having this inquiry and I do believe it needs particular planning, funding and the allocation of resources because otherwise it will remain a mystery to the bureaucracies in Sydney. I think, importantly, the State institutions such as the Powerhouse and also Sydney Living Museums, et cetera have, in the past, undertaken extraordinary work but I can see them retreating—I think that is for various funding, political reasons—from regional New South Wales and they need to start leaning in again. And it needs to not be an option in the good times to be actually working across New South Wales; it needs to be consistently and as a priority for the people of New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** One of the things that has been missing from our evidence and our inquiry are very clear examples of the kind of smaller institutions that are really hurting—extremely valuable but really hurting. We went to Lithgow and saw the small arms museum, which was quite extraordinary. We heard from another institution, the Mount Victoria museum, which was hurting. With your network across the southern part of New South Wales, could you, on notice, perhaps pick two or three highlighted examples of these kinds of institutions that if we heard about we would love and want to resource but which have been ignored?

**Ms SCULLY:** I would be very happy to do that.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** You stated that the cultural heritage collection is in deep distress. Can you just elaborate a little on that and what sort of follow-up steps you have taken?

**Ms SCULLY:** Sure. When I talk about the distress of collections, it is actually the actual buildings that they are housed in and on notice I would be very happy to also provide you an image bank because there is nothing like seeing some visuals. So we are talking about very poor assets that perhaps had their heyday in the nineteenth century but are now in need of substantial upgrades and care. With our own museum of the Riverina, we are not in a situation where we are in a purpose-built building. So we are on two sites but we still have a long way to go in terms of creating an environmentally controlled storage facility for our collections.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Is that the former council chambers?

**Ms SCULLY:** Yes, but also we have a large collection at another site up at the botanic gardens, which is where our collections are held. The important part of our work at Wagga Wagga in relation to your question is that we also need to keep upgrading our assets to actually care for our cultural collections as well, especially when it relates to the museum in particular. We are talking about huge collections, absolutely massive collections housed in small towns right across New South Wales. So it is the scale and it is also as well the depleting population of volunteers.

We work with volunteers who are in their mid-80s now. I have worked with volunteers for 18 years and their passion is still there but their physical ability and obligations are changing. You need to consider that a lot of them are part of a carer role if they have partners and lives change over 18 years. There is a lack of environmental controls in collections when we go inside places, as well as the ability sometimes, the skills of people caring for them. They are very well meaning but just the sheer load and nature of the collections need



urgent assistance. The type of work we do at the regional museum in outreach work is that we undertake surveys of collections and we tend to chunk off pieces of work and work with volunteers not only to research their collection and then exhibit and interpret portions of that collection but importantly to assist them to care and do some preventive conservation and if possible assist them to seek funding to actually care for some of the more significant collections.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What does "chunk off pieces of the collection" mean?

**Ms SCULLY:** Instead of being completely overwhelmed by this collection around the wall—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Find a part of it?

**Ms SCULLY:** Through a piece of research you actually identify significant objects and parts of the collection to research and then importantly follow through with great interpretation the opportunity to upgrade the exhibition and the experience and connection to that collection, and that will include conservation. The really important thing to remember about the physicality of the collection is actually the intangible stories and provenance of these collections, which are falling away because a lot of that knowledge is in the heads of the volunteers and the ageing community who initially cared for it and brought it together.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** When the object loses its story it loses much of its significance?

**Ms SCULLY:** It diminishes, yes it does.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** As Walt Secord mentioned earlier, we make various recommendations in the report. What would you like us to recommend?

**Ms SCULLY:** I think you should all come to a site visit in the city of Wagga Wagga. I would host you and I would really show you what it means and what it looks like on the ground. The city of Wagga Wagga was really established over an 18-year period. Our commitment is to a cultural life and to care for the cultural collections of the city but also we take very seriously our obligations and responsibilities to actually connect and support regional communities of interest as well.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** If we were to do that would it be possible—we have not made our minds up—to go on some of the spoke visits and see those within a day?

**Ms SCULLY:** Yes, that would be a really important part of the experience.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** I move that we do that.

**Ms SCULLY:** I think you should consider it because I am sitting here in Sydney with you and it is sort of out of body. I would like to bring you to the context of the discussion by actually welcoming you to Wagga Wagga and the region because I think you would really see for yourselves how it all works.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It is a nice heritage room though?

**Ms SCULLY:** Yes, it is beautiful.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** My question may repeat some of what you have said but you talked about the Western Sydney Arts Strategy being a great success.

**Ms SCULLY:** Really exciting.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Can you touch on why that is working and key elements that you think can translate to a regional level?

**Ms SCULLY:** First of all, it was a strategy that determined a place: Western Sydney. We are going to build assets that are purpose built and built for the people of Western Sydney and the visitors and actually recognise the collections and the importance of a cultural life and cultural institutions being located in place and have it then resourced and work very closely with local government and other organisations to build it.

I am not sure how old that strategy is but it would be at least a decade old. Western Sydney is on fire. The culture institutions and cultural life is incredible. The expectation of someone working in Western Sydney to have their story and place as part of their experience in a local context is really exciting. It is multi-disciplined, it is multiple art forms but most of all it recognised that they needed to define a strategy, a geographic locale and work with local government. You are achieving it.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** The State arts policy is over a decade old?

**Ms SCULLY:** I am not sure. I do not know how old that is. It has been long admired in regional New South Wales. It is about pace; you cannot build and fix everything in 12 months. The relationship with local government is ongoing and you can see the results.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Would you have any documents on the strategy at all?

**Ms SCULLY:** I am sure I could find them.

**The CHAIR:** You took some questions on notice. I note the Committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice be returned within 21 days and the secretariat will be in contact with you about that.

**Ms SCULLY:** Thank you for inviting me to appear.

**(The witness withdrew)**

**DEBBIE SOMMERS**, Volunteer Curator, Port Macquarie Museum, and Vice President, Port Macquarie Historical Society, affirmed and examined

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

**Ms SOMMERS:** I would.

**The CHAIR:** Could you limit it to two or three minutes?

**Ms SOMMERS:** I shall. Thank for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am here not only to represent the views of the Port Macquarie Museum but also to champion the value and needs of volunteer-managed museums across New South Wales. The inquiry has already highlighted that if volunteer-managed museums do not advocate for themselves they will continue to be overlooked in New South Wales arts and culture policy and planning. This is evident and highlighted in Create in NSW, the New South Wales arts and cultural policy framework. I quote from page 22 which states, "New South Wales State cultural institutions manage significant cultural heritage collections. These institutions provide a unique and irreplaceable archive of our history and contemporary culture." It goes on to state, "The State cultural institutions belong to the people of New South Wales".

The same should be said for the collections of most volunteer-managed museums across the State. The State's significant cultural heritage materials and collections are dispersed and held in numerous museums, libraries, archives and galleries. Many of these collections are managed by volunteers with little, if any, financial support from any level of government. Last week I spent time with colleagues from museums and galleries across New South Wales. Many of them mentioned to me the tiny volunteer-managed museums out there. This particularly resonates with me because it is evident that they do not know what they are talking about.

Many volunteer-managed museums are not tiny in terms of space, nor in the size of their collections. Many occupy large and heritage listed buildings. They have often worked hard to save them from demolition only to find that there is little interest in or funding for their ongoing maintenance. Nor are volunteer-managed museums tiny in terms of staffing. For example, the Port Macquarie Museum has a staff of 60 part-time volunteers. What is tiny about volunteer-managed museums are the grants programs offered or available to them, as we mentioned in our submission. The decision to merge Arts NSW and Screen NSW into the Office of Culture, Arts and Screen sends a clear message that collections are not in the mix. Perhaps it is time to truly recognise the value of our rich and unique cultural heritage by creating a new entity, "Collections NSW", with a clearly set out plan for supporting the management, use and access to the State's significant cultural materials held by all collecting institutions.

Many of those held by volunteer-managed museums have already been identified by significant assessments funded through the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grants Program. Volunteer-managed museums across the State are expecting real positive and effective change from this inquiry. The Port Macquarie Museum suggests a good starting point would be fully funded collection documentation officers to work for groups of volunteer-managed museums in all areas of the State; a dedicated and appropriately funded museums grants program for volunteer-managed museum projects that demonstrate benefits such as collection management, use and access, but not excluding creativity; and a dedicated and appropriately resourced capital infrastructure and maintenance grants program, including an emergency fund, for volunteer and community owned museum buildings. I look forward to answering your questions .

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** I note in your submission on page 4 you make a significant point about the amount of funding. You state, "Our museum has been a regular and successful applicant under the program, however, the total program amounted to \$85,000 in 2015, funded 43 projects, an average of \$1,980. If we divide the total funding by the number of volunteer-managed community museums the amount available to each museum would be a measly \$280." That is a measly amount. How do you survive on such an amount?

**Ms SOMMERS:** In our case we survive by strong leadership and seeking grant opportunities whenever we can. We do spend a lot of time focusing on our collections because we think that is very important. In fact, that has been the basis for us leveraging so much funding. Most of the grant programs we access are quite small.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Only \$280.

**Ms SOMMERS:** They are not good value in terms of effort. The volunteer hours put into grant applications, doing the projects and acquitting those grant projects are minuscule in terms of value for effort.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Sommers, you go into detail in your submission about the success of the Our Rivers Our History project. It is a collaboration. The State Government funding for that, while welcome, was less than \$45,000?

**Ms SOMMERS:** Correct.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Can you tell us how much came from the State Government and what the benefits were?

**Ms SOMMERS:** The Our Rivers Our History project was a collaborative project involving seven of the 18 volunteer-managed museums on the mid North Coast and the funding for the project was \$42,000, excluding goods and services tax. It was a relatively small funding project but it had enormous benefits. It really demonstrated what can be done with a little bit of funding going into the regions. It did involve a great deal of project management on my account. I, too, am a volunteer. However, it has really opened people's eyes to what can be achieved. It has also opened volunteers' eyes to what can be achieved by properly documenting their collections and telling the stories. Collections are about telling the stories. I would be happy to be locked away in a room somewhere, researching collections, rather than doing all the other things that I do. I always make time each week to research our collection, because that is really important to me.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You can go to *www.oro.com.au* to learn more about this.

**Ms SOMMERS:** Thank you very much for that promotion.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I had a look at it. The website is a lovely introduction to your collections. Has it drawn more visitors?

**Ms SOMMERS:** Yes, it has. Because of this inquiry and other promotions that are happening—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** That website, again, is—

**Ms SOMMERS:** It is *www.oro.com.au*. We are receiving about a hundred unique visitors to that site per week. We are being contacted about our collections, when people have seen items there or through other online initiatives that some of us are undertaking. For example, at Port Macquarie Museum we were contacted by someone in America who had seen something through Trove. We are putting parts of our collection, our documentation, on Trove. A photograph from our collection recently appeared in the *Journal of Crustacean Biology*, an international science journal. That shows that access to collections is very important.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** In the absence of adequate funding and with collections mostly in antiquated buildings, we stand to lose a big part of our history unless we turn it around, do we not?

**Ms SOMMERS:** Yes, and clearly we already have lost a large chunk of our history because collections have not been well documented and supported in the past. That is evident. A number of items in our collection can no longer be found. I am sure that is the case in most volunteer-managed museums across the State. I should add that it is probably also the case even at the Powerhouse Museum.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Or the object can be found but its significance and story have been lost.

**Ms SOMMERS:** Yes. Sometimes you can find the object but not its story. The stories are what make our history, our past and inform our future. We should not forget that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I asked Ms Scully this question and I am going to ask you. You are working in regional New South Wales with volunteers, looking for small grants to make a fundamental difference. How does it feel when you see the State Government potentially spending skyward of \$1 billion to relocate a perfectly functioning and respected museum 10 kilometres down the road.?

**Ms SOMMERS:** Not very impressed, obviously. I table an article the from the *Sydney Morning Herald* dated 26 September 2016. The Committee may have already seen it. Our museum features because we are after \$25,000 to update our conservation management plan and include an archaeological management plan. It is not very well received when we hear that sort of figure being offered and we cannot find \$25,000. In fact, there is not a funding program available to fund our conservation management program. There is part funding available through the Office of Environment and Heritage, up to \$10,000 only, but nothing higher. A lot of the funding programs on offer at the moment are almost intended to contain us.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You said that in your submission. In some ways they trap you in a low-level equilibrium trap.

**Ms SOMMERS:** I strongly believe that. The term "disconnect" has been used today. I think the term is really "alienate".

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** You say that there is a lack of coordination at all levels of government. Who is responsible for the coordination? Who ought to be responsible?

**Ms SOMMERS:** My comments were made about the levels of operating funding, as opposed to coordination. The State is lacking an overall strategy for museums. Certainly the Create in NSW policy looks very much at the State institutions and at bringing the State's cultural material to the regions. There is no strategy to harness and use the already existing rich cultural materials in the regions and make them the tourist attraction as well.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Thank you for all the work that you do in Port Macquarie. Everybody in that community speaks extremely highly of the incredible richness of your institution. My first point is about funding. It has been a perennial problem for community museums. This is not attributable to one side of politics; this is something that has been broken for a long time and that we need to fix.

**Ms SOMMERS:** I am an early retiree. I have been involved in museums since I retired 13 years ago. Funding has been a problem for some time. It is because there is a lack of overall strategy. A strategy would not only help to find where resources are allocated but also give a framework to how museums develop into the future. There are a large number of collections held across regional New South Wales. There are no barriers to starting a new museum currently. The policy needs to consider not only funding but also the structure and framework and how workers, both paid and unpaid, are supported.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That brings me to the relationship that community museums have with Museums and Galleries of NSW. It provides some training for volunteers, as we know. What else do you think it could and should be doing with regional museums?

**Ms SOMMERS:** First, I think they should be getting a bigger chunk of the available funding budget. It is not enough money to do much with. A media release came out recently announcing \$20,000 for small community museum projects.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Is that for one or for the entire State?

**Ms SOMMERS:** That is for the entire State. That was the New South Wales Government media release of 18 July. Museums work very closely with Museums and Galleries of NSW and it provides funding, training and development support for museum volunteers, and those in volunteer-managed museums in particular. One of the problems, though, in providing funding for training and developing museum volunteers is that volunteers are not always there for a long time. Collection management is also an issue. I mean not only researching the objects but telling their stories, caring for them into the future and making sure that the building does not leak and that they are conserved. That is not necessarily work that attracts a large number of volunteers. The answer is to have paid people to do that work. I do not think that volunteer museums have advocated strongly enough for that. We tend to be overly grateful for the small amounts of funding that we receive because, quite frankly, they are better than nothing.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** The point that you made before was that, particularly in regional museums, even small funding can be magnified and have a really important effect.

**Ms SOMMERS:** Small funding absolutely makes a difference. It is inappropriate say that it does not. Any funding makes a difference, but if you really want to have an impact and to have longevity then the way the funding is allocated needs to be more clearly thought out.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Sommers, you would support what Ms Scully said, which was that it is one thing to fix the roof every 15 years but really we need commitment to employ people to do the hardcore work.

**Ms SOMMERS:** Absolutely, and by hardcore work I am not talking about grant applications; I am talking about physically researching and documenting the collections. That is work that I do and that is work that I train other people in doing but there are not a lot of people who can do that or who want to do that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Do you see a role for a series of regional, if you like, fly-in squads that move around the State and devote real attention and resources to a collection to get it up to speed as a starting point, or more systemic employment?

**Ms SOMMERS:** I have thought about fly-in squads but, you know, all care, no responsibility perhaps. So I really see it being more systemic and I see those people being absolutely connected to the museums that they are working with. Also I do not know whether you noticed in my statement I said working for, rather than working for someone else.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Do you see being in partnership with local council as the best and most viable model?

**Ms SOMMERS:** It could be. It will not work everywhere. For example, at the moment it may not work in the Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** What has occurred to me in the course of this inquiry and from my own investigations—I am happy for you to shout me down—is that it seems that museums appear to get less attention and less funding than regional galleries. To me that is one of the fundamental issues here. Could you speak to that if you believe that to be the case?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And is it a glamour thing?

**Ms SOMMERS:** Yes, absolutely correct—10 points. The regional galleries were set up quite differently but there is no doubt that the current policies and strategies are intended to make regional galleries shine. I think there is a level of elitism about them; they do not rely on volunteers. Sometimes professionals or paid people like to talk to other paid people rather than unpaid people or volunteers, for whatever reason. Perhaps they think we do not speak the same language. Perhaps they think we do not have the right level of literacy, I do not know. But I think that is very true. Yes, there is definitely a huge disparity. Occasionally one might get a cast off for the regional gallery—a couple of frames or something, an old display case for which we are eternally grateful—but we cannot compete. It is the same with the program funding and project funding offered by Arts NSW. We have just had our second fail in seeking Arts NSW project funding. So that is the next level for us. There is nowhere else to go. In fact, frankly the Port Macquarie Museum has probably almost outgrown the devolved funding offered by Arts NSW through museums and galleries.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** There is an increasing move—rather than prize local collections and local history to build a big, modern white box that can be used for anything?

**Ms SOMMERS:** Yes, or a big modern glass box, one might say.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Yes, I suppose from your perspective that is true.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That having been said, the glasshouse is now quite a vibrant local cultural centre. Do you agree?

**Ms SOMMERS:** I have always been in favour of the glasshouse but it certainly divided our community and a high number of members in the local community still have not set foot in the glasshouse.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It is the opportunity cost, is it not? With a great big permanent project like that you must look at opportunity costs and wonder who made that decision?

**Ms SOMMERS:** We know who made the decision. Yes, we do see it as a huge opportunity cost, particularly for us because, as I indicated in our submission, the local government area lost a museum focused cultural worker through that project.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Contrary to what Ms Scully and others have said, it is really the paid and engaged commitment from people that will get us out of the mess we are in at the moment.

**Ms SOMMERS:** Absolutely.

**(The witness withdrew)**

**(Short adjournment)**

**ELIANE MOREL**, Deputy Convener, Save Bondi Pavilion, affirmed and examined

**MURRAY COX**, Cultural Adviser, Save Bondi Pavilion, sworn and examined

**The CHAIR:** Thank you for coming. Would either of you care to start with a short statement?

**Ms MOREL:** No, I will leave that to Murray.

**Mr COX:** G'day honourable members, ladies and gentlemen.

**The CHAIR:** G'day, Mr Cox. It is not often someone says that to us and I think that is an excellent start.

**Mr COX:** I am thrilled to be here and following Ms Scully and Ms Sommers' clarity and intent. I bring greetings from the denizens of "Boondi", the place of crashing waves. It is a common accusation of Bondians that we have vacuous minds and sunburnt bodies. Many people do not understand the active engagement with the ocean when swimming and surfing that play is a pleasure to be gained from effortful enjoyment. Many people may not feel the hedonistic, erotic pleasure of doing next to nothing wearing next to nothing on a sandy shore, but we know that there are particular places that nourish and console us, spaces wedged between our dense urbanity and the wide sea.

Bondi is also a creative source of the concept of surf lifesaving, of the lifesaving reel, modern surfboards and surf wear, Sculpture by the Sea and Camilla's kaftans. It is a cultural source of the bronzed Aussie, who stands beside the bushman and the digger to represent the egalitarian spirit of an Australian common wealth. This particular beach identity first saw the light of day in the summer of 1906: Daylight bathing was officially permitted and an independent surf and sand culture evolved in Australia. But where is this exciting story being told? This inquiry is no stranger to imaginary museums. The Powerhouse in Parramatta is nearly the largest elephant in the room. What we are suggesting is an imaginative museum, a museum dedicated to the broad idea of coastal culture, situated at Bondi Pavilion on Bondi Beach, at the geographic verandah of Australia's pre-eminent city on the threshold of land and sea. It would create the opportunity to exhibit and explore the social, cultural and artistic stories of this nation girt by sea.

Unfortunately, we have a problem with our local Waverley Council. They are proposing to redevelop this national landmark, this heritage listed building—and incidentally our own town hall—as a thoroughly commercial and catering function facility. We, as stakeholders in the pavilion, wish for a more imaginative solution—a vision in fact that is based on our cultural economy, not the catering economy. A museum of coastal culture, or, should I say, an art gallery of coastal culture, is an important initiative in this vision. We seek your help and support in this venture. Thank you.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What is the current state of play? I understand in the *Wentworth Courier* some weeks ago Waverley Council placed an advertisement for the business plan. What is the current state of play and can you give us a bit of a time line of what is going on?

**Ms MOREL:** It is a long story.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Does the time line start in the 1980s with the then corrupt Liberal administration?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Leave it to Lee Rhiannon to raise those things in the Senate.

**Ms MOREL:** In 2012 Waverley Council started a plan of management to have a look at the whole Bondi Park area. That included looking at Bondi Pavilion and upgrading the pavilion. It was agreed more or less at the time that there would be approximately \$10 million spent on Bondi Pavilion to upgrade the facilities there. That was the essential plan. In December 2015 Waverley Council was presented a plan that had been approved apparently in secret meetings between Mayor Betts and staffers at Waverley Council and this plan was now suddenly \$38 million. The plan was by Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects—who, by the bye, were the architects of the Glasshouse at Port Macquarie. There are several aspects of the plan that the community has opposed. One of them is that there is a plan to get rid of the community from the top floor. The top floor of the pavilion currently houses a theatre and it is called the Seagull Room, all of which are community hireable spaces—ballet classes, drumming classes, all sorts of different classes and theatre events go on in that space.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And that spectacular veranda that you can go to and see the whole of Bondi Beach.

**Ms MOREL:** You can, which is completely open to the public.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So what happened between the \$10 million and the \$38 million? Was there any discussion with the community?

**Ms MOREL:** No.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Or was it completely behind closed doors?

**Ms MOREL:** It was completely behind closed doors. Since then we have had two community consultations.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What did they comprise? What happened at these so-called consultations?

**Ms MOREL:** The first community consultation comprised 700 submissions by the community—more than 700 submissions. I believe there was something like 706 submissions and 700 of those submissions were against the plan. When you think about the number of people who respond, for example, to a survey—you might get 250 if you are lucky—700 members of the community wrote for themselves, that is incredible, that is a huge response, and Waverley council chose to predominantly ignore those submissions. We had another round of community consultation conducted by a consultation company called KJA. Again, KJA have found that the community is opposed once again—what a surprise—to the plans put forward by Waverley council.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Would you agree that there is overwhelming community opposition to Waverley council's privatisation plans?

**Ms MOREL:** Absolutely, overwhelming.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** How would you describe the behaviour of the mayor during this process?

**Ms MOREL:** I would describe the behaviour of the mayor as disgraceful.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Would you say that she is dictatorial?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Point of order: How is this relevant to the terms of reference?

**Ms MOREL:** I would say—

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Excuse me, I am taking a point of order.

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

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** It is not relevant to the terms of reference to ask about the behaviour of a particular mayor.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** As a dictator.

**The CHAIR:** Would you like to rephrase the question?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I was talking about the community consultation. I was told there were 706 submissions and 700 were against the proposal. These were not pro forma submissions, these were genuine heartfelt individual submissions—

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** You are attacking the mayor.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** To the point of order—

**The CHAIR:** Order! We will have a process here. Do you wish to speak to the point of order?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I have finished my comments.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I am not exactly sure where the Hon. Walt Secord is going but I assume that it will be relevant to the terms of reference because many of those submissions were talking about the cultural institution—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Correct.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I think he will get there but he needs to take that next step.

**The CHAIR:** Order! We need to stay away from the personality.

**Ms MOREL:** Mr Shoebridge is exactly right. The tenure of most of the submissions was that the community wants the Bondi Pavilion to remain as a cultural and community centre. It has been a cultural and community centre for approximately the past 40 years. Waverley council has, to some extent, been running



down those services over the past 10 years and we want it to be re-energised as a community and cultural centre. We think the cultural input of the community is what will attract and delight tourists rather than more coffee. So the plans that Save Bondi Pavilion have been coming up with for the pavilion include a museum that shows off the surf culture and the entire sort of history of the Bondi area, which includes, of course, the Indigenous contribution to Bondi. There is an enormous amount of resources in the community—in all of the surf clubs there is history that is displayed. I am a member of the Bondi Surf Club and on the walls of the Bondi Surf Club, all around, are surfboards and pictures of incredible people who have contributed in so many ways to community. These are hidden away from the public; people cannot see them. These are the sorts of resources that it would be amazing for the busloads of tourists who come to Bondi to see because—and I have heard this before—people say, "I have done the Bronte to Bondi walk, which was pretty good but what do I do after I have had my coffee?" People come and learn nothing about Bondi and its history.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Mr Cox, you seem to be a person who has had a long history with Bondi. You probably remember the Markham era down at Waverley Council where they had a dream of privatising and doing the same thing.

**Mr COX:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Does this remind you of the Markham era down at Bondi?

**Mr COX:** The zombies come back up out of the grave every decade. That has been true since the 1920s; there have been schemes upon schemes. The essence of Bondi is that it has a larrikin spirit; it does embody a particular ethos of Australia, but because it is on the beach it is not well quantified. For instance, Carolyn Markham in her day, who followed her husband as mayor—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Jim.

**Mr COX:** —said that she went down to Bondi one day and I think her exact words were, "You can't tell me that the 20,000 down there were doing something productive", which, in essence, is where we are at the moment with the current council saying they are the adults up the hill and we are the children down at the beach and "We know what's best for you". They are not offering a vision for Bondi, for the pavilion, where we as two or three community groups have been putting on evenings to offer having a radio station down at the beach right with the recording studios that are there—we have an art gallery, we have a theatre. The art gallery and the theatre are the only two public theatres and galleries in all of the three coastal councils.

We have an opportunity at Bondi to put a museum there, even without changing the fabric of the building, that would then do exactly what a museum should do: it would bring people to the place and facilitate being able to put on events in the theatre, events in the art gallery, a well-curated gift shop—marvellous things that would really help the creative culture of Bondi. We want something more than a T-shirt that says "I was at Bondi". It is a cultural hub and it should have an expression of it, and this museum is an idea that we think should be pushed forward.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Mr Cox, do you think that there is almost contempt by the majority on council, by the mayor, for the very spirit of Bondi—that sort of larrikin, celebration of freedom and leisure and, if you like, a little unregulated community that has its own spirit? Is that what you are facing?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Point of order: I find it difficult to understand why we are having these personal attacks on the mayor. We have not done it to any other witnesses in any other inquiry.

**The CHAIR:** I did not hear a reference to the mayor.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** "Contempt by the mayor" was—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I said the majority on council.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I think if you check *Hansard*, you said "and the mayor".

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Anyhow, you are quite right though about the mayor having that attitude. I accept that.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Point of order: I did not say that. You are misrepresenting me now. You are using this forum as an attack on the mayor. Let us talk about their proposal for a museum.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Which is where I want to go. Mr Cox, there really is not any place that celebrates that kind of beach culture, larrikin spirit, but also celebrates a community that has been so resilient and, effectively, independent, as you see down there at Bondi, is there?

**Mr COX:** The surf clubs do not have public museums. I am going to a meeting tomorrow evening where one of the local identities has brought together the surf clubs and the Icebergs and the ladies swimming club to bring up the idea of a specifically surf and swimming museum. That is not my personal preference for how a museum at Bondi Pavilion would be, but it is a good example of the local spirit coming to the fore and being innovative in suggesting not just a museum but that there should be an entire walk along the promenade—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Which links all the different surf clubs in the area.

**Mr COX:** —to celebrate what Terry Jenkins calls the heroes and champions of swimming and surfing.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Have you heard anybody in the community say, "Do you know what the pavilion needs? Not a museum or a cultural thing but a nice high-class restaurant that takes up the whole top level"? Has anybody said that?

**Ms MOREL:** No, no-one in the community has said that. In fact, many people have said that is what they do not want, and we do not need. We do not need it.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Is there a kind of frustration in the community where you have a fabulous idea that is kind of embryonic and an amazing community asset which is actually owned by the State Government, with the difficulty in translating that community-generated idea to an actual outcome? That must be quite frustrating for you, that there are so many barriers to putting something good in a public building.

**Mr COX:** I think you heard it from Ms Scully and Ms Sommers that the council can be for you or against you, but these people represent a community spirit outside of the political and commercial machinations. That is why we have come before you today, to seek your support outside your personal and political allegiances.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And there needs to be a role for the State Government to facilitate that, to empower communities to be able to tell their story in their communities. That is what you are asking: you want to be empowered as a community to tell the story of Bondi at the most culturally significant place, which is the pavilion?

**Ms MOREL:** Absolutely. That is what we want to do.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I have spent 12 years on local government myself. I have been involved in many battles to try to get museums opened or funding. The gay and lesbian community of the inner city are trying to get one opened up at the moment in Oxford Street. The easiest thing for council to do, the cheapest thing, is to provide a room or something; it is the recurrent cost that is always the baulking point for councils. Just as an aside, I think your idea is a great idea; its time will come at some point. There could be, I think, quite a successful museum around the issue you are talking about, whether or not it is this location or a future council. That is just the way it goes as you put the question to get your dream occur and, as I say, the gay and lesbian community has not achieved theirs. The biggest drawback has not been the property; it has been the recurrent cost. You are going to have to talk about \$100,000 or \$200,000, or maybe more, to employ a person to curate and so on. Have you got a business plan—aside from the fact that you want the space—for the funding of this museum?

**Mr COX:** Yes, we have. It is very simple. After the Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Bondi Beach is it. We will just stand in the way and put our hand out and the money will come. We are not worried about being in Wagga or being in Port Macquarie; we are at Bondi Beach and we have two million visitors a year. We will be able to fund this.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Mr Cox, you are saying some of it would be visitor attendance, but I suppose you are also looking at the fact that the council has put aside \$38 million to do the wrong plan, and a fraction of that could do the right plan and put some money aside for recurrent funding. Is that your position, Ms Morel?

**Ms MOREL:** Yes, that is, that is correct.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Council funding are you saying?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Council is proposing spending \$38 million to do the wrong thing—

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** That aside, I am talking about the building's operation.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Could some of the recurrent funding come from investing that money in a pool—

**Ms MOREL:** I certainly believe that we would like funding. We would like funding support from the Government to enable this to happen.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** In the earlier concept plans, and I am a bit confused, there have been changes to it, which is a good thing, along the way—

**Ms MOREL:** There have been very minor changes.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** There were two gallery spaces. There is one gallery there now which, I understand, is booked out all year long—commercial and community exhibitions of all types. I have been down there myself to see a few. I understand that the current proposal is to relocate that, enlarge it and make it better, but the original plan had two gallery spaces and they had removed the second one because of the protests from the Save Bondi Pavilion group.

**Ms MOREL:** Can I just clarify that?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Yes, sure.

**Ms MOREL:** The reason that they decided to change the second gallery space into community space was because they had essentially removed 50 per cent of community space and the community objected to that.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** So they responded to the community; that is good?

**Ms MOREL:** So they responded to that by turning the gallery into a community space.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** The so-called arrogant mayor responded. Okay.

**Ms MOREL:** No, no, excuse me. They had removed 50 per cent of the space and replaced it with merely 10 per cent of the space and that was that gallery space, so I do not agree that that is a good compromise. That is not acceptable.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** So the community space is back now?

**Ms MOREL:** That tiny bit of community space, so not 40 per cent—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ten per cent.

**Ms MOREL:** Not the 40 to 50 per cent that had been taken away from us; it had been replaced by 10 per cent.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** But now there is only one gallery?

**Ms MOREL:** But now there is only one gallery.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But there is still one big fat restaurant grabbing the entire top?

**Ms MOREL:** But there is still one, but the entire top floor and the High Tide Room, which is at the back of the pavilion and the music studios and the pottery studios and the art studios and the theatre were all going to be removed from the community as part of a plan by—

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** But they are not now?

**Ms MOREL:** That has not been decided on.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Mr Cox, I thought you would be going to Waverley Council's meeting; I think that is tomorrow night. I am just looking at their website. They are proposing—it still has to be voted on but council is staging the whole project and moving the contentious part to after the next council elections, assuming they occur in 2017—

**Ms MOREL:** No, that is not true.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** It is on their website.

**Ms MOREL:** Yes, but on their website the staged plan is basically a Trojan horse. The staged planning is intended to remove the current toilets to the side of the pavilion, which we also object to because it is unsafe, and that will remove the pottery and the arts studios, which are then supposedly going to be relocated, and they are also planning to take out the music studios and supposedly again relocate them into one room in the pavilion. At the moment it is three rooms; it is two rehearsal studios and a recording block in the middle of it. They are proposing to replace that with one small room. They have not talked about the costing of that, how much that is going to actually cost. It costs approximately \$2 million to create a music studio. These are pie in the sky ideas that have no basis in reality because they have not costed them or provided a business plan for them.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** The website seems to say differently.

**Ms MOREL:** Well, the website is misleading.

**Mr COX:** Mr Mallard, I would be very happy to give you my detailed synopsis of the staged process. I would just alert you to one point. In December 2015 the \$38 million plan had a 18 per cent contingency concerning the building works—

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** That is not uncommon.

**Mr COX:** —perhaps changes to the design—

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** They are heritage matters, which you cannot help.

**Mr COX:** —and heritage matters.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** It is quite common, though, 18 per cent?

**Mr COX:** Yes, and the current plan for the whole thing has reduced it to 4.6 per cent, which is not a very big number.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** You can raise it tomorrow night with the council.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I have a quick question. What has been the response from your two local members, Bruce Notley-Smith, the member for Coogee, and Gabrielle Upton, the member for Vaucluse?

**Mr COX:** We went to visit Mr Notley-Smith a month ago and he was obviously, as you would understand, in his electoral chambers, a very busy, tired man but he gave us a fair hearing but deferred—

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** He has Coogee Beach not Bondi Beach in his electorate.

**Mr COX:** He deferred to Gabrielle Upton and we have not been able to get a direct appointment with her.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What about your Federal member? What use has he been?

**Mr COX:** Our Federal member has been absolutely silent because the mayor works for him a couple of days a week.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** For the record, who is your Federal member?

**Ms MOREL:** That is Mr Malcolm Turnbull.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So the mayor works for your Federal member and have you been able to get an appointment with the Federal member?

**Mr COX:** No, but we have met his staffers, who have also turned up at one of our events and we have got a very fair reception.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Excuse me, Mr Shoebridge, I did not follow this. So the mayor works for Malcolm Turnbull.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Oh, that's a big secret. Lee Rhiannon has been campaigning for her Senate seat.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** And were you able to get a meeting with the Prime Minister?

**Ms MOREL:** We have not had a meeting with the Prime Minister, no.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I suppose if you had one takeaway message for this Committee, which is looking at museums and how the State Government goes about supporting museums and galleries, from a Bondi perspective what is the takeaway message?

**Mr COX:** Why we put in our submission was we thought we had an innovative idea for a museum that answered several of the points of reference, most particularly the economic impact of museums and galleries on cultural tourism. We are very interested in the cultural economy. We would offer the opportunity to access collections to be able to curate exhibitions from existing collections of galleries and museums in an innovative way and present them to a different public. It is a slightly alternative way, as you said there, to support museum development. We commend our idea to the inquiry.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Your local community has a history of doing alternative ways of presenting amazing cultural things and Sculpture by the Sea would be a case in point?

**Mr COX:** Sculpture by the Sea would be certainly about number one.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Well funded by the State Government.

**The CHAIR:** We might draw it to a close there. I note that last comment. Thank you very much for coming, Ms Morel and Mr Cox. I do not think you took any questions on notice.

**Mr COX:** Thank you for your time.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I think there were questions about the business plan.

**Ms MOREL:** You wanted to know about the business plan.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I think I heard the business plan.

**The CHAIR:** I think basically Mr Mallard was asking: Do you have a business plan?

**Ms MOREL:** Yes, that was one of the questions. There was another question you were asking.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Recurrent expenditure was an issue. The staff will tell you.

**The CHAIR:** If you do have a business plan that you would like to table, we would like to receive it.

**Ms MOREL:** Okay, good.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You are doing an extraordinary job out there in the community. Congratulations.

**Mr COX:** Thank you very much.

**(The witnesses withdrew)**

**(Short adjournment)**

**KYLIE WINKWORTH**, Museum and Heritage Consultant, affirmed and examined

**JANIS WILTON**, OAM, Associate Professor in History, University of New England, affirmed and examined

**JOSEPH EISENBERG**, OAM, Cultural Director Emeritus, Maitland City Council, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Would you care to make a short opening statement, and hold it to three minutes if you could?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** I would like to start by thanking all the members of this Committee for agreeing to establish this inquiry. It is no small matter to be heard by members of Parliament and to have the opportunity to highlight critical issues for the future of museums and collections in New South Wales. I am impressed by the thoughtful questions you have asked and the time you have spent to absorb the information from so many submissions. I thank you for that. This is potentially the most important museum inquiry since the Federal Government's Pigott report on Museums in Australia in 1975.

Many of the outstanding recommendations in the Pigott report are repeated in submissions to this inquiry, most notably, the need for regional networks of museums supported by paid curators—recommended by Pigott—and the importance of policy and funding coordination for museums and collections. People working at the coalface of museums have been saying it for decades. Now you have given museums and their advocates the chance to have their needs considered and to address some of the entrenched policy failures.

I know each of you is in public life to make a difference. In this inquiry you can make a huge difference to the future of museums and collections in New South Wales by delivering a report that enlarges museum opportunities for all communities and provides practical solutions to the policy, coherence and funding inequalities for museums in regional New South Wales. I applaud the Baird Government's ambition to create a great new museum in Parramatta. What I do not understand is why that museum is not being built from the stories of Parramatta and Western Sydney. You do not plan a modern museum on the premise of shifting collections from one building to another.

All museums start from conversations, and all the great museums are connected to place, contrary to evidence given earlier at this inquiry. When I reflect on the debate about the museum in Parramatta I am struck by the disconnect between the passionate advocacy from any understanding of the extraordinary history and cultures in Parramatta. Everyone seems to have missed the World Heritage landscape of Parramatta Park and the Fleet Street heritage precinct. What other city thinking of a new museum would not start with that asset? Some parts of Parramatta's history are well known: The first successful farm, the first vineyard in the Governor's domain, the convict history, and Australia's three surviving eighteenth century houses, which represent a cross-section of colonial society.

Less well known is the contact history of black-white relations: the good intentions, missteps, misunderstandings; the wars of resistance; the first attempt at reconciliation in 1805 when a group of Darug women approached Samuel Marsden in the hope of reconciliation between the settlers and Aboriginal groups; Macquarie's recognition of the obligation owed to Aboriginal people for the loss of their lands and living resources; the feasting of the tribes; the removal of children to the native institution; the first land grant to an Aboriginal woman, Maria Lock, whose descendants still live in Western Sydney; the survival of Aboriginal families in Western Sydney; and the rough justice and the institutions that inherited the results of misconceived policies.

The seeds for understanding modern Australia are there in the landscape and history of Parramatta and Western Sydney. Apart from the contact history, the great cultural asset in Parramatta is its diverse communities, with almost 50 per cent of the population born overseas. I have been to the opening of migration heritage exhibitions in Parramatta and seen the impact that sharing stories of migration and culture can have on communities that otherwise receive little recognition. I table a paper on the Migration Heritage Centre. We live in a world where there is too much contention and there are too few spaces for conversation where we can build respect and cultural understanding. How inspiring to reading Deng Adut's story of survival and resilience, from Sudanese child soldier to New South Wales Australian of the Year. Where is the museum to tell his story and those of countless other migrants whose hard work has created the modern nation?

I know that many members of the upper House have wonderful migration stories to share with the people of New South Wales, not least the Chair of this Committee, the Hon. Robert Borsak, and the Hon. Walt Secord. We need a museum that shares the stories of migration and that builds community harmony and understanding. When I look at the terms of reference of this inquiry I see that they are interrelated. It is not one problem associated with the Powerhouse Museum and another basket of issues for museums on the other side of

the sandstone wall. I hope that when the Committee writes its report it will look at the terms of reference and submissions as a holistic issue that begins with good policy and equitable funding. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Thanks very much.

**Dr WILTON:** I join Kylie in thanking the Committee for having this inquiry. I am first and foremost an historian. I have a strong belief in the importance of understanding the past in order to appreciate the present. I have a firm belief that history is not just presented in books and articles but is out there in museums, on the streets, in walking tours and in a variety of forms. For more than 30 years—it is always hard to remember that you have worked for that long—I have worked at the University of New England, teaching and coordinating the local, family and applied history awards. We have students across the country, many in regional New South Wales. I teach a course on history in museums, and I have students in that course and undertaking research projects who are volunteers at those museums. They do amazing work and represent the amazing work done in local museums. Joe Eisenberg and I put in a submission. He is also my partner in life. I thought I should own up to that. We are married and we have children.

**Mr EISENBERG:** And a grandchild.

**Dr WILTON:** And a grandchild. Our submission focused on two projects, not because we want to promote those projects or our work but because we think they illustrate key issues, key concerns. They are: the role of local museums, the representation of regional New South Wales in Sydney museums and the important role of history. Because I am at heart a teacher, I have brought some show-and-tell, which I will provide to the Committee so that members may amuse themselves later. It is a way of anchoring the projects we did. I have brought the book of the Golden Threads project. The project involved far more than a book. There was a travelling exhibition, a website and a range of other activities. The book is the easiest one to bring into this room. I brought it because all the amazing objects in the book come from local museums in regional New South Wales.

Out there is an amazing cultural and artefact heritage that needs to be tapped and given assistance. This project, which was the brainchild of the then Ministry for the Arts, in cooperation with the Heritage Office, tracked this (the State's Chinese history and heritage) across new regional New South Wales. It worked with local museums. It was a hugely collaborative project involving the Powerhouse Museum, which at that stage had a wonderful outreach program highlighting the history of the State. The Migration Heritage Centre also came on board. Another show-and-tell that I brought is a brochure that that the Migration Heritage Centre put together. I should test your regional geography. How many of you know where Tingha is?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** It is near Tamworth.

**Dr WILTON:** It is further north. Keep going. It is closer to Glen Innes and Inverell.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It is close to the border.

**Dr WILTON:** Do you know about the Wing Hing Long Museum and store? Wing Hing Long was a Chinese Australian store that dated from the late nineteenth century. As part of the Golden Threads project, and supported by the Powerhouse Museum and many other organisations, it became a community managed museum. It still runs as such. One of the wonderful things the Migration Heritage Centre did was to fund and print a brochure, because that little museum could not afford to do something like that. They worked collaboratively to do that. There are many other examples. For me, it is important to take a statewide view of our history, a statewide recognition of the collections, the histories and the stories that are out there in the regional areas. There is a need for an entity in the centre of Sydney that supports and collaborates with that network of museums.

The other example is at the other end of the extreme. I have another show-and-tell. This book is about the Maitland Jewish Cemetery. It is local. It is unique. Sydney does not have a dedicated one. The only other dedicated Jewish cemetery is in Goulburn. I should let Joe talk about this, but why? This project was initiated by the art gallery in Maitland, a council-led gallery, working with the local historical society. We do not yet have a Maitland museum. A travelling artist was also associated with the project. Galleries can work with historians and local museums. There can be those connections. There was a travelling exhibition of work by an artist called Hanna Kay, who had done paintings inspired by the cemetery. My key point is for this inquiry to think about the importance of history. Local museums and galleries need to be recognised, acknowledged and supported, knowing that they do things on a shoestring. These projects did not cost very much in money terms. They used a huge amount of in-kind support.

**The CHAIR:** Slow down. Take a breath.

**Dr WILTON:** I am a teacher. I get excited. I am sitting down. I need to pace the room.

**The CHAIR:** You are not allowed to do that here.

**Dr WILTON:** Okay.

**The CHAIR:** But you can take a pen out and mark people down.

**Dr WILTON:** My other point is to think about having a central museum in Sydney that looks after the history of New South Wales, somewhere for interstate and international visitors to encounter that history, and that supports it across the State. Digital access is an important issue. It is tragic that the Migration Heritage Centre has been mothballed. It undertook a number of projects like this across New South Wales. That is where I sit.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Thank you. Mr Eisenberg, would you like to add anything?

**Mr EISENBERG:** I agree with all of that.

**Dr WILTON:** Can you do it the same way?

**Mr EISENBERG:** I cannot say it the same way. I have worked in the visual arts and crafts industry for nearly 35 years and I sort of started in what might be called at the top, which was the Australia Council, the federally funded body of the Federal Government. Then I went, as most people thought, backwards and went into regional New South Wales to work in a regional gallery first in Armidale and lately Maitland—I retired about a year ago. The one thing that I know is that in that time, although I came initially from Sydney and studied in Sydney I realised that regional New South Wales was really missing out. Although I have worked in regional galleries, it is not about my job, I have always seen it as being part of regional museums as well.

The work that Dr Wilton has just spoke about we did together—she did more than I did—which always involved the regional museums, and it was not just about art. I too have a show and tell. I can leave you with exhibitions at the beginning of when the Maitland Gallery was opened about eight years go, which was called the Intangible Collection which showed the history of the building before it became the art museum. It was a teachers' college and part of the five old institutions that belonged to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Do want to tender that now?

**Dr WILTON:** These are also for all the members.

**Mr EISENBERG:** Yes. Finishing off, the exhibition which is on at the moment at the gallery which is called Inside Bloomfield, is about the coal industry, a particular coal company in Maitland on the outskirts of Maitland. If you look at the pictures you will not listen to me; I know what is going to happen.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We are going to put off that joy until after we have listened to you. You have our undivided attention.

**Mr EISENBERG:** Do you promise because I serve on a lot of committees and that is what we do in committees. I also want to say, just as Ms Winkworth and Dr Wilton have said, that I am appreciative of the opportunity to come and talk to you. This is a passion that I have had for more than 30 years and I will continue to have. I see no difference particularly between art galleries and museums in the regions. They are all screaming for money. I raised millions of dollars for the two institutions that I worked for, as well as from philanthropic trusts and industry. Sometimes the State Government came along but of course it was the poorest cousin of the lot at the table. That does not matter. We still built the institutions and we made sure that even though there were some showings of museums in both the Maitland area and the New England area, we have always seen it as part of our job. There is no difference in my mind between what we see on the walls and what we see as objects on plinths.

I have also worked on a number of projects with individual galleries and museums throughout New South Wales. I have toured exhibitions. I have assisted with infrastructure, the development of new institutions, assessing and valuing collections and, lo and behold, I also opened exhibitions. As I said, I am of the firm belief that the distinction between art galleries and museums often is divisive. For example, I have always felt that social history is the responsibility of both types of institutions. To this end, in my role as director, I have supported projects and exhibitions that invite conversations between history and art.

Regional art galleries and museums are the backbone of cultural activities and cultural tourism in regional New South Wales. They need to be funded and supported appropriately. The Powerhouse is no different. It too needs to be funded so that it can remain in the centre of international and national tourism as a place for, among other things, craft, decorative art and exhibitions of social, cultural and migration history. I had not been in the museum for a number of years and recently I decided that I really should go in. I was extremely



disappointed that some of the things that both Dr Wilton and Ms Winkworth have spoken about were no longer on show and obviously were not part of the structure of what is going on.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** If you could wrap up your introduction because I am sure members of the Committee have questions.

**Mr EISENBERG:** I think Parramatta and Western Sydney should have a museum. It should have a place where it can tell its history and stories, the migratory stories, but the Powerhouse needs to stay in Sydney. As somebody who came from regional New South Wales I would come and see people at the major institutions constantly. To travel around Sydney in a day or 1½ days and then to whiz back home is difficult enough, but to travel to Western Sydney on top of it is just bizarre. Imagine what tourists would feel.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Winkworth, I am sorry I did not hear your presentation.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Ms Winkworth, thank you for your fantastic and powerful submission that makes the case. Playing the devil's advocate, what do you say to the people of Western Sydney particularly if this Committee blocks the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum? In effect you will deny the community the opportunity to have a museum there.

**Ms WINKWORTH:** I do not think anybody wants to do that. I think all the submissions to the inquiry have strongly supported a museum in Parramatta. It is just a question of how you get there, following proper museum planning processes and having an opening dialogue with the communities in Parramatta and Western Sydney about what sorts of stories they want to tell. As I said, building a great museum is not about shuffling the collections from one museum to another; it starts with the stories that people want to tell about themselves. I appreciate that so many Committee members have been interested in Aboriginal history so I have brought in a report commissioned when I was working in Parramatta a couple of decades ago about Aboriginal contact history. I do not expect you to read it all but I have been very impressed that you are interested in these issues. Perhaps it could be copied as it is my only copy. I ask you to dip into that and I would defy anybody to look at this history and think that is the story that we need to be telling because, as Dr Wilton said, history is important and it matters. If we have a State that does not have a museum showcasing New South Wales history we imperil community understanding and education opportunities for people of all generations.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Committee members will look at it later because it is quite a challenge for us to put all that on online.

**Ms WINKWORTH:** I am not expecting you to read it all. I can see the size of the lever arch folder already. But it is a little known history and the consultants who are working on the business plan will never find these stories because their job is to do something else.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** The argument is that if the Powerhouse Museum property is not sold and the money is not allocated for a new museum in Parramatta they will not get it. As you said, is the choice between a museum at Ultimo or Parramatta? To many people if the sale does not proceed from where does the money come?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** In fact, it would be cheaper to keep the museum at Ultimo and build a new museum in Parramatta.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** I am not arguing that case.

**Ms WINKWORTH:** But that is a fact. It would be cheaper to keep the museum at Ultimo doing what it does so well, with collections that belong in those grand spaces, and to develop a new museum at Parramatta that fills some of the silences in our cultural profile and that genuinely is an international attraction because it is telling a story you cannot discover anywhere else in New South Wales. That is the opportunity.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Why would it be cheaper?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** Because the sale cost does not cover the cost of relocating all the collections, let alone building a new museum. There are many more opportunities to support a new museum in Parramatta. Indeed, as I suggest, rethinking a network of branch museums and regional museums that are related to the State's museums would offer better value for money.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** The three of you have an enormous history in relation to this area. What would the project of relocating that fabulous steam engine that is in the main collection of the Powerhouse look like in regard to time, energy, resources and money for just that one part of the collection?

**Dr WILTON:** It is daunting.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I hear you say it is daunting. Will you explain how and why just that one item is daunting?

**Dr WILTON:** In terms of cost I just imagine it would cost a great deal to relocate an item like that but it is about giving it context and the right environment and the right interpretation as well as just physically relocating it. So you are then building another purpose-built shape or space to house something that is perfectly adequately housed at the moment and tells a story where it is.

**Mr EISENBERG:** I was just going to add: Why do we want to move it? Why do we need to move it? It would cost thousands and thousands of dollars. That \$10 million that I saw is going to go nowhere. I have built galleries.

**Ms WINKWORTH:** That is just for the consultants.

**Mr EISENBERG:** I just want to say that has nothing to do with the real cost. The real cost has not even, I assume, been looked at. To answer that question how do we save 10 and get another 10—I read in the papers that one of the members here, I do not remember which one, mentioned that everybody is looking for funding and more funding and where is it all going to come from? That is the issue for the arts and for the museums. Look at all the volunteers throughout New South Wales. We are talking here about money for consultancy, for moving objects, when we have volunteers working for nothing throughout New South Wales in their thousands in volunteer museums, in buildings that are ready to fall down and in buildings that they themselves look after

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I have asked a couple of other witnesses this. Mr Eisenburg, with your regional experience, when you look at the very basic needs in regional museums and galleries to just fix a toilet, stop the roof leaking or secure their collections, how does it look when you see the Government preparing to spend \$1 billion to kick a collection 25 kilometres down the road to Parramatta?

**Mr EISENBERG:** I shriek. I shriek in horror. I just think of the places that we have been to, particularly the places that we visited looking at the Golden Threads project 10 or 15 years ago. Sometimes you would have to ring up the museums and say, "Would you open for me so I can have a look at what you have got," because the volunteer was away or it was a Tuesday or a Wednesday and they only open on Thursday, Friday and the weekends. It is all happening out there, it is all sitting there. It must be sitting around Parramatta and the western suburbs. We need to gather it together and put it in a building of its own with its own story. I read somewhere else in one of the reports where a migration museum in Parramatta would be the obvious answer to all our needs. Adelaide has got it, Melbourne has got it. Why has Sydney not got something? We are the first city in Australia and we have not got a migration history museum.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And as the largest destination of migrants to the country.

**Mr EISENBERG:** Yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** In 2010 a review was commissioned by Arts NSW into the museums and galleries sector and then another in 2011 to devise a strategic plan. I assume you are aware of that. Could you let us know as a Committee what the key findings were and if they were implemented in your view?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** In my view many of the findings have not been addressed, in particular concerning supporting museums and giving museums a stronger voice in the structure of the organisation. I know what came through very clearly to those inquiries was that the community volunteer-managed museums did not feel that their needs were properly represented within that organisation. I do not particularly want to be critical of the organisation. The other issue is that the grant funding as it was operating for Arts NSW did not recognise the importance of collections and the need to invest in collections. Out of the 2011 report came the collection networking grants, which led to the acclaimed Our Rivers Our History project, another great project in Wollongong and another wonderful project in Albury. We saw the result of those. You can go and look online. Sadly now that funding has ceased. What you get with community museums is a few steps forward and then the funding goes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You would recommend the re-establishment of that funding stream?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** Absolutely.

**Dr WILTON:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Talking about an overarching representational body that potentially collaborates with museums and so forth, could you discuss your view about the relationship of the sector with Museums and Galleries of New South Wales, both its strengths and weaknesses?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** As you have heard and will have read in the submissions, the needs of museums are very different from the needs of the largely professionally managed regional galleries that are typically in architect-designed, purpose-built buildings as against the 300 plus community museums of which maybe half a dozen are in purpose-designed buildings. They are volunteer managed and managing very significant collections with no resources. I think it is a struggle for one organisation to represent the needs of both those sectors. Many of us would say that is an experiment that has not delivered for the community museum sector. I look at the work that is being done in Victoria. For example, if you go to the Museums Australia Victoria branch website you will see the wealth of resources and innovation that is there linked to the Collections Victoria website, which is a single portal for digital access to the collections and stories across Victoria. I think that is working. It is no reflection on Museums and Galleries of New South Wales, but to think that you can have one organisation that represents such different needs I think has not worked.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** A number of witnesses have said that we should look to what is happening in Victoria as probably the best example for us to follow. Do you all agree with that?

**Mr EISENBERG:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ms WINKWORTH:** Yes.

**Mr EISENBERG:** Just to follow on from that, I do agree with Ms Winkworth. Again, it is not being disparaging about Museums and Galleries of New South Wales but it has tended, because of the nature of the beast, to look after galleries in one way and to look after museums in another way. To look after galleries that tend to have at least a couple of professional staff and council that is putting money into those institutions and having museums, apart from three or four places in New South Wales, like Newcastle—they are voluntarily run. They need to share. They need to compare, they need to assist, they need to be helped and vice versa. This is just too big a job for Museums and Galleries. It is a different beast. The museums are not in purpose-built buildings in most cases or in nearly all the cases. They very rarely have professional staff. They live on volunteers who are ageing, and that needs to be replaced by something. Unless some sort of impetus is given by the Government a lot of these institutions and their collections, as quite a few already have, will close.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Picking up the point about access through an online portal particularly cataloguing critically important collections, could you talk a little bit about what needs to happen there? As you would know, I have a very strong view that this is critical for regional people in terms of access. Obviously, it does not replace the experience but it is an important part of the experience. Could you speak to what you think needs to be done in that area?

**Dr WILTON:** I think there needs to be somewhere, somehow a stable means for people to have their material online. The fact that the Migration Heritage Centre has been archived, the fact that the material that went into Golden Threads is no longer available as a database online—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Is that right?

**Dr WILTON:** Yes, because it is the nature of the funding. I will not go into the details of it, but it was set up by an organisation housed within the Powerhouse Museum that moved and then the database could no longer be supported. People who want that have to contact me and I have to go through the standalone copy I have got. I would like to see somehow a system where the material that comes can be looked after by a central body that can look after it. It is not just about giving access to the collections in Sydney; it is about sharing the information and the collections across the State. I think there is real value for local museums to be able to look at the comparative and comparable objects, items and interpretation.

When I was at the Powerhouse the other day I was just thinking of an example for me at the moment. I think the only exhibition left there that relates to social history and migration history is the What's in store? exhibition. I am thinking there that the Powerhouse clearly has a wonderful collection to do with shopping and commerce. We also know that there are museums across the State that do that. Some like the Wing Hing Long Museum do it on their own; others have segments of their museums relating to it. How wonderful to be able to actually pull that together as an online reference point for sharing and then having a way of doing things with it. One of the things I want to see happen also is that regional New South Wales gets brought to the city. One of the wonderful things about Golden Threads and other exhibitions and things that have actually been said, for some of this stuff out there, we are showing it. The Powerhouse showed it, and we actually managed to show that exhibition in the centre of Melbourne, in Adelaide and in the State museum in Queensland. I think that sort of thing is also important because one of the ways is the online access—anyway, that is my thought. I have no idea about the logistics of it but I certainly know that in terms of the museums that I have worked with and for, to have that sort of assistance, they struggle to create computer catalogues let alone go on line.

**The CHAIR:** The Committee heard quite a lot of evidence from Ms Merrillees about the plot space that may be available from the existing site the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [MAAS] occupies at Ultimo. She gave evidence that the sizes of the sites were comparable. The Committee has not received anything from her yet in answer to my question, we are expecting to receive it on Wednesday, but I have been told that the current Powerhouse Museum occupies 2.74 hectares, or about 6.8 acres, is that correct?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** Yes.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Is that the footprint?

**The CHAIR:** The footprint, yes. I have the paperwork here, which I can circulate. It covers everything from the main building plus the annex and the archives.

**Ms WINKWORTH:** And the Harwood Building.

**The CHAIR:** That is correct. The David Jones car park site, ignoring flood and height setbacks, is 1.67 acres. That is a very clear statement. Ms Merrillees gave evidence, unless someone wants to say otherwise, that they are almost comparable. I asked her whether the comparison included multiple floors in the new site and I think her answer to that question was no.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** That is right.

**The CHAIR:** I have also been told that even if you do consolidate the old David Jones car park with surrounding lands—and correct me if I am wrong—they are not incorporated in the proposal, is that correct?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Perhaps you do not know that finer detail?

**The CHAIR:** Maybe you do not know the answer to that question?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** Maybe I do not.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ms Winkworth, you were a trustee of the Powerhouse Museum, were you not?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** That is correct.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Would you support the current proposal to move the Powerhouse Museum as it stands?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** No, it is a shocking waste of money. Not a single, independent museum professional thinks it is a good idea. Nine eminent director emeriti of State and national museums all agree that it is a waste of money, none of them support moving the museum under the plan as it is currently conceived. We all support a new museum for Parramatta, absolutely, a wonderful opportunity.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Do you think the Premier should do a backflip on the Powerhouse Museum, as he has done on the greyhounds and sharks?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** I do not think it needs to be a backflip, I think it has just got to be an evolving plan that looks at the opportunities.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Ms Winkworth, you say in your submission that building a new museum is an exercise in community engagement?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** Yes.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Has the Government conducted a proper community engagement process with the people or has it failed to do so?

**Ms WINKWORTH:** No, it is a real worry to me as a museum planner that the process for developing this museum has broken every rule in the museum planning book, which is that museums start with stories and conversations with communities. That is why I would really suggest that you go and look at some other museums. I know that Ms Scully has invited you to Wagga Wagga. I would say go to Washington and look at the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I will second that.

**The CHAIR:** I would be happy to visit all of the Smithsonians.

**Ms WINKWORTH:** Yes, look at the Smithsonians because—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** That might be outside the Committee budget. Ms Merrillees and Ms Torres both said that the three international examples they gave—the museum in Leeds, the relocation of the

armoury and the Oslo Museum—are comparable to what they are proposing to do on the Powerhouse. Do any of you have any observations about whether or not they are comparable?

**Mr EISENBERG:** How is it comparable?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I did ask Ms Torres that earlier and I simply got told that it was. Do you believe that any one of those three examples are comparable?

**Mr EISENBERG:** I only know bits so I do not feel right in being able to answer the question in the way that you are asking it, but from the little bit that I do know my first question would be: How is it comparable? Museums move, museums develop, museums become smaller, become bigger, the same with art galleries, they have branches—the Tate in the United Kingdom, all over Britain almost, in three places. I do not understand the question. The answer to me is: Where do we go now? It is not a matter of being comparable, it is what we need here in New South Wales now. It is all to do with regionalism; it is as simple as that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You three witnesses have been involved in this industry, if you like, for decades. Can you think of another international example that would suggest this proposal for the Powerhouse Museum will be successful? Can you think of an example where a prized, well located museum has been shut down and relocated in this way?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** That does not mean that we cannot do it, though.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Can you think of an international example where it has been successfully done?

**Mr EISENBERG:** The answer for me is no. Even if there was, what does that tell us? That somebody else has managed to do something in relocating.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Government needs to make decisions with a risk portfolio in mind. If you are doing something that has never been done before it might be because it is a very bad idea.

**Mr EISENBERG:** It is a very bad idea, the risks are limitless.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you all for coming today. I note no questions have been taken on notice.

**Mr EISENBERG:** Thank you.

**(The witnesses withdrew)**

**JOHN SHINE**, Former President of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, before the Committee via teleconference, affirmed and examined

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

**Mr SHINE:** Thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to make a short statement. I certainly hope it will facilitate some of your questions. I will just restrict it basically very briefly to the proposal to move the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta, which I understand is of particular interest to the Committee. I was appointed to the role of president of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees in January 2012. I served in this position until reaching the prescribed retirement age under the Act and tendered my resignation on 30 June 2016.

Along with my fellow trustees and the then museum director, I became aware of the proposal to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to a cultural precinct planned for Parramatta through the publication of the State Infrastructure Strategy in 2014. This occurred shortly before the board of trustees' scheduled December 2014 meeting. The board of trustees at that meeting was provided with the relevant strategy recommendations. Prior to the December board meeting, I met with the Deputy Premier in his capacity as Minister for the Arts and I was accompanied by former trustee Elizabeth Bryan. At that meeting the Minister affirmed the Government's commitment to enhancing cultural facilities in Western Sydney.

Prior to the December board meeting, the then museum director met with the secretary of the Department of Trade and Investment, Mr Mark Paterson, and the chief executive of Infrastructure NSW, Mr Jim Betts. Oral reports of both of those meetings were provided to the board at their December meeting. That meeting certainly noted that whilst recognising the political expectations for a presence in Parramatta, it was the responsibility of the board to ensure that any proposal was adequately funded, was absolutely aligned to the museum's collection and was focused on the applied arts and sciences.

Following the Premier's announcement in late February 2015 that the State Infrastructure recommendation to relocate the museum would be adopted, it was agreed the secretary of the Department of Trade and Investment should attend the next meeting of the board of trustees to provide his understanding of the governance and the implementation framework for what would be a very significant initiative. Mr Paterson then attended the March 2015 meeting to outline the context of the proposal and to advise that additional funds would be provided to the museum to undertake the feasibility studies that were required for its implementation. I am aware of comments made to the inquiry by a former president of the board that he felt it was inappropriate to invite the secretary to brief the board. I would like to very clearly disagree with that comment. Given the significance of the proposed relocation, it was, in my view, entirely appropriate and, in fact, essential for the board to be briefed by the most senior government bureaucrat that was responsible for the governance and the implementation of this project.

The board then subsequently adopted a series of measures to ensure its appropriate oversight of this relocation proposal. First of all, as a lawyer with extensive experience in property in commercial jurisdictions, deputy president Lisa Chung was appointed as the board representative on the project's steering committee. The Parramatta relocation became a standing item on the agenda of every trust meeting from March 2015. A comprehensive report was provided to each meeting and, where appropriate, members of the consortia responsible for the development of the preliminary business case, and then later the final business case, briefed the trust meetings. Our finance audit and management committee was also briefed on the project as required. I am, therefore, confident that the board established an appropriate governance framework to exercise its responsibilities as an advisory board to develop both the preliminary business case and the final business case to enable the Government to make informed decisions about the implementation of the Premier's commitment of February 2015.

I would like briefly to record that this significant project has been undertaken in tandem with some of the most important changes to the museum structure and operations in its more than 130-year history. The appointment of a new director in 2013, the completion in 2014 of a bold new strategic plan through to 2020 and of a very significant staff restructure aligned to that plan in that year, and then finally, more recently, the appointment of Dolla Merrillees as director for 2016 I think have happily delivered some very impressive results. I note that at the completion of my term as president in the 2015-16 financial year the museum recorded a 28 per cent increase in visitation, an impressive exhibition program which saw a 20 per cent increase in our objects on display, and a significant increase in education visitors. So that is a record that I think I and my fellow trustees are justly proud of.

Finally, just very briefly, I would like to suggest to the Committee an initiative that would enhance access in equity enormously to our State cultural institutions and match the opportunity: to extend the current free entry for children to provide free access for both adults and children to both the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and the Australian Museum. I think that would enable more diverse audiences to share the priceless collections of our great institutions and it is certainly the type of initiative that has been very successful in all the major museums, for instance, in the United Kingdom. Thank you.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Thank you for taking the time to give us your position. When the initial presentation was being made to the board from the Government, what was their position on funding this move? Where were they saying the funds would come from?

**Mr SHINE:** In the initial Infrastructure Strategy and the recommendations in the Infrastructure Strategy, which was the only initial information that the board had at its December meeting, there was no particular discussion about where the funds would come from.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But surely that must have been some of the discussion. The money was not just going to fall from the roof. Where were you being told, as trustees, the funds would come from to make this project actually work?

**Mr SHINE:** All that we were told at that point in time was, essentially, primarily from the director general Mark Paterson of the department that any funds which may be liberated—and it was very much "maybe", if it came to that—from any sort of redevelopment of the current Ultimo site, all those funds would be committed to a new museum. At that point, of course, we did not have any particular idea of what those funds might be or what the cost of a new museum would be; this would all depend upon the preliminary and final business case that was then developed. We were reassured throughout the process, especially after the Premier's announcement in November 2015 of accepting the New South Wales Infrastructure Strategy, we were continually assured by Government that the funds would be there to develop, as the Premier said, an iconic, fit for purpose museum, and we made it very clear to Government the requirements would be to ensure the collection was in no way broken up, that the collection was looked after and housed appropriately and that the ability of the public to view the collection would be enhanced with any particular move.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** As president you were, I assume, largely dependent upon the expert advice you were getting from staff on these matters. Is that right?

**Mr SHINE:** The expert advice we were getting from museum staff?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Yes.

**Mr SHINE:** That certainly came into it. As the preliminary business case was developed, which you will appreciate is Cabinet in confidence so I cannot talk in any particular detail, a whole range of external consultants were involved in doing the appropriate analyses as to what would be preferred sites, what would be undoubtedly potential costs. No sort of firming of costing, of course, could be done until the initial site was determined.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But in regard to what is good for this extraordinarily important cultural facility, the best advice you could get about what would be the best interests of the museum would have come from your extremely professional staff, I assume?

**Mr SHINE:** Certainly. We certainly took that very much to heart. That was continually and consistently being provided. As I mentioned, we had at that point in time, of course, appointed a new director who was incredibly competent, Rose Hiscock. We were undergoing a restructure, as I am sure the Committee is aware. We had developed internally an initial master plan to redevelop the existing site because the museum, Mr Shoebridge, to be quite frank—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I will come to that internal proposal that you were developing in a second. What was Rose Hiscock's position? She was your most senior staff member. Did she think that this relocation thing would be good for the museum? Did she support it?

**Mr SHINE:** Absolutely. There is no doubt that when Infrastructure NSW initially came out with the recommendation to move the Powerhouse there was a lot of questioning, as there should be, but once we had reassurances from government that funding would be appropriate, it would be an iconic new museum and it would really be an exciting opportunity for the museum, Rose embraced it with absolute enthusiasm.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So why did she resign?

**Mr SHINE:** I am sorry?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Why did she leave?

**Mr SHINE:** She resigned for a host of personal reasons. You would need to talk to Rose specifically.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What did she tell you?

**Mr SHINE:** She comes from Melbourne; her partner lives in Melbourne. She had been commuting backwards and forth to Melbourne for the last couple of years. She had always made it clear when she was first appointed that it would be a limited 10-year appointment because her future was undoubtedly in Melbourne. I think once it became clear that the relocation program was well underway, everything was undoubtedly going to happen appropriately, I think Rose felt—again you would have to speak to her—that it would be difficult for her to commit to another five to seven years, which would be the minimum for this proposal to be completed and it would be better to transition out now and hand over to someone who could see carriage of that all the way through, and she was fully supported by the trustees.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** When you say people were satisfied that things were going to be appropriately dealt with, are you satisfied now? You have not even seen a business case. How can you be satisfied?

**Mr SHINE:** I am satisfied in that I believe what government tells me, then as a trustee and from all of the information that the various business cases were providing, and again the preliminary business case and now I am sure in the not too distant future the final business case, as you know, are Cabinet in confidence which government is considering. But there is no doubt that all of the potential concerns that we had as trustees about: could you fit the museum into the particular sites that were being recommended; what would be the logistics of such a move; what would be the demographics of visitors; how would people get to and from the museum—all the things like that were undertaken by very professional external consultants and they are all there in those business cases.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So can you say for sure where the museum is going to be relocated to, if it is relocated? Were you told a final site?

**Mr SHINE:** No. Mr Shoebridge, obviously at the end of the day it is the Government's decision. At present they have said yes, it will be relocated but it will be subject to acceptance of the final business case.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Did the board ever receive a written report from the museum's own staff supporting this relocation?

**Mr SHINE:** Well, the board received—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It is a simple question?

**Mr SHINE:** As I said, a report from Rose Hiscock and other senior staff members who were involved in many of those trust meetings. We received very regular reports and everyone in a sense at the senior staff level were 100 per cent unanimously enthusiastic at the potential and the opportunity this relocation would provide for the museum. I cannot tell you about every one of the museum staff.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It is a pretty simple question. Was there ever a detailed standalone report from your staff that went through the pros and cons of this proposal and said, "On balance we support the relocation"?

**Mr SHINE:** Look, I would have to go back and look through the trust minutes. There were a series.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Feel free to take it on notice and then if there is such a report, if you could provide it.

**Mr SHINE:** If I can provide such a document I certainly will. I would have to go back to the museum. I can only stress that at every trust meeting this was a standard agenda item which was discussed at length and undoubtedly the pros and cons were therefore talked about.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But my question is quite specific: Did you ask for and receive a detailed consideration by your staff weighing up the pros and cons?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Mr Chair, he has agreed to take that question on notice.

**The CHAIR:** I think he has agreed to take that on notice.

**Mr SHINE:** I will take that on notice. I am sure there are a range of things relating to that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And if you did not, why not?



**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Shine, I refer to the opportunities presented to you. You were talking before about the proposals and your thoughts. What do you see as being the opportunities of a relocation to Parramatta to take the Powerhouse into the next millennium and to make it a real highlight attraction for Sydney?

**Mr SHINE:** Certainly, as I mentioned earlier, I think the most exciting part was this opportunity to get a purpose-built new iconic building which would open up the museum hopefully to a lot more visitors than we currently had. You have to look at this against the background of the museum as it was under previous administrations. It was withering on the vine. It did need significant reinvigoration. As I mentioned, we went through a significant structural reform. We appointed a whole new executive team. Everything was on the upswing but to realise that sort of vision it was very attractive when government says, "Look, if we relocate we can build this iconic new museum and it will be a whole new chapter in the Powerhouse's history."

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Earlier in the inquiry we heard evidence from Liz Ann MacGregor where she talked—and I do not know if it is through your time as a member of the board of trustees—of a proposal that the Powerhouse had put in about a redevelopment to capture more money to invest in the site. Is that something you are familiar with?

**Mr SHINE:** No. I am sorry, I missed the name of the individual.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It was Liz Ann MacGregor, I think, who mentioned it in her evidence earlier in the inquiry that the board had put in a proposal at one stage looking to redevelop portions of the site in order to gain more capital to invest in the collection and presentation of it?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** This was about the air space and the like.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Yes.

**Mr SHINE:** I do not remember a specific proposal from Liz Ann MacGregor at all.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** No, it was not that it came from her; she indicated in her evidence that the board had put forward a proposal at some point in time in the past—I am not sure if it was during your tenure—because effectively the Powerhouse needed increased capital injection?

**Mr SHINE:** Unless she is talking about the museum—and of course she was not involved with the trustees at all during my tenure there, but unless she is talking about our master planning exercise which was occurring in 2014 before the announcement of the proposal to move to Parramatta.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I think that is it, Mr Shine; the process that began in 2013 and 2014, which involved the potential to redevelop some of the Ultimo site. Maybe you could speak to that?

**Mr SHINE:** Certainly we developed a master plan for reinvigoration of the Ultimo site. That went to government and once the relocation to Parramatta was established, that was basically stopped.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Was there any figure around the capital injection required as part of that master plan considering the Ultimo site rather than Parramatta?

**Mr SHINE:** It went to Treasury, as I recall and I am sure there were some initial preliminary figures there but it is not something that I can comment on.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** One of the things that has attracted me to the relocation of the Powerhouse has been the equitable access for students to our institutions.

**Mr SHINE:** Yes.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Having coming from Western Sydney and worked in Western Sydney I know that in this day and age that you are lucky once in your school career to get on a bus and come into the city to see a museum because of the logistics and so forth, so that attracted me to it from the beginning. You talked about looking at the demographics of the relocation. Do you see as a potential upside for the relocation access for tens of thousands of students in Western Sydney?

**Mr SHINE:** Absolutely, we all know where the central population is in Sydney. To be quite frank, when the trust I was involved in was set up there was a museum that was a little bit at times, if you want to be overly critical, run as a club for a few individuals that felt they had particular rights with the museum. We want to make sure the museum is accessible to everyone and has as broad a visitation as possible and this was an opportunity which the trust saw, questioned carefully, listened carefully and then embraced, subject to all of the caveats that we had to have—the money had to be there to build the iconic institution, the capital, the collection

had to not be damaged and appropriately accessed for visitors. Another part of the business case is the overall operational costs of the museum going forward, not just the capital cost.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Mr Shine, we have had evidence from a series of other witnesses who have said that there has not been an analysis of the likely impact on visitor numbers. That has not been undertaken or has not been completed. It might be part of the business case. Are you saying that was presented to you before you left the board?

**Mr SHINE:** Yes, that general analysis, along with many other analyses, is part of the preliminary business case and now the final business case.

**The CHAIR:** Mr Shine, did you have information presented to you that supported a move from the current site to the Parramatta river site?

**Mr SHINE:** I am not sure I understand the question. The temporal process was the potential move to Parramatta and an analysis of several different sites of which the so-called riverbank site was the final preferred site at present as the final business case is being developed. I do not think there was any particular site one, site two. They were looked at as the pros and cons and advantages and disadvantages of several sites at Parramatta.

**The CHAIR:** It does appear that the riverside site is the most appropriate, according to the Government. Do you think you can fit the current museum from an 6.8-acre site on to 1.67-acre site?

**Mr SHINE:** When the trust looked at the different sites, although the Government decided, the riverbank site has the unanimous support and recommendation of the trust. We did look at all of the issues, the consultants did, and provided us with the appropriate pros and cons in reports of fitting the collection as it is now into that particular site. It has to be quite different in the way it is structured.

**The CHAIR:** Can you explain how different it is and how it happened? How did you fit that collection that covers nearly seven acres into less than two acres?

**Mr SHINE:** I am not an architect.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Close together.

**The CHAIR:** I am not talking as an architect but your point of view as chair how that would happen?

**Mr SHINE:** It is a fit for purpose site and it goes up quite a few storeys, rather than being on a flat level. The other site was the old golf course site where you did not have to go up in height and you can go out a lot more. They both have pros and cons.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Has there been a study that shows the average travel time for somebody in New South Wales to get to Parramatta as opposed to the Powerhouse at Central?

**Mr SHINE:** I am not aware of any specific study comparing the two. I am sure, without talking in detail, that sort of analysis of how visitors would get to Parramatta from regional New South Wales and from the city is part of the various business cases.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You said in answer to a question from the Hon. Shayne Mallard that this provides better access. Have you done the basic due diligence to work out how long it takes to get to the Powerhouse as opposed to Parramatta for the ordinary Sydney-sider or resident in New South Wales?

**Mr SHINE:** It depends where the ordinary Sydneysider lives.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** On average, is it easier or harder to get to Parramatta than Central?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** It is certainly easier for students in Western Sydney; that was my point.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Did you ask that basic question?

**Mr SHINE:** It was asked in the context of comparing the potential different sites in Parramatta, what sites would provide the best access for visitation from all around New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You compared different sites in Parramatta against each other but you did not compare Parramatta to the current site. Is that the process that you went through?

**Mr SHINE:** That particular analysis may well have been done as far as the business case. I cannot remember that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You gave clear evidence to the Hon. Shayne Mallard that it was an improvement. I am asking on what basis you gave that evidence?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The question the Hon. Shayne Mallard put was in respect to Western Sydney students. Of course it is an improvement for Western Sydney students. That was the question put.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** It was.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Let us talk about a student from South Western Sydney. Are you saying it is easier to get from Campbelltown to Parramatta than Campbelltown to Central?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Let us talk Penrith or Blacktown.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Are you saying it is easier to get from Campbelltown to Parramatta than Campbelltown to Central?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** You are picking Campbelltown on purpose.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Because a lot of people live there. Mr Shine?

**Mr SHINE:** I have no idea—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I think that is right.

**Mr SHINE:** Of the particular travel times depending on where you live around Campbelltown to get to Ultimo compared to Parramatta. These issues have been addressed in the two business cases before Cabinet.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** This comes back to your earlier evidence that you accepted what the Government said.

**Mr SHINE:** You have to remember that under the Act the trust is advisory to the Government, we are there under the direction and control of the Minister of the day. We are not there to act independently of government; we are there as a trust to advise government on the best way to protect the assets, incredibly important assets, of the collection and the museum for the people of New South Wales.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** If they can enhance and increase access to it, that is in the Act.

**Mr SHINE:** And to increase access. Parramatta is in the middle of the population. Whether any particular individual can travel to or from to Ultimo faster or not depends where you live.

**The CHAIR:** At any stage did you consider another museum at Parramatta?

**Mr SHINE:** As well as the one at Ultimo?

**The CHAIR:** That is right.

**Mr SHINE:** Those discussions, in a broad general sense, were had at various trust meetings, especially before the Premier's final commitment in February 2015 to take up the Infrastructure NSW advice. Prior to that we were thinking it may be possible to have an activity at Ultimo plus an activity at Parramatta. Government has made it clear that was not its intention. Therefore, we focused on delivering an exciting opportunity at Parramatta.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Basically, you thought your role was advisory, the Government had made the call to relocate it and you had to get on and implement it?

**Mr SHINE:** We did not just have to get on and implement it, we had to make sure that as government implemented it that it was to the benefit of the museum, maximising our benefit, maximising the value of the collection and the showing of the collection to the people of New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You did not think it was your job to critique government policy?

**Mr SHINE:** It was our job to ensure that we presented to government, as we consistently did, that in order for this to work and have the trust support it needed to be well-funded, appropriately planned, and to give us an iconic new institution that would enhance visitation and enhance our ability to show off this wonderful collection.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I put this proposition to you: In failing to critique and hold the Government to account on that policy decision you failed in your obligation as the president of the trust of this important cultural organisation?

**Mr SHINE:** I totally disagree with that. In no way have we failed our obligation at all. We made it clear to government that for the trust to support this exciting initiative there are certain things that needed to happen and at this stage they are happening.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Is there one reason that you think the Powerhouse Museum should not move to Parramatta?

**Mr SHINE:** The only reason I can see for it not to move to Parramatta would be if those conditions of appropriate capital and operational funding were met and there was an appropriate business plan to ensure that the showing would be enhanced and the collection would be preserved. We would end up with a Powerhouse that was an order of magnitude better than it is now.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Mr Shine, for your evidence. I note that you took a question on notice. Please respond to that within 21 days. The secretariat will be in contact with you. Thank you for attending.

**Mr SHINE:** I will. Thank you, Chair.

**(The witness withdrew)**

**(The Committee adjourned at 16:50.)**