

REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 – LEGAL AFFAIRS

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

CORRECTED

At Jubilee Room, Parliament House, Sydney on Tuesday, 6 June 2017

The Committee met at 12:30 pm

PRESENT

The Hon. R. Borsak (Chair)

The Hon. S. Farlow

The Hon. B. Franklin

The Hon. S. Mallard

The Hon. S. Moselmane

The Hon. W. Secord

Mr D. Shoebridge

The CHAIR: Welcome to the seventh hearing of the Portfolio Committee No. 4 inquiry into museums and galleries. The Committee was established to examine the New South Wales Government's 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 who are the traditional custodians of this land. I also pay respect to the elders past and present of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginals present.

Today we will hear from the Hon. Don Harwin, MLC, Minister for the Arts. Before we commence, I will 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 broadcast guidelines, while members of the media may film or record Committee members and witnesses, people in the public galley should not be the primary focus of any filming. I would also remind media representatives that they must take responsibility for what is published about the Committee's proceedings.

It is important to remember that parliamentary privilege does not apply to what witnesses may say outside of their evidence at the hearing. 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 decided to take action for defamation. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat. There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time or with certain documents to hand. In these circumstances, witnesses are advised that they can take questions on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. Witnesses are advised that any messages should be delivered to the Committee members through the Committee staff. Finally, could everyone please turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing.

DONALD HARWIN, MLC, Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, Minister for the Arts, and Vice President of the Executive Council, before the Committee

ALEX O'MARA, Acting Department Secretary for Arts and Culture, Department of Planning and Environment, sworn and examined

MICHAEL BREALEY, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Planning and Environment, affirmed and examined

CRAIG LIMKIN, Acting Executive Director, Cultural Infrastructure Program Management Office, Department of Planning and Environment, sworn and examined

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

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I would like to start by thanking you for the opportunity to appear and discuss what I think is one of the most exciting periods for arts and culture in the recent history of New South Wales. I want to thank the members of the Committee for establishing the inquiry. I think the focus of an inquiry on the Arts portfolio needs to be embraced as an opportunity and therefore I am looking forward to your report and recommendations when they are finalised.

It is no secret that I asked for the Arts portfolio. I have a great affinity and love of arts and culture, and in particular I am passionate about museums. The Government is bringing a commitment to funding to the arts and culture in this State that is without recent precedent. We are committed to a once-in-a-generation investment in our cultural infrastructure. For decades we have been slipping behind Victoria, and even Queensland. When people think about where to go in Australia for arts and culture, I want them to be thinking about New South Wales. Obviously, a particular focus of this Committee has been the new museum for Parramatta. Already the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences operates on three sites, including the site of the old Ultimo Powerhouse, the Sydney Observatory and the Museums Discovery Centre in Castle Hill.

The New South Wales Government is committed to establishing an iconic, vibrant, interactive, world-class cultural institution in Parramatta to further grow and promote an accessible and diverse arts and cultural environment in Western Sydney. We have a huge responsibility to deliver this institution in our State's fastest growing and most diverse region, Western Sydney, and also of course in greater Sydney's second central business district, which is Parramatta. I want the new museum to be on the cutting edge of science and innovation and be forward looking to the twenty-first century. I announced in April that we have expanded the scope of the project to investigate additional options in order to effectively deliver the best facility for the community, including a world-class museum, which has been the Government's commitment.

The new museum will be a real attraction for the people of Western Sydney and broader Sydney and for intrastate, interstate and international visitors. Large-scale investment projects such as this are subject to an assurance and business case process to enable the Government to thoroughly investigate the costs and benefits of all options. As is standard with a major cultural infrastructure project, the planning process will investigate several options for the Government to consider. In order to deliver the best possible museum for Western Sydney, we need to ensure all possible options are investigated, tested and analysed so we are also getting a good deal for the taxpayer. I have requested that the possibility of retaining part or all of the Ultimo site as cultural space be among them.

We want to establish a vibrant and interactive new museum that will grow and promote an accessible and diverse arts and cultural environment in Western Sydney. The new museum will be world-class and become a "must see" cultural institution for locals and visitors alike. This project will extend beyond the museum building. In my very strong view, it will become the anchor for a broader arts and cultural precinct for the region. It is something I believe Western Sydney well and truly deserves. This takes time and proper planning and the team is working closely with the City of Parramatta council to ensure that the museum forms part of a cohesive rejuvenation of their central business district as well.

In closing, I want to reiterate this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a world-class museum for Western Sydney and we want it to be one that the community can fully call their own. Mr Chair, I should also explain that I had hoped to have my departmental secretary with me today, Carolyn McNally. I saw Carolyn yesterday and she was losing her voice. She rang my staff this morning and with her rasping down the phone we were informed that she has now well and truly lost her voice. I am very sorry about that. Yesterday I did myself an injury at the gym and I am in some pain. I briefly considered whether I should request that we

defer this hearing today but I decided that would inconvenience too many people. I apologise that Carolyn McNally cannot be here and I will try to soldier on as best as I can too.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In your opening remarks you said, "It takes time and proper planning" in reference to a museum at Parramatta. What is the target date that you have now for opening a museum in Parramatta?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think when I made an announcement in April about an extension to the business case, I cannot remember if it was either in the press release or in public statements I made, but nevertheless I did say at that time that I expected that it would still be opened in 2022.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Thank you for appearing. It is a tad unusual for Ministers to appear outside the budget estimates process and we appreciate that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Very unusual.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I said it is a tad unusual, so thank you for appearing. What has transpired since the departure of the previous arts Minister to make you decide to appear?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have always been willing to appear. I only just received an invitation so I am here, but if you had asked earlier I would have come.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: As the Hon. Walt Secord just mentioned, you have created a bit of precedent by offering yourself to appear before—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I do not know that I offered myself. I received a letter requesting me to come and I accepted.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You accepted.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Either way, we are grateful to have you here. Let's move on.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is my time; you can have your time. I am sure you have plenty of questions. In your opening statement you said that there would be a number of options. Can you give us a brief on what you see as the options?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The key thing that I was pointing to in making that remark was in terms of the briefing I received when I became Minister. As I understand it, the preliminary business case and the final business case was precluding the option of any cultural space remaining at the current Ultimo site. After I had received briefings and after I had had a number of meetings that are on the public record with various stakeholders, including also the member for Parramatta and Parramatta council, firstly it became clear to me that they did not feel that there had been enough consultation with the people of Western Sydney about what form the new museum should take. Secondly, in terms of the other meetings that I had, and of course by virtue of the fact that this Committee is doing its work and having a focus on a new museum in Parramatta, it was clear to me that there was interest and concern in the proposal and also a desire among some people that the museum stay at Ultimo. I felt therefore that the option of keeping all or part of the Ultimo site as cultural space should be explored as an option. I made that recommendation to the Premier and she agreed to let me extend the business case to consider it.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Do you foresee which of the current items in the Powerhouse will stay in Sydney and which items will move to Parramatta? Was there a discussion?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That would be micro-managing to a degree that I think would be inappropriate for a Minister. I have asked the people who have been tasked with preparing the extended final business case to look at that.

The CHAIR: Before you go any further, we have some technical issues this morning with the sound system. If anyone is having difficulty hearing, so am I. It is because the microphones are not working properly. We are working on it.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I will try to bring the microphone closer.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In your response to Mr Moselmane's question, you said that one of the options was that all or part of the museum remain at the Ultimo site. Are you saying that in fact one of the proposals as part of the business case is to not move the museum at all?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, I think I have always made it—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am just seeking clarification.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, all or part of Ultimo as cultural space. That is a different thing entirely from not moving the museum at all. The Government has always been very clear that its proposal is that the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [MAAS] will be headquartered at a new, world-class, iconic museum at Parramatta when obviously the business—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: All of the space, rather than all of the museum.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When you use the phrase "cultural space", what do you mean?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am not limiting it. I am not limiting it to any—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Excuse my ignorance but what does "cultural space" mean?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: To me that could have a museum usage, it could have a gallery usage, it could be performance space. I am not limiting it but all of those things are cultural uses and therefore cultural space.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I will take you back to another thing just to make sure that I have heard you correctly. I do not want to misrepresent what you are saying. You talked about the MAAS headquarters moving to Parramatta. What constitutes a headquarters? Can it be an executive office of two or three people?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, I have always been quite clear that the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences is going to be at Parramatta.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: The museum is going to be at Parramatta?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I suppose that begs the question: Can it be over two sites, both at Parramatta and at the Powerhouse, and is that one of the options that will be open and full explored in the course of this new business case?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As I said in my opening statement, the museum already operates over three sites.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In terms of public interaction you have the primary site which is at Ultimo and the other two are tiny in comparison.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I do not think the Museums Discovery Centre is tiny.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The public interaction part of it is tiny. We are talking about the public interaction. Is one of the options that is being explored in the business case to have the Powerhouse Museum in two primary sites, one at Parramatta and one at Ultimo? Is that one of the options?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, it is one of the options.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is that clearly set out in the terms of reference for this business case review or is it just left in the opaque terms that you are exploring with Mr Secord, being cultural space?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am going to ask Mr Limkin to talk to the terms of reference.

Mr LIMKIN: The terms of reference are very broad, there is no specific in there. We are looking at all the options. That would be one of the options we examine but as part of this we are consulting to actually work out what all the options should be.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you in a position to share with us the preliminary costings that you got from Mr Root about the expense of moving the extremely large and very fragile collection from the Powerhouse at Ultimo to Parramatta? Can you share with us those costings?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: They are all part of the business case that is being prepared for the consideration of Cabinet and its committees on the proposal and so therefore at present they are Cabinet in confidence.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: To follow up on the question unanswered by Mr Limkin, you talked about broad options. Is one of the options in consideration to scrap the move to Parramatta?

Mr LIMKIN: I think that is actually worked out as part of the business case, as I said to you. We have not taken anything off the table yet. We are looking at all the options and then what are the criteria that you can use to actually properly accept. Now that is part of Treasury guidelines. Treasury guideline O805 actually says how you actually do a business case and that is the process we are following to actually do that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I will clarify that. It is the Government's policy to move the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to Parramatta. But until it gets the final tick off from Cabinet, obviously it is a proposal.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I understand that. I can tell you from introductory undergraduate study into government policy that when you approach a decision that one of the options is not to do the project. I am asking Mr Limkin very clearly is one of the options a reconsideration of the "broad" options before you, that is, not move to Parramatta? Is that one of the options under consideration?

Mr LIMKIN: The extended final business case is being prepared for Cabinet, and that is a Cabinet document.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So that is one of the options, not to move—

Mr LIMKIN: I have answered your question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One of the worst parts of this debate has been repeated attempts to wedge Western Sydney against the supporters of the Powerhouse in Ultimo. That has been a very unifying spectacle in New South Wales politics. Is there a commitment to produce a world-class institution at Parramatta and then a parallel commitment to see what can be done to retain extreme value at the Powerhouse site?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, that is exactly what is being looked at as part of the final business case.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: If there has been one repeated theme from the submissions we have been getting to this inquiry there is a deep love for the Powerhouse and the way it is exhibited at Ultimo, as well as a deep wish to see a world-class but distinctly Parramatta institution. Is that the first option that is being looked at in the business case?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No. My answer to your question was, the museum at Parramatta is going to be the headquarters of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences with a focus on science innovation. We are looking to see if it is possible we can keep the Ultimo site as cultural space. So that is consistent with the answer to the question I just gave you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I do not think we need to go back and unpick the cultural space. I think we have had that discussion. A series of extremely competent and experienced people in designing and operating museums have given evidence and have suggested to the Committee that the funding envelope required to produce anything like the Powerhouse at Parramatta would be in the order of \$1.5 billion. What is the indicative budget that the Government has set aside for this proposal?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is a matter that is completely tied up in the final business case. Exactly what amount of money is spent on that is what the business case is all about. It is about assessing what the costs are. It is just not possible to give that figure at this time.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister you have given the people looking at this business case the opportunity to find all options. If one of the options were to have an iconic world-class museum in Western Sydney, Parramatta, have you worked out the budget allocations for it?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: By definition if you are looking at a range of options there will be a range of costs.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You take the Taj Mahal off at the beginning because you know you have not got \$8 billion and you give them a financial envelope—that is normally the way these things start, Minister. What is the envelope?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: There are a range of options and each option has a different funding envelope obviously. Until the Government decides as part of the preparation of the final business case which option it is going to go with, it is not possible to give a figure.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: We could end up with an iconic world-class proposal but you will not have the money for it and then you would be back at square one?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Point of order: The question has been asked on five different occasions in five different ways and the Minister has answered it. I would ask that we move on.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: To best put it in a quite distinct way: How do we ensure the process is going to come up with a viable option?

The CHAIR: I think the Minister said he does not know yet.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Because there is a range of options on the table.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is quite clear that I announced in April the extended business case would look at a range of options. We also said that there would be more community consultation with the people of Western Sydney. That is getting underway now so obviously I am not in a position, even if I was not subject to the strictures of Cabinet-in-confidence for final business cases, to give more detail. But in any case I am. We have an extension to the finalisation of the final business case, it will be considered by Cabinet and its committees and then we will be in a position to talk about the funding, and not before.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Minister, you referred to community consultation. You said you are doing consultation in Western Sydney. Who are you consulting with?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: On 19 April I made my announcement about the public consultation process. Obviously there have been a series of meetings between myself and key stakeholders and obviously the senior executives involved in the process with key stakeholders to hear their concerns. Detailed stakeholder engagement is obviously part of every significant process that has been gone through. Since 19 April the community has been able to register for upcoming consultation activities. The community consultation will comprise, firstly, consultation on what is important for people to see in a new museum in Western Sydney to inform options being considered. Secondly, consultation on the project options that emerge from the business case. The consultation mechanisms will include stakeholder meetings, community outreach activities, an online survey, focus groups and a community deliberative forum to ensure the new museum meets community needs. Community consultation opportunities commenced yesterday.

Mr LIMKIN: There are over 200 people.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Businesses and individuals who have already registered to attend consultation sessions. People can register by going to the Create NSW website and following the links to the new museum in Western Sydney.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In your answer you referred to "stakeholders" four times. Who are the stakeholders that senior executives met with?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have met with a range of people. I have obviously met with the member for Parramatta appropriately as the local member, with Parramatta council and a range of other people who are interested in the process. I will defer to my officials because obviously they are running the process, not me, and I think appropriate they should comment on the terms of that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Before they answer, I have a question for you. Have you met with Powerhouse friends and Powerhouse supporters of the existing museum?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Absolutely.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When was the last time you met with them?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I would have to check my diary. I am guessing that you are referring to Lindsay Sharpe, Jennifer Sanders, Lionel Glendenning, Nicholas Pappas and Kylie Winkworth?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Yes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have met all of those people over the course of my ministerial responsibilities, which is just over four months now.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, could you give the Committee the details on notice? I am not expecting you to remember dates and times.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am sure the Hon. Walt Secord has looked at my diary to see who I have met with.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Yes, I have.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: There are a number of people.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That reporting can be a little slower than the answers you can give us on notice.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, returning to the options. A *Daily Telegraph* article says—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Careful what you believe.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, Mr Stuart Ayres wants the museum broken down into bits with some of it housed in Penrith, some in Parramatta, Liverpool and Sydney. Would this be one of the options, to split the museum into four or five different places?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Ayres has never articulated that view to me. It is not the policy of the Government. As the member for Penrith I am sure he is keen on having more cultural infrastructure in Penrith, as one might expect of a local member.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But that is not one of the options?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is not the policy of the Government.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And, it is not one of the options in the business paper?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, would you support that as an option?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: He has already excluded it.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is not the policy of the Government and it never has been. I am certainly not critical of the member standing up for the interests of his electorate. That is what I would expect any local member to be doing.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: When this item causes conflict with other Ministers, how will you hold your business case?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: When you taken an appointment as Minister you accept Cabinet collective responsibility for all decisions.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I understand that. The answer is that ultimately the option you choose may not be the end outcome of the Cabinet decision. Ultimately the Cabinet might decide on a different option that you may have chosen?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am just trying to make sure that I completely understood that question. Could you just repeat that question?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The report comes back with three options—A, B and C. As the Minister you have nominated A but your Cabinet colleagues nominate B.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think that would be "see my previous answer", which is when you accept a commission to be a Minister you have to accept the decisions that Cabinet makes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You have to accept the consequence.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, that is the way Cabinet government works and always has worked for centuries.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, have you met with the North Parramatta Residents Action Group, one of the key residents groups who have a clear vision for driving Parramatta's cultural institutions?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I would have to check whether the people I met with at North Parramatta at the Cumberland Hospital precinct were members of that group. I am not sure but I certainly have been there and met with people who are interested in that Female Factory precinct. I am not sure if they were from that particular group but I am certainly right across that issue.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I assume you are open to meeting them?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Absolutely. I have in fact visited there. I went there and I asked UrbanGrowth to show me over the precinct because I am quite interested in it. A number of the people that I was asked about before have raised it, I think it is sometimes called the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct, with me and I wanted to see it for myself. I have subsequently discovered that one of my ancestors was in the Female Factory, which has piqued my interest.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Has it piqued your interest enough to include as one of the business case options to locate this premiere cultural institution at that heritage precinct?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is a different question to the one I thought you were going to ask.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Aunt Nellie Memorial Museum.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mary, actually.

The CHAIR: We are having technical problems with the sound and the hearing is not being recorded. I propose to adjourn for half an hour while the problems are fixed. If they are not fixed, the Committee may have to adjourn to a later date.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Earlier in the hearing we experienced problems with our sound recording and webcast. Our technicians are working to address the issue. Unfortunately, this means that we cannot webcast at this time. We apologise for any inconvenience caused by this technical outage. We will recommence questioning.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I think I had an outstanding question before the short adjournment.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It might have been outstanding, but I do not know if it was outstanding.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I do not mean it in that adjectival sense. The import of the question, though, was whether or not one of the options is not to move to that riverside site or establish a museum at the riverside site but rather to establish the museum in that extraordinary heritage precinct of Parramatta.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Mr Chair, could you clarify what the two microphones are for?

The CHAIR: We are using the portable Hansard system. That is why there is a second microphone in front of each speaker.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is for recording, not for amplifying.

The CHAIR: It is a portable recording system that Hansard uses for committee hearings away from Parliament House. Usually when it is used, nothing is lost—unlike this morning.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: On that note.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, I do not mind if the matter is best addressed through Mr Limkin.

The CHAIR: Would you like to take the question on notice, Minister?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, I definitely have some things I want to say about it. I just could not find it in the index, my apologies. Obviously the Parramatta North historic site which sits within the Parramatta North Urban Transformation Program area is being managed by UrbanGrowth NSW. They are managing the sites to conserve, unlock and share the exceptional heritage value. As I think I mentioned just before we broke, I visited the site and I believe there are opportunities to unlock the value of the site. I have asked my department to liaise with UrbanGrowth on this.

However, in relation to the new museum at Parramatta, a decision was taken by the former Premier and the former Minister which was announced on 11 April 2016 that the riverbank site, the old David Jones car park, would be the location for the new museum. After I became the Minister, I asked for a briefing on that. The departmental secretary, Carolyn McNally, was kind enough to arrange for the Government Architect to pull together all the material and come and give me a briefing. Peter Poulet gave me a briefing on those issues and I was satisfied that the right decisions had been made.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And is the presentation from the Government Architect available and will it be part of the consultation?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It was a verbal briefing, not a written one.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Does it include the flood proofing and the costs of flood proofing a site on the river, given the extraordinarily valuable, in fact irreplaceable collection that the Powerhouse has? And has there been an analysis of the flood risk to the site?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Obviously the museum holds an invaluable collection in trust for the people of New South Wales. I take that very seriously as an important and overriding consideration in all of these matters. Engineering studies are being undertaken to examine the potential for flooding on the riverbank site. Those studies are attachments to the draft final business case and therefore they are Cabinet-in-confidence.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Because previously the, I thought, rather flippant response we got from the experts was that they were simply going to locate the collection above the one-in-100-year flood level. And of course that is the level that is close to guaranteeing it will be damaged at least once every 100 years. Surely you are going beyond that kind of primary school analysis of the flood risks to the collection.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: All of those considerations are part of the work that is being done on the final business case and you can be absolutely certain that I will not be supporting any proposal, going forward, that puts the collection at any way at risk.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, given that there were technical difficulties with Hansard, I just want to ensure that this question is on the record. It relates to an article by Andrew Clenell entitled "Minister in secret push to split Powerhouse museum". The article states:

WESTERN Sydney Minister Stuart Ayres has been pushing to overturn the Powerhouse Museum's move to Parramatta.

Instead Mr Ayres wants the museum broken into bits with some housed in Penrith, some in Parramatta and some in other centres such as Liverpool.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Can you give me the date of that article, please, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is 4 March 2017. I am interested in your response to Mr Ayres' position.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have not actually spoken to Minister Ayres about it. I do not know whether he has been correctly quoted. I think I gave a response to the concept before. I think I indicated that in fact they were Mr Ayres' views they were not the policy of the Government. But if they were his views, I could understand him making comments like that as the member for Penrith. As I reiterate now, I do not know if they are his views and I have not had a conversation with him about them.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: But if this was the option, would you support facilities at four or five different areas?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The Minister told you it is not the Government's policy.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think I made two comments in that respect. First, I have made it quite clear that the museum operates over three different locations, so it already is in that multi-campus organisation. Secondly, I have made it clear that that is not the policy of the New South Wales Government.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: For my understanding, in the beginning there were a number of options. As the Minister for the Arts, you must have a strong view as to what you want. Can you tell us what is your preferred option?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is not really just a matter of what I want, Mr Moselmane. It is a matter of what the Government decides it will do, what it has already decided it will do and the decisions it takes in the future. Obviously, as the portfolio Minister I have inherited this policy commitment. I have negotiated with the Premier to expand somewhat the number of options being looked at, and that is part of what is being considered in the extended final business case. It will be considered in the normal course of events by Cabinet and its committees before a decision is taken.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I understand that Cabinet ultimately makes the decision, but what is your preference as the Minister?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is my opinion. I do not think that it would be appropriate for me to say, "This is what I want" and then do it. That is why there is a project steering committee; that is why there is a project control group. They are doing the work, they are consulting the community, they are working with experts and they will develop options. Obviously after I have looked at it with them, I will present it to Cabinet and its committees. It will be for them to deliver upon what the Cabinet collectively believes is the right decision in the interests of the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: With respect, Minister, any department and its bureaucrats must have some form of directions that the Minister wants to ultimately achieve. I know you have said that you want various options put on the table, but as Minister do you have a preference that you would like to see happen?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I hear what you say, Mr Moselmane. I think you are re-asking me the same question, to be honest.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes, because I have not got an answer.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Well, I think I have given you an answer. When I inherited the project, I asked that a broader range of options be looked at. I am not going to say that this will be the option that will happen and dictate that. I have put it in the hands of the public service professionals to work with the experts to

come up with the position in its final business case, and then Cabinet and its committees will deliberate upon that and make a decision.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Minister, to assist, I will make the question simpler: Do you support moving to Parramatta? Yes or no?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Thank you.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have always said that there should be a new museum at Parramatta, a world-class iconic museum. What I have also said is that I am open to the Ultimo precinct being kept either in part or in whole as cultural space.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: As part of your definition of "cultural space", does that mean a park? What does "cultural space" mean?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Apologies, would you be kind enough to ask the question again?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are very careful in your language and you refer to "use as cultural space". Can we return to what you define as "cultural space"? Does parkland constitute cultural space?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Does an office building constitute cultural space?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think, with respect, you are asking some ridiculous questions.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am trying to get your response.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Parkland is clearly not cultural space.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What is your definition of "cultural space"?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Point of order: The Minister has already answered the question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have actually answered that question.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, he has not.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I actually have answered it.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It was one of the first questions.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Minister, we have now heard of a preliminary business case, an interim business case, and a final business case. How many business cases are actually in the ether about the Powerhouse Museum? If you are unable to answer, perhaps you can defer to one of the bureaucrats.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I will let Mr Limkin answer that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: If you can take us through it slowly, please.

Mr LIMKIN: As I said earlier, New South Wales preliminary guidelines actually set out what you have to do, and the guidelines for capital business cases promote a consistent approach for all public sector agencies in preparing a preliminary and final business case. So they are the two steps that are required under Treasury guidelines. The preliminary business case constitutes the planning framework for the business case and is used to demonstrate and justify the service rationale, consider service delivery alternatives and also inform internal agencies of priority settings.

The final business case documents and defines the project and contains an updated justification for service delivery and service rationale, determines the value for money and demonstrates the agency has the capacity to implement the service. The business case process aims to help agencies choose the best means to satisfy a specific objective and rank competing proposals and enables the Government to prioritise its resource allocation decisions. The business case should and does clearly demonstrate the agency's capacity to implement the proposal and realise the intended service delivery.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So what possible use—

Mr LIMKIN: Can I just finish? Given the fact that there is an insurance process as well—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Assurance.

Mr LIMKIN: —assurance process, and I guess that is really key here, going back to Mr Secord's question, because there is a preliminary business case and only a draft final, which the Minister has extended—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So there is a draft final?

Mr LIMKIN: Well, there is a final, and that is what we are currently working on.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: There is—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The question was the process in this case. Because if the assumptions and the questions that were asked change between the preliminary and the draft final and the final, perhaps you need to go back to first principles and do your preliminary again. It sounds to me like the assumptions and the options have fundamentally changed between the preliminary and the final business case. I do not see how that fits in the model that Mr Limkin put forward.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: If I can respond, I do not think that there has been any change. I think merely any change in the central proposal, which is that there be a world-class museum built at Parramatta—the only expansion is what to do with Ultimo. That is the only real change.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you seriously saying that that was not part of the original business case: you shut down the Powerhouse Museum and do not do anything with it, or is it simply that we are changing from a residential apartment development to something else?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, I think the option of keeping it as cultural space was not part of the original consideration.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What were the original options? What has changed?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think you have had extensive evidence about that from Barney Glover and Dolla Merrillees at previous hearings.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Not on what were the other options for the business case. The whole community has speculated that your Government wanted to sell it off for residential or commercial development. Can you answer that deep concern now and say that that is off the table?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I think it was a yes or no question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have inherited the project. The project, of course, was originally announced by Premier Baird and Deputy Premier Grant. Obviously when they announced the project, they announced it in the context of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences being entirely relocated to Parramatta and the Ultimo Powerhouse site not being a location of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences anymore. But what is done with the Ultimo site has always been a matter that is being dealt with by the business case.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, here is a chance for you and your Government to remove a very deep concern, not just for the Ultimo community but for people around New South Wales who prize this site. Can you answer once and for all that you are taking off the table the option to turn the Powerhouse or part of it into residential, commercial or other private development?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The future of the Ultimo site is entirely part and always has been of the business case process—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So one of the options is the privatisation and sale of it, still?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: —the preliminary and final business case. I am not going to pre-empt the finalisation of the business case.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Can I ask some questions, Mr Chair?

The CHAIR: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You got your answer, Mr Shoebridge.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Minister, I am sure you have read the transcripts throughout this hearing and you would know that my particular area of interest is—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Rural and regional.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: —rural and regional.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Here we go, the diversion.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You think it is a diversion, do you?

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, I do not say it is a diversion. You are diverting from the line of questioning about whether it is going to be residential. That is what I was referring to as a diversion.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Mr Chair, I think you will agree—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I wanted to make sure I could correct the record.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: —that in terms of regional museums and galleries are a specific item of interest.

The CHAIR: I do agree. I ask that honourable members not interject.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: He was distorting what I said.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Minister, I have a number of things I would like to raise in terms of your support and potential future support for regional museums and galleries, including and particularly community museums. What level of interaction have you had personally with regional museums and galleries, and what are your personal views? Further, what is the Government currently doing to support regional museums and galleries?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Obviously this is an inquiry about museums and galleries and a specific part of it goes beyond just simply one museum and what is proposed for one museum. Regional museums and regional galleries are obviously a key consideration in terms of the New South Wales Government. Improving the support for the arts in regional New South Wales is a key policy priority that we have as well. Already a good deal is done through two means. Regional Arts NSW has a series of regional arts development organisations and Regional Arts NSW is funded and through it the regional arts development organisations are funded to work with particular local councils and also local groups on museums and galleries, amongst other things, and also working on visual and performing arts and other cultural activities as well.

Currently there is funding through Regional Arts NSW through to the regional arts development organisations. There is also a separate stream in terms of Museums and Galleries NSW where that organisation receives a block grant to cover its activities plus also funding so that it can have a small grants program to directly fund regional art galleries and regional museums. But in terms of some of the specifics, I might get Michael Brealey to give some of the details. In terms of our overall support for regional arts, in fact this is a key area and it is one of the areas where we have increased quite considerably the amount of funding in the last budget cycle.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Just before Mr Brealey answers, I was also interested in your personal support for regional arts, museums and galleries. I am trying to put on the record you are committed to regional areas and that then allows me to start pushing recommendations so that the Government can spend even more money in regional areas.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As you know, at present I am a resident of regional New South Wales. We have in next to my hometown in Huskisson an excellent local museum. It began its life as the Lady Denman Museum but it is now I think called, from memory, the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum. It is an excellent local museum, and I am passionate about it. Early on I decided that I would, as far as possible, have a program of visiting regional museums and galleries. I have done that so far in Orange and Newcastle, and I look forward to visiting others in future. I have been incredibly impressed with the work done, frankly, in Orange and Newcastle. I think their contribution is vastly underrated. One of the things I am also happy about but would like to see more of is the work that our cultural institutions do with regional museums and galleries as well. They have touring programs. I think that is excellent.

I would like to explore more in the next few months as Minister what are the possible impediments to that occurring more. I am sure there is no lack of will to do it amongst the cultural institutions but I want them to look more at how they can use their existing resources to do more. I also would like to have more attention on regional museums and galleries and whether there is something in a systemic way we have to do to improve our support for regional museums and galleries to ensure that we have a greater capacity to tour some of the collections that our cultural institutions have so that more of them can be experienced by people in regional areas. Another key consideration for me is digitisation. Each of the cultural institutions has a digital strategy but it is not a coordinated overall strategy. Some are doing very good things, others are doing other very good things. But I want to have more of a focus amongst the six cultural institutions on digitising their collections so that they are more accessible by people in regional areas as well.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Thank you. We have taken evidence to that effect. We have also taken evidence that in a number of museums across regional New South Wales, particularly smaller community museums, there are significant challenges in infrastructure, that there are problems with kitchens, bathrooms, rooves and so on.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Rooves, floors, doors, walls.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Exactly. Would you consider an increase in investment in small-scale infrastructure in regional museums and galleries to help ameliorate some of these challenges?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, I am exploring ways to be able to do that.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: One of the things that has come through this inquiry from witnesses is the lack of a real museum strategy for particularly the small to medium sector museums, predominately focused on community museums. Is that something that you would consider endorsing to identify the strengths, obviously of which there are many, and also the gaps in this area.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have had a number of discussions with my departmental secretary and other officials in the Arts portfolio about this issue. I have seen the evidence. Some of the people who have given that evidence have actually been to see me and spoken with me about it personally, including for example Kylie Winkworth, which I think was one of the first meetings I had as arts Minister. I have known her for a very long time, incidentally. I think I have mentioned that to the House before in an answer to a question, so I will not go over that again. Let me put it this way, I think there is a case for coming up with a proper museum strategy. I am looking at the best way of implementing that. We have some outstanding cultural institutions that do excellent work. But I think there are gaps, frankly, not just among the State cultural institutions in terms of the work they do. By having a proper museum strategy we can integrate the good work that regional museums do as well as part of that strategy. I am looking at ways of progressing that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Minister, as you would be aware, I am the shadow Minister for the Arts. As part of my consultation, I am going around to major regional galleries where there is concern about a lack of a proper museum strategy and a proper gallery strategy. One of the items that has come up in the consultations is that there is an appreciation for an occasional small-scale infrastructure. But the real concern is the need to fund ongoing programs and staff. They welcome getting infrastructure funding but they are unable to actually mount exhibitions and properly curate because they do not have staff. Are you looking in particular areas at ongoing programs and staff funding rather than just one-off infrastructure funding.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: At the moment we fund touring and small grants for infrastructure. That is the focus of our current funding. I think I mentioned earlier that I am considering the whole issue of how we can improve the regional offering.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you familiar with the Margaret Olley Gallery in the Tweed?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have not visited that one, no.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have you been to the gallery in Broken Hill?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have not been to Broken Hill since I was quite young, so I cannot help you with that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How about the Bega gallery? These are major galleries that I have visited around the State.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you aware that they are undertaking a major proposal to expand their gallery.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am excited to hear that they are.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would you be interested in or welcome a briefing or receiving material on their exciting proposal?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Of course I am.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, you have put on record your support for funding for small regional museums. You are unambiguous about that. You think that the Government should adequately fund small regional museums, is that right?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I do not think that is what I said.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you support additional funding being made available for small regional museums?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: What I said was that the Government at the moment supports through Regional Arts NSW the regional arts development organisations to work with regional museums and galleries. At the moment they also fund Museums and Galleries NSW with a block grant and Museums and Galleries NSW staff assists regional museums and galleries. They also have a small grants program themselves, which is funded by Regional Arts NSW. Finally, regional museums and galleries are also eligible to apply for funds under the Arts and Cultural Development Program of Create NSW as well. They are all being done at the moment. What I also said was that I am looking at ways of improving the regional offering. As to how that is done, I cannot be more specific at the moment because it is still under consideration.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you understand the enormous frustration out there, particularly of those people who are deeply passionate about their local museum, whether it is at Hill End or at Lithgow or at Boorowa or wherever and they cannot get \$200 to fix the toilet, or \$500 to fix the roof, or \$1,000 to get a digital camera? And they hear that the State Government is proposing to spend more than a billion dollars to blow up a perfectly functional highly prized museum and move it 20 kilometres down the road. Do you understand the frustration out there in the rest of the State?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: First of all, you put some figures in that question and loaded it up. So I am not going to agree with the premise of your question and say that there—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Maybe it is \$800 million, maybe it is \$1 billion, maybe it is \$2 billion.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Let the Minister answer the question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But it is hundred and hundreds of millions of dollars to blow up a premiere cultural institution when they cannot get the money to fix a roof or unblock a toilet.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: You are using terms like "blow up" which really do not assist the discussion.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You have not taken off the table turning it into residential or commercial and you are—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I absolutely do understand the passion that people in regional New South Wales have for their museums and galleries and I can understand that they want their fair share of funding, and I am working on ways to make sure that they get it.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, in one of your interviews on 2GB with Luke Grant you said, "We are also going to be a bit flexible about how we pay for it". Can you explain the flexibility?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am sorry, I have to see the full context, the whole transcript.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I can give it to you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It is your own Government that did the media summary.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am well aware. I do not remember the entire conversation, the question. I just want to understand the context.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It is your own media summaries. Those are your own words; they are not provided by us.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: The Minister does give more than one media interview a month.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: He does not do many.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What is your response, Minister.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The question of how we fund the new museum at Parramatta is a matter that is being looked at as part of the final business case.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You specifically say, "We are also going to be flexible about how we are paying for it". What is the flexibility? What do you mean by that?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: All of those matters are being considered as part of the final business case.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Including the Ultimo site?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, the matter of how we pay—how the new museum at Parramatta is funded will be considered as part of the final business case.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Don't you owe it to the community? You cannot just keep hiding behind by saying, "All those matters are under consideration, all options are under consideration". Then you go on 2GB and say, "We have to be a bit flexible about how we are going to pay for it". You cannot have it both ways. You cannot say one thing in an interview and then come to the Committee hearing and say, "I can't give you the details". What are you examining?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: They are not mutually exclusive at all.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You cannot go into the public arena—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: He is saying there are a range of options for consideration, which is exactly what the business case is doing.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: He owes it to the community and taxpayers to say. This is a major expenditure.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: That is what flexibility is. That is the definition of flexibility. You look at a whole lot of different options.

The CHAIR: Order! Let the Minister answer the question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I could not have put it better than the Hon. Ben Franklin. In fact, I have put it in exactly the way that the Hon. Ben Franklin put it several times earlier in the hearing.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I will go back to an earlier question. We were talking about the business cases—the preliminary business case, the intermediate business case, the draft final business case, and the final business case.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, I think with great respect you are now misrepresenting what has actually been said. There is a preliminary business case and there is a final business case—two stages.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Where are we now? Are we at the preliminary business case or are we at the draft final business case or are we at the final business case?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We are at the final business case.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: We are at the final business case?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes.

The CHAIR: We have taken a fair amount of evidence in relation to the business case process. We were told that the final business case was expected to be tabled by the end of March.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Correct.

The CHAIR: Are you saying that that did not happen?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It absolutely did not happen, and that was the announcement I made in April which was that the final business case stage would be extended so that the option of keeping part or all of Ultimo as cultural space could be included, which it previously was not.

The CHAIR: It was not included?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No.

The CHAIR: The option of Ultimo continuing was included in your new extended version of the final business case?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, part or all of Ultimo as cultural space, which could include, for example, a continued presence of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. I think I actually said that earlier in evidence I gave.

The CHAIR: You did say earlier that it was not in the earlier business case, or the rules or the guidelines.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The terms of reference.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is the expansion that happened in April at your direction.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The extension. Absolutely.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: In your opening statement you said that New South Wales had been languishing for several decades behind Victoria and even Queensland in terms of art and cultural attractions. How does New South Wales stand in comparison with other States in regards to budget allocation for arts and culture and what would be your vision for future budgets?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think you have heard evidence on that in terms of your Committee has received submissions on that. That has obviously been an issue over the years. The thing that concerns me most, however, is that cultural infrastructure in New South Wales does not seem to have kept pace with what has been happening in either Victoria or Queensland. This Government has been determined that New South Wales should be number one in everything. We are the number one State and we should be the number one State. We have achieved that. We have brought New South Wales back to that in so many areas. One of the areas where I do not think we have been number one is in some of our cultural infrastructure.

If you look at the Art Gallery compared with the National Gallery of Victoria or the National Gallery or even the new gallery in Brisbane it is quite clear we are falling behind. In terms of attracting blockbuster exhibitions which are very important in driving visitation and in particular cultural tourism and the enormous multiplier effect that has on the economy, we are not number one. That is a very serious issue that needs to be addressed. Fortunately, because as a Government we have been prudent, we do have a capacity to reinvest significantly in our cultural infrastructure. While it is not specifically related to this inquiry, obviously the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct and the Sydney Opera House are going to be the recipients of significant funds in that respect. Given that those two projects are arguably outside the terms of reference I will not speak at too much length about them.

The CHAIR: What role do you see for the private sector in financing, running and sponsoring museums?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Public-private partnerships [PPPs] in the provisioning of a range of infrastructure are very important.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We are not going to get the KPMG Art Gallery or the BHP Opera House, are we?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Why not?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: "Why not", I hear. We are not going to offer naming rights to our premier cultural institutions?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think the model in New South Wales up to now has been a strong public sector model. There has been a substantial opportunity to focus on generating revenue which has effectively involved the museums and galleries engaging in revenue raising options. Obviously, there has been, in some of the cultural institutions, a willingness to generate income. For example, the Art Gallery has a restaurant which is run by the private sector as part of the Art Gallery which works perfectly well and that provides an income stream to the Art Gallery. Beyond that they have sponsorship programs and they have philanthropy programs. All of our cultural institutions are trying to broaden their revenue base beyond just support from government.

The CHAIR: You are leaning towards a model that could have public and private funding. I am not just talking about the MAAS but any museum. You can have an art museum like the Guggenheim or MONA in Tasmania that have been sponsored by non-governmental private people. New South Wales does not seem to have that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: In fact, there are large amounts of philanthropy and corporate money that have been invested. It is more philanthropic but I am aware, for example, that some of the work that is being done at the Australian Museum in its new long gallery is being done with the assistance of Westpac. That is fantastic. The Art Gallery by virtue of very significant support from individuals has been able to increase its floor space. For example, with donations from Mr Lowy and Mr Gonski a large part of the ground floor has been redone to make additional exhibition space available.

The CHAIR: I not implying it is negative to do that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, I am aware of that. I am just outlining some of the ways it has been done and is being done. On the ground floor of the Art Gallery, after the previous Government put the Lilyfield storage facility in so that the Art Gallery was able to move its storage facility outside of the building across the other side of the Domain, there was considerable philanthropy that enabled a considerable expansion of Art Gallery space to open up a whole significant new area. Obviously the support of individuals who are able to give something back to their community is very important. I, of course, have an open mind about public-private

partnerships in terms of the provision of infrastructure but there are no proposals at present, as far as I am aware, for there to be greater use of that in the provision of cultural infrastructure.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are taking us off track. While we are off track, you said you have an open mind on PPPs and commercial ventures. Do you support the crass commercialisation that is being undertaken by Waverley mayor Sally Betts on the Bondi Pavilion?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: This is obviously well outside the terms of reference.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, it is not. He took us down there.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: He directly answered a question by the Chair.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It is a museum. The Bondi Beach Pavilion Community Cultural Centre was established—

The CHAIR: It is outside the terms of reference.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It is easily in the terms of reference. Now that we have given the Minister time to think about the answer, do you support it?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I would not be comfortable with answering the question because I am not sufficiently familiar with the proposal.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are very good friends with Sally Betts. Have you not discussed it with her? It has come up in our Chamber.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think Sally was a former employee of mine. I would not describe Sally as a close friend.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you will take it on notice?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I do not see any reason to take it on notice; it has virtually nothing to do with the terms of reference.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It is actually within the terms of reference.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I do not see how it is, but anyway.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: To come back to explore the consultation process that will happen from here on out, did I understand you correctly when you said that once the further review of the draft business case is developed the options that are identified will be taken out for public consultation before the business case is finalised?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think I answered that question, which was that community consultation has started now to inform the options.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I wrote down your answer and I thought you said there would be consultation on the different options. Are you saying there will be consultation that informs the different options? Do you understand the difference?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, I do. I think it is better to ask Mr Limkin to comment on how he is approaching the consultation. I think we might be at cross-purposes but in fact essentially agreeing. I will let him answer it.

Mr LIMKIN: Will you clarify the question so I am 100 per cent sure of what you are asking?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Currently there are a series of broad options that are informing the next stage of the business case. Is that right?

Mr LIMKIN: That is correct.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: After further analysis and discussion with the community, that will crystallise in a more specific option, I assume, as the business case develops. Is that how it works?

Mr LIMKIN: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The question is: As it crystallises into more specific options once you have got some figures and much more detail about the proposal, will you then go out and say to the community "These are the realistic options in front of us. We want to talk to you about them"?

Mr LIMKIN: That is obviously a decision for government because the standard Treasury process does not require that. I will be following the standard Treasury process where you engage with the community to develop the option and then you let the Government decide.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, do you understand the difficulty the community has at this stage? They do not know what the budget is, they do not know how much you are proposing to spend, and they do not really know what the viable options are out there to engage in. It is almost impossible for the community to give you informed views at this stage. Is there openness in the Government, once it gets a bit further down the track and it has fleshed out the options in more detail, to then go to the community and say, "Okay, \$800 million for this, \$1.2 billion for this, \$400 million for this. What do you think?"?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I will take that question on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: A lot has been said about consultation with Parramatta and Western Sydney, and I think we all celebrate that. But when will you reach out to the sectors of the Ultimo community and the Friends of the Powerhouse and have formal consultation with them, not just meetings with you in the office, on this proposal?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As I understand it there will not only be community consultation at Parramatta but also at Ultimo. I will ask Mr Limkin to comment on that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And in his answer will he please indicate whether at least one of those formal consultations will be a meeting at the Powerhouse where the friends and the community can really have their say where they want to say it, which is at the Powerhouse?

Mr LIMKIN: I will unpack that because there are two questions there. We are going to consult, as you say, in Western Sydney and we will also consult in Sydney in Ultimo. I would encourage everyone to encourage everyone to register on the website because that is one of the facilities we will use. We will also look at large community forums. I note your suggestion that you have put on the table. I will take that into part of the planning of the consultation to discuss it with the project team to make sure we can look at how we do it. It is a good suggestion.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can you think of any better place to communicate and consult with the Friends of the Powerhouse and the Ultimo community about the Powerhouse than right there at the place they are troubled by and at the place they love?

Mr LIMKIN: As I said, I am happy to take the question on notice and consider it with the project team and also in conversation with the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences because obviously that is just as important.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can we be comfortable that there will be a public meeting and it will not just be an atomised, one-on-one consultation or online consultations? There will be a public meeting where people can go—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think that question has been answered.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I was not sure that it was.

The CHAIR: He did answer it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is the answer "yes"?

Mr LIMKIN: Yes.

The CHAIR: You mentioned the business case and I listened to the criteria that you ran through there. You do not have to read it again.

Mr LIMKIN: No, I am just going to make sure I have my notes.

The CHAIR: It is Treasury speak; I do not want to hear it again.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: It is government speak.

The CHAIR: Treasury speak is not necessarily good government speak. The Committee has heard in earlier hearings, and correct me if I am wrong, that no risk assessment has been done in relation to moving all or parts of the collection from the Powerhouse or other places to this new site on the banks of the Parramatta River. Has that particular issue been addressed since you have become Minister?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The answer is that that is being done as part of the final business case now.

The CHAIR: I thought that might have been the case.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who is undertaking the business case review? What government agencies are doing it? What external consultants are you engaging?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Limkin as the project director can answer that question.

Mr LIMKIN: The project is currently led by the Department of Planning and Environment. Obviously Arts and Culture has moved as part of the machinery in government changes. The Department of Planning and Environment is undertaking the business case, obviously in key collaboration with the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [MAAS] because they are ultimately the customer and they will be owning this as we go forward. A project steering committee has been reconstituted and that project steering committee includes representatives from the MAAS trust, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Treasury and the Department of Planning and Environment. There is a project control group which includes all those members, plus also independent advisers, Infrastructure NSW and the Department of Industry to ensure that we deliver the best outcome for the people of New South Wales. You asked about independence and peer reviews. We have engaged Doug Hall who is a museum expert to actually provide some expert advice on this. I will get the credentials for Doug Hall.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: They are definitely worth hearing.

Mr LIMKIN: Doug Hall was the Director of the Queensland Art Gallery between 1987 and 2007. Under his directorship the gallery expanded international focus and developed a strong engagement with Asia, especially the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art. He initiated, negotiated and curated many major exhibitions within Australia and internationally and continues with academic and advisory roles.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: His role is as a peer reviewer?

Mr LIMKIN: He is part of the project's team engaged by the lead consultant. There will be peer review as well. The Department of Planning and Environment are currently establishing the peer review process to ensure that we do get the best outcome for the people of New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who is the lead consultant?

Mr LIMKIN: Johnstaff Projects.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is it true that for the tender of that particular contract Johnstaff was the only organisation that tendered?

Mr LIMKIN: That tender was done by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. I believe they have given evidence to this Committee previously regarding that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you know if it was the only organisation that tendered because nobody else wanted it?

Mr LIMKIN: No, I do not know. As I said, you would have to ask the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences because it completed the procurement tendering process.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is hard to understand those three different layers. I am not criticising you for your answers but it is hard to understand how this project is being assessed. Will you provide a diagram to explain how it works, on notice?

Mr LIMKIN: Just to clarify, are you asking for a project governance diagram?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who is running the business case? How is the business case being finalised? Please start with the Department of Planning and Environment and all the way down and explain the checks and balances, the decision-makers and the consultants at the various levels.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think the Acting Deputy Secretary might like to comment on that.

Ms O'MARA: Yes, we are happy to take that on notice and provide a diagram, if that would be helpful.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Limkin, how many people are actually working on the project team? Is there a secretariat? Is there a formal structure? Is there a floor of bureaucrats working on this?

Mr LIMKIN: No.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How many people are working on this?

Mr LIMKIN: I will have to take that on notice. I do not know off the top of my head and I would rather give you a—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you the project director?

Mr LIMKIN: I am the project director.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How many people answer to you?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Point of order. The witness has said he will take it on notice, which is utterly reasonable.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am not accepting that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: He has said he will take it on notice. That is an answer.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That is not an answer.

The CHAIR: The witness has said he will take it on notice.

(Short adjournment)

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Chair, before we continue, one of the questions asked earlier about Johnstaff Projects was taken on notice. Mr Limkin is now in a position to answer that question.

Mr LIMKIN: I have been advised that the contract for the works associated with the development of a final business case was awarded following a selective tender process. Five organisations were invited to tender, drawn from the performance and management brief qualification scheme managed by the New South Wales Government. The request for quote was advertised on the eQuote system on 7 May 2016 and closed on 3 June 2016. This contract was awarded to Johnstaff Projects NSW Pty Ltd as a consortium of partners across fields including architecture, museums, quality surveyors, economic, research and planning. The contract was awarded on 26 July 2016, the engagement was endorsed by the then project control group, project steering committee and Minister for Arts.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Limkin, thank you for that history, but it did not answer my question, which was: despite the invitations is it true that the only one who put their hand up for this particular dead cat of a project was Johnstaff?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is clearly not a "dead cat" project.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Putting to one side the dead cat, is it true that the only firm to put their hand up for the project was Johnstaff?

Mr LIMKIN: I was not involved in the procuring process, so I cannot answer that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: As helpful as it was, it did not answer the question.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Limkin, during the break did you check the number of staff on the project team?

Mr LIMKIN: As I said, I will take that on notice just to ensure I give you an accurate answer. I want to make sure everything is accurate to this Committee.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you also take on notice the budget allocated to you, the project team, the people working on the project steering committee and the project control group?

Mr LIMKIN: Can you clarify?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: To assist you, I am trying to find out how much is being spent on bureaucrats and staff that are working the final business case, the project team, the project steering committee and the project control group. Is there any other group that I need to be aware of that is working on this project? You have the project team, project steering committee and the project control group; is there another body working on it?

Mr LIMKIN: No, there is not.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Could I have the budget and the number of people working in all of those three bodies?

Mr LIMKIN: I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I think it might be useful, rather than trying to suggest this group and that group, how much has been spent to date on the preliminary draft and draft final business case?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Thank you, Mr Shoebridge.

Mr LIMKIN: I am going to take that on notice.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We will certainly take that one on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, you outlined some of the past challenges that New South Wales faces compared to Victoria and Queensland. Could you share some of the optimism that exists in New South Wales for the museum and galleries sector?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I note the scepticism in the public gallery. Can I say everywhere I go there is excitement about the fact that there is significant investment in arts and culture. The amount of money going into cultural infrastructure is unprecedented. That has its own challenges in terms of people coming forward with urgent priorities. It is a good problem to have. This is an opportunity to make sure New South Wales is number one again in arts and culture. That is what I am determined to do.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Would you consider a priority of this government to develop a long-term strategy for the development and delivery of cultural infrastructure in this State?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, I absolutely think it is particularly important for the non-State government sector, which is largely in regional New South Wales. It is critical that we have a cultural infrastructure strategy for the regions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We have had witness after witness tell us that we should be looking to Victoria for its museum strategy and its gallery strategy.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have read that evidence. It is one of the reasons I would encourage the Committee to conclude its work and report. Then we will have guidance from the Committee that has heard the evidence about what we should be looking at.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Committee is mindful of that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I said what I said in my opening statement deliberately. It is fantastic that the arts portfolio, and in particular museums and galleries, are having this much attention. Given the number of submissions and the number of people present today there is a lot of interest. I encourage the Committee to report and make some recommendations.

The CHAIR: You are happy to give it more attention.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, I am quite certain that Doug Hall has an extremely high national and international reputation as somebody who knows how to run a gallery. But, we are talking about a museum. Do you accept it is a fundamentally different skill base to know how to build and run a museum than it is to run a gallery?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: In this country we refer to art galleries and museums as different things, but the truth is that a museum of the visual arts is still a museum. An art gallery is a museum of the visual arts. In most of the world they are referred to as "art museums" not "art galleries".

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you suggesting it is the same skill base that runs something like the Queensland Art Gallery, with its quite distinct collection, compared to something like the Powerhouse, which is really the historical custodian of so much of this State's history?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I would suggest to you that in fact across galleries and museums there are substantial core similarities in terms of collection management and exhibition practice. For starters, art galleries and art museums have artefacts, not just pictures on the wall. In terms of art galleries with, for example, Indigenous artefacts, the Australian Museum has one of the greatest collections of Indigenous artefacts in the world. Tell me how considerations about the display and interpretation of an Aboriginal artefact by the Australian Museum is different to how it is displayed and interpreted by the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You do not accept, then, Minister, that there is a distinct difference between a visual arts presentation in a gallery and the role of the Powerhouse in preserving and recording and displaying our extraordinarily unique history?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, I am not saying that there are not differences. There are obviously great differences between the curating of the visual arts and museological practice. In terms of the premise of

your question, you are suggesting that there are no similarities and I am rejecting the premise of your question which is that there is no synergy at all.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The premise of my question is not that there is no similarities—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is actually what you were saying, Mr David Shoebidge.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: —it is that there are quite distinct skill sets. When you are bringing in a peer reviewer as effectively the check and balance to make sure that the museum's interests and its collections will be protected, why bring in someone who comes from the gallery history? Why do you not assure the community and bring someone in with museum history?

Mr LIMKIN: As I said, Doug Hall is one of many peer reviewers we are engaging. We are happy to consider that as part of that, and it is something we will consider. In addition, I think you forget how wonderful and how talented the staff of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences are. Those people are key collaborators in this project. They are on the project steering committee and on the project control group so that we make sure we get and protect that collection as much as possible.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The purpose of a peer review and having somebody with the relevant experience in the museum sector as the peer reviewer, is to have someone who can step back from it and say, "You are too close to it. It is going in the wrong direction. My history says that is going to fail." Where do we get the comfort that the person with that peer review role has got the relevant museum background?

Mr LIMKIN: And, as I said, the department is engaging peer reviewers. Doug Hall is one of many.

Ms O'MARA: We are seeking candidates with museum and curatorial experience as part of the peer review.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Perhaps further details of this will come when we get the diagram.

Ms O'MARA: Yes. We have not engaged that person yet, but we are seeking to engage someone with museum experience. The other point I would make about Mr Hall is that he conceived the idea for the Gallery of Modern Art in Queensland and oversaw its development, so he brings that expertise to the table.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am not denying his talents and expertise. The question is: We are talking about a museum. If you are going to comfort the community that you have the right peer reviewer in, pick somebody with museum experience.

Ms O'MARA: Yes. I would also reiterate what Mr Limkin has said about the expertise that the museum brings to the table. They are represented on both the control group and the project steering committee.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, with regard to paying for the development of the new museum at Parramatta—or anywhere that you may ultimately choose—and in response to your comment that you will be a bit flexible about paying for it, is it possible is there the expectation that the City of Parramatta Council will make a contribution towards the cost of the new museum in Parramatta?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Obviously I have had discussions with Parramatta council about the importance of activating Parramatta as an arts and cultural precinct, but I am not part of the commercial negotiations team that is handling the purchase of the riverbank site in Parramatta so I cannot really help you with that. That is obviously being handled as part of those commercial negotiations.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Is that part of an understanding for the City of Parramatta Council to increase development heights and as a result have more funding put into the development of the museum?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am not really involved in the commercial negotiations, so I cannot help you there. Obviously all of the issues in relation to the purchase of the riverbank site which was announced by the previous Premier and the previous Minister are commercial-in-confidence. While I am not involved in those commercial negotiations, even if the people who are were here being asked, they could not go into them either.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: So there is a possibility that the City of Parramatta Council will be making a significant contribution towards the new museum in Parramatta.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That is not what the Minister said.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: No—I am asking it. It is a question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have answered the question.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I have one further question about regional museums and galleries which I have thought about over the break. I appreciate your obvious commitment to supporting and increasing support for regional museums and galleries. I think that is terrific. We have heard numbers of structural problems around the support for regional galleries and museums. What do you think are the impediments that could perhaps stymie some of your plans to support regional museums and galleries and what could be done to address them?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am not sure that I can really add that much at this stage, the Hon. Ben Franklin. Obviously we are looking very closely at it. It is complex in terms of capital funding. Obviously there are always challenges in terms of recurrent funding. Capital funding largely goes into State assets, which is why it has traditionally been called the State asset acquisition program rather than the capital works program. None of the facilities in regional New South Wales are in State Government ownership, so that provides some challenges in itself. But all of those matters are being looked at so that we can come up with something. Currently of course we work through Regional Arts NSW in one respect and in terms of the support they give through the regional arts development organisations. Otherwise we work through Museums and Galleries NSW in terms of their small grant programs. And then there are the direct grants that can be applied for from the Arts and Cultural Development Program. So all of those are options, but we are looking to see if there are other options as well.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, we have spent a lot of time talking about the Museum of Arts and Applied Sciences. When we are thinking about galleries, we have got the Australian Museum just down the road that celebrated 190 years this year. Earlier you mentioned the Long Gallery redevelopment. What other items are occurring at the Australian Museum this year and in the lead-up to the 200 years?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think the Australian Museum is an extraordinary institution. Obviously it is the oldest museum in Australia and Australia's first museum. At one stage, actually, it lived in the Parkes Room. Most people do not realise that, but that was one of its campuses once upon a time. But it has been at its current site for a long time. I think they are doing tremendous work. They have a really challenged site, of course, because it is a small site and of course they have heritage buildings. What they achieve within that area is incredible. I think the quality of their work is first class. They have a very significant Australian Museum Research Institute as well, which has a much broader remit than the other cultural institutions in respect of their supported scientific endeavour, and their work is incredible. Let me just say, in respect of getting on top of some of the challenges that all cultural institutions face, all of the staff at the Australian Museum, under the leadership of Kim McKay, are doing a fabulous job. Take the current spiders exhibition. I do not know whether members have visited it. It is an incredible exhibition. For those who are arachnophobes, I would not recommend it. The kids love it. There is the capacity to watch scientists actually milking funnel web spiders. It is incredible what they are doing. It is an example of museological practice at its finest.

One of the things that the Australian Museum is getting right in a big way is that it is now packaging up its exhibitions and onselling them, so they travel. Not only do they travel—funded of course by the New South Wales Government—to regional locations, they are now selling them to major museums in North America, and that is earning the Australian Museum significant revenue. It is the way forward. We have some of the finest museum specialists anywhere working for our museums in Sydney, and their capacity to develop exhibitions like the spider exhibition and to travel with them improves the capacity and quality of our museums into the future. I think they are doing first-class work.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, you would have to be aware of the anxiety in the community about the future of the Powerhouse Museum.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think I have referred to that earlier in answers, and I think I may have referred to it in my opening statement.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Which is informing your decision about the increased options of the business case?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I, for one, welcome that for the Powerhouse. If you had asked somebody in Sydney three years ago what were the cultural cornerstones for Sydney, they would have said the Opera House, the Australian Museum, the Art Gallery, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Powerhouse. If your Government sells the Powerhouse site, what protection do the people of New South Wales have for those other iconic sites in Sydney?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Shoebridge, the New South Wales Government has taken a decision to develop a first-class iconic world-rated museum in Parramatta. I think it is the right decision. I think it is a tremendous project. I am delighted to be associated with it, and I believe that the people of New South Wales

will see the museum when it is completed and think this was the right decision. It is a great thing for the State of New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What they see now is a very real and current threat to one of those cultural cornerstones of Sydney. They are seeing this as the thin edge of the wedge and that there will be a possible loss of those other cultural icons. They are asking: What next?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: With respect, Mr Shoebridge, that is nonsense. Are you suggesting that the Opera House is going to be lost? Is that what you are actually suggesting? That is just ridiculous.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am suggesting that if the Government is willing to sell the Powerhouse, it is willing to sell anything. That is what I am suggesting, and that is the concern.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Shoebridge, I was not a member of Cabinet when this decision was taken. I was President of the Legislative Council, as you well know. I was not part of that decision, but now as Minister for the Arts I have the responsibility for carriage of the project. I have made adjustments by extending the business case, which I think is worthwhile, and I also have seen why the Government took that decision, because I think it is incredibly important that Parramatta has a world-class iconic cultural institution. But, of course, as I have said before in this hearing, I believe it is an important matter that the possible retention of cultural space at Ultimo—either part or all of the site—needs to be looked at and that is what I have done as Minister.

The CHAIR: Minister, what you are saying is that you cannot throw any light on why Parramatta?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Why Parramatta? Actually, this was part of the State Infrastructure Strategy considerations from the first point that the State Infrastructure Strategy was released in 2012, the fact that there needed to be more arts and a cultural presence in Western Sydney. I think that is absolutely right. I think there is significant importance for that. In 2014 there was an update to that strategy, and it was suggesting that Parramatta be looked at. That is the background to the announcement that Premier Baird and Minister Grant made.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: In your options, are you looking for alternative areas where you may have a museum? You have already said that Parramatta is the site.

The CHAIR: What about Rockdale?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Minister has said that the site is already locked in.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The decision of Cabinet taken in April 2016 was that the site of the museum would be the Riverbank site. There has been no change to that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Number two central business district.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much, Minister, for attending today. I note that questions were taken on notice. The Committee has resolved that the answers to questions taken on notice be returned within 21 days. The secretariat will contact you in relation to the questions that you have taken on notice.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee adjourned at 15:12