

Attachment 1: The Missing Expert Committee

Mystery at the Museum

The idea of moving the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta is opposed, with excellent reasons, by what should be overwhelming forces, beginning with the National Trust. Public outrage forced the establishment of a Legislative Inquiry which has developed into one of the largest such exercises in the history of these Inquiries. 28 major organisations, and 128 people, including museum and arts experts with centuries of relevant experience and knowledge made submissions opposing the 'move'; not one such submission supported it.

But the government has not taken the slightest notice of the mass of expert opinion. The decision to move was demonstrably taken without any research. All actions taken by the public service are origin from the decision by the government to move the museum. The process of moving the amazing exhibits from their iconic, purpose-built home means a process of incredible complexity which will simply waste hundreds of millions of dollars while destroying the magnificent heritage building of the present museum.

When we pressed for any evidence that the Government has sought expert advice, we heard of the existence of an Expert Advisory Panel, sometimes called the Expert Advisory Group or Expert Advisory Committee. The New MAAS website says that the group of 'world renowned museum experts provided their input and guidance throughout the process.'

The Arts Minister said he did not need other advice: In Inquiry evidence on 29 August 2017 he explained

'We have established an expert advisory committee to look at this. We have a wealth of knowledge and a solid project focus track record across many critical aspects of the project, including: the design and delivery of major arts and cultural projects; government relationships; subject matter expertise across museums, collections, science and the arts; major project planning and delivery; operations and management of museums; and philanthropic and sponsor relations. They provide their knowledge and guidance directly to the project committee. The members of that include the following: Dr J. Patrick Greene, previously the chief executive officer of Museum Victoria; Professor Graham Durant, the Director of Questacon; Mr Mark Carnegie, well-known as an arts philanthropist; and [Doug Hall, former director of Queensland Art Gallery], Peter Root, the Managing Director of Root Partnerships who has had an extensive involvement with the Powerhouse Museum; Penny Hutchinson, previously the head of Arts Victoria; and Edmund Capon as well, who I am sure is well-known to all of you. My response would be we are getting the expert advice and we are able to go forward on the basis that the best advice is available already to the project and we have locked that in to ensure that we have a good outcome'.

So let's look at this wonderful organisation.

No member of the committee appears in the Business Case or other records until June 2017. So the project had run for two and a half years without the involvement of any of these people.

In the Involvement Register, part of the Business Case, we read that Doug Hall attended a workshop on 'Area Schedule' at the Arts and Culture offices in Castlereagh Street on 20 June 2017.

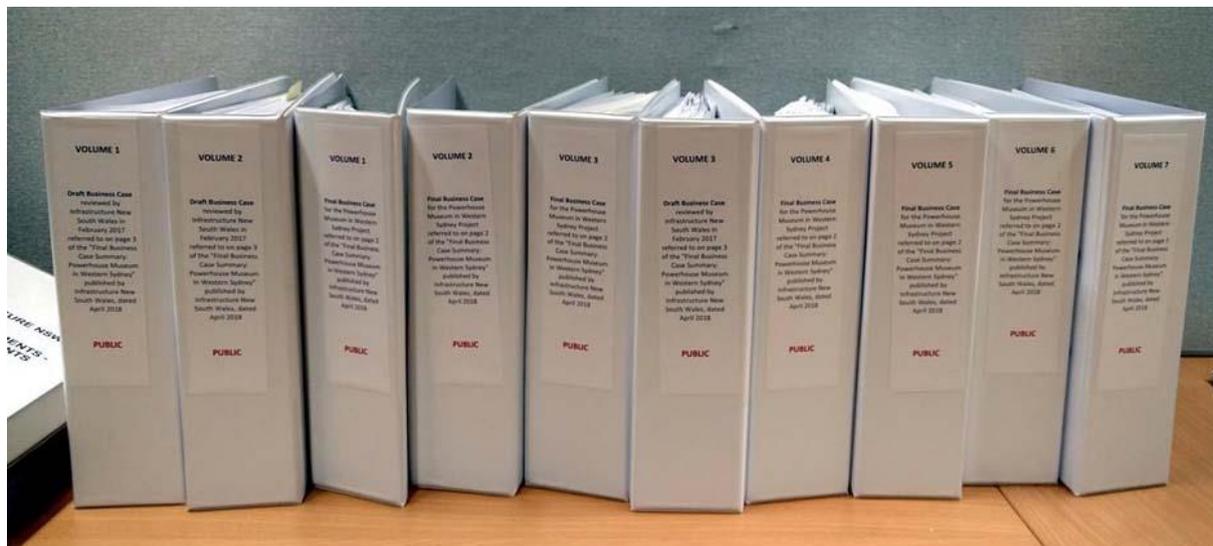
The expert group first met on 7 September 2017 at The Mint, Macquarie Street, attended by Peter Root, Penny Hutchinson and Graham Durant with a group of senior people from MAAS and CIPMO.

A second meeting, on 25 September 2017 at Parramatta Council buildings, had the same attendance plus Patrick Greene. Doug Hall attended neither meeting. Edmund Capon and Mark Carnegie have never attended meetings of the group and do not appear in the involvement register. They are reported as saying respectively that they would not attend and did not know anything about it.

In the academic world, peer assessment involves the examination of the relevant material by outside experts. Almost uniquely among the people who have contributed to the Business Plan, Peter Root had had museum experience, and the arrangements that Root Associates has submitted for gutting the museum are efficient. He makes the point that the process is clumsy: the Catalina must be last out of Ultimo and first in to Parramatta, and this will cause huge delays in commissioning the new museum. But nowhere has he recommended the move idea. He has been paid for professional involvement in the project and thus should not take part in peer review, nor should Penny Hutchinson, a director of Root Projects. So we are left with one meeting attended by Patrick Greene and two by Graham Durant as the only valid sources of input from the expert group. Search of the business plan does not reveal any input from the group or any of its members. MAAS, the Arts Ministry, CIPMO and the Premiers Department have all been contacted seeking information on any other involvement by any of these people, and dates and times of any other meetings, with no response.

So we have a situation where the massive, properly reasoned and factually supported material presented by a who's who of the Australian cultural sector, (not to mention tens of thousands of the general population) is counterbalanced by a few hours of undocumented participation from a few so-called 'experts'.

Or could it possibly be that the Government's determination to destroy this wonderful building and waste hundreds of millions of dollars is motivated by some other advisory force? I wonder who!



The Business Case was released after strenuous efforts were made. One copy was made available, by appointment, in the Legislative Council offices. We had to copy it all, digitise and put on line so we could analyse it.

Below: The missing Attachment EE

	Attachment X – Heritage Report	29 November 2016	JohnStaff, contributor Adam
Tab 26	Attachment Y – Flood Study	November 2016	JohnStaff, contributor Taylor Whitting
Tab 27	Attachment Z – Traffic and Transport Assessment	November 2016	JohnStaff, contributor Taylor Whitting
Tab 28	Attachment AA – Geotechnical Investigation	2 September 2016	JohnStaff, contributor Pe Meynink
Tab 29	Attachment BB – New Museum Rationale	14 February 2017	MAAS
Tab 30	Attachment CC – Commissioning and Launch Plan	21 February 2016	JohnStaff
	Attachment EE – Consultants and Peer Review Schedule	12 January 2018	