



**Submission by Museums Australia (NSW)
on a strategic plan for the visual arts & museums sectors
in NSW**

**Part 1
Supporting community and regional museums and
galleries in New South Wales**

28 June 2011

**Related document
Part 2: Selected sources and commentary**

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In a nutshell

**We need a fresh approach
to support regional and community museums and galleries
through the next decade.**

In NSW, the future of CAN is as important as the future of M&GNSW.

**Future solutions will depend on the degree to which
governments, institutions, agencies and other organisations
have the authority, resources and skills
to lead or contribute to programs and services
in a world radically changed by technology.**

**The NSW Government
could support the development of
NSW regional and community museums and galleries
by**

transforming the use of technology through major cultural institutions

**clarifying roles for delivering complementary services by M&GNSW, MANSW and
other stakeholders**

providing appropriate funding.

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See also Part 2: *Selected Sources and Commentary*

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND

Arts NSW is reviewing the visual arts and museum sectors in NSW with the aim of producing a new strategic plan for the sectors. The initiative was one of the recommendations of the report by Peter Watts on Museums and Galleries NSW (M&GNSW) in September 2010.

Professor Amanda Lawson and her team of consultants have been asked to identify significant issues for sustainable development of the museum and gallery sector, current and emerging needs of the different parts of sector, opportunities for increased joint programs, the role of NSW cultural institutions in relation to the small to medium sector, and key priorities for the sector over the next five to ten years.

Museums Australia (NSW), as a professional association representing museums, galleries and related enterprises in the state, is a key player in future developments. Its 1991 strategic plan for museums laid the ground for the establishment of Museums and Galleries NSW. Its local government handbook for museums, published in 2000, carries the seeds of issues still to be resolved. Its state-wide chapter network offers a mechanism for supporting future initiatives in collaboration with other bodies.

This submission builds on previous MANSW submissions available on its website.¹ It has been prepared by Paul Bentley the NSW executive officer on behalf of the branch executive. Wider and deeper consultation on the issues raised and the availability of an exposure draft of the consultants' report submitted to Arts NSW would assist in refining ideas represented in both documents.

1.2 CONTEXTS

As a context for our three main points, we examine the scope of the terms of reference and some of the language driving future action. We draw on extensive research and commentary, some of which are presented in part 2 of this submission. And we summarise government policies and directions internationally and locally across a range of portfolios that may influence future strategies for museums and galleries.

1.3 DEVELOPING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Overview

The Watts report offered a springboard for concerted efforts by stakeholders over the next decade. Significant issues revolve around transforming the use of technology, clarifying roles and services, and providing appropriate funding. Future solutions will depend on the degree to which governments, institutions, agencies and organisations have the authority, resources and skills to lead or contribute to programs and services in a world radically changed by technology.

¹ Museums Australia (NSW) <http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/site/nswdocs.php>

Transforming the use of technology

The internet and technology are driving widespread social change with profound impacts on industries and organisations. Convergence in media and publishing industries demonstrate the substantial nature of these changes and the primacy of the issue.

Technological solutions often address a range of other issues such as questions of significance, conservation needs, intellectual property rights and promotional opportunities.

At a time when the Federal Government is rolling out a National Broadband Network, it has undertaken reviews of the Collections Council of Australia (CCA) and the Collections Australia Network (CAN), then removed their funding without explanation. What were the recommendations and accompanying analyses in reports on the Collections Council of Australia and Collections Australia Network?

Despite the rhetoric about whole-of-government policy development, there is a perception that converging interests and opportunities for museums, galleries, libraries, archives, and historical societies are not well coordinated federally and in New South Wales.

What are the best options for managing data to ensure they maximise their value in a cross-sectoral online environment?

In 2010, MANSW developed a proposal for a survey of ICT infrastructure and digitisation to capture data necessary to inform future decisions. It is planning to update the proposal and survey details and explore avenues for collaboration in 2011, taking into account recommendations in the consultants' report to Arts NSW and other significant developments over the past 12 months.

Clarifying roles and services

The Watts report considered 6 models for supporting regional and community museums and galleries. A combination of models is desirable, with added weight given to mechanisms for leading museums and galleries into an online future.

Governments, as the main funder, are called to a leadership role because museums, galleries, libraries, archives, historical societies and related enterprises have no overarching body to influence and provide incentives for coordinated action, such as those in a number of other countries.

In New South Wales, we need the leadership of major cultural institutions to assist in transforming the use of technology by regional and community museums, galleries and related organisations. Data management requires an international perspective in transforming local practices. There are lessons to be learnt from the cross-sectoral work of major cultural institutions in Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania.

Museums and Galleries NSW is an appropriate enterprise to provide a range of services to regional and community museums across the state, particularly in building capacity and developing skills. There are merits in considering a smaller coordinating central office and a distributed service in the manner of Regional Arts NSW.

There is a need to expand the role of major regional museums and galleries, regional hubs and regional museum development officers and for them to play a role in partnering with the flagship museums, M&GNSW and other stakeholders in support of local initiatives.

Following the example of Victoria and Western Australia, a more effective embrace of stakeholders such as Museums Australia (NSW), Regional and Public Galleries NSW, and the Royal Australian Historical Society is highly desirable.

Providing appropriate funding

A more strategic approach is needed in allocating funds. Some policy clarification at the level of an appropriate COAG council is desirable in sorting out what is commonly acknowledged as the funding quagmire of federated Australia.

At a state level, a more astute approach to funding is needed. Why are there different levels and different mechanisms for funding libraries, galleries, museums and archives? Are the current approaches accidents of history rather than examples of coherent policy? How can we achieve more consistency in funding museums, galleries, libraries, archives, historical societies and kindred organisations, while at the same time take into account the specialised nature of the services they deliver?

The quality and accessibility of funding information could be improved to flag strategic intentions, opportunities and performance, in the manner of the Institute of Museums and Library Services in the United States.

Appropriate investment in programs for volunteers and the employment of key staff to manage and coordinate volunteer staff would assist in capitalising on the valuable role of volunteers as protectors of our cultural heritage.

Agreed measures to assist governments to make decisions about funds need to be further developed by all stakeholders, possibly involving a more rigorous and widely-accepted accreditation program that make use of evolving standards for museums and galleries.

Future funding solutions could also involve incentives for museums and kindred organisations to connect with other cultural, educational, business enterprises and social services within local communities, as promoted by Andrew Mawson in *The Social Entrepreneur: Making Communities Work*.

2 CONTEXTS

2.1 OVERVIEW

Words will drive future action. Accordingly, we begin our submission by noting the cautionary advice of Chris Puplick in his essay on arts advocacy:²

“...the rhetoric is getting somewhat confused and opaque. The slippery segues from art to culture to creativity, from creativity to output to productivity leave one in real danger of missing what the debate is all about. The looseness of terms and definitions, the inexactness of measurements and incomprehensibility of some of the jargon becomes mind-numbing.”

2.2 LANGUAGE

Terms of reference	According to the terms of reference, Arts NSW is creating a strategic plan for the visual arts and museum sectors, combining a cultural context and a type of collecting organisation. Has the scope been clearly established? Why isn't it a strategic plan for the visual arts, cultural heritage and science sectors? Or a strategic plan for the public gallery and museum sectors? Or a strategic plan for community and regional gallery and museum sectors?
'Cultural heritage'	<p>Governments have traditionally funded museums, galleries, libraries and archives through arts portfolios. The phrase <i>cultural heritage</i> has been the shorthand way to encapsulate policies for collecting institutions. It is often treated as a footnote in arts policy. The Australian Bureau of Statistics, in its discussion paper <i>Arts and Cultural Heritage: An Information Development Plan (2008)</i>, defines cultural heritage in the following terms:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Cultural heritage</i> refers to the preservation of culture through the collection and management of objects and ideas that represent ways of life of particular groups of people. The sphere of cultural heritage activities includes activities generally associated with museums, art museums, libraries and archives.</p> <p>Categorising museums, archives and libraries as 'cultural heritage' agents, though, distorts their overall purpose and value. While cultural heritage is an important aspect of their function, their converging roles in providing access to information, producing cultural content and experiences and contributing to educational, social, scientific, technological and economic agendas are equally important.</p> <p>The online environment has changed, and continues to change, the nature of future challenges and encourages governments to find new ways of supporting cultural heritage organisations to deliver programs that have an impact on community identity, cohesion and wealth, indigenous and immigrant cultures, arts and recreation, knowledge and information management, history, heritage, education, science, innovation, and tourism.</p>

² Puplick, C. *Getting Heard: Achieving an Effective Arts Advocacy* (Currency House, Platform Papers, no 18, October 2008)

Leadership	Government leadership is needed to support museums and galleries because governments provide most of the funds at a time with funds are being cost-shifted. The fractured nature of the sector makes it difficult, even with the best will in the world, for individual institutions to exercise sector-wide leadership. As Diane Zorich, Günter Waibel and Ricky Erway, in their OCLC report, <i>Beyond the Silos of the LAMs: Collaboration Among Libraries, Archives and Museums</i> , observe: "While many independent LAMs can easily articulate a broad and compelling vision of network-level access to their resources, by definition they generally lack the unifying influence of a mandate that would propel the LAM community toward that vision ... Governments and other entities can have a significant impact in realising a more collaborative environment through strategic investment."
Peak bodies	The over-used and misleading hyperbole <i>peak body</i> more often than not obscures the purpose of any organisation using it. Discussion of strategic issues would be greatly assisted by banning the use of the phrase. The use of peak body to describe Museums and Galleries NSW, for example, contributed to a perception that it had departed from the purpose for which it had been set up. If it were a peak body for the sector as a whole, it would need a different structure, modus operandi and personnel.
Convergence	The word convergence has emerged as a thorny issue in government and museum circles within the past few years. In the past 15 years, from <i>Creative Nation</i> onwards, federal and state governments have encouraged cultural bodies to get together physically and in virtual spaces. Physical integration and co-location are questions that are subject to business cases and local circumstances. Online convergence remains the critical issue for the museum sector and it is explored in more detail in section 3.
Sustainability	Regional and community museums and galleries in NSW could be sustained through more astute allocation of funds. As suggested in the <i>Report on the Development of Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Outside the Sydney CBD</i> , sustainability is tied to local initiative and dynamics. Funding regimes need to capitalise on the endeavours of volunteers as protectors of cultural heritage. Cultural, social and business partnerships are the servants of sustainability.

2.2 EVIDENCE

In considering the needs of the sector, we believe it is important to distinguish between needs and wants. Aggregated opinion, often reflecting local circumstances, is highly desirable because it carries the wisdom of accumulated experiences and instincts. But past needs analyses have often turned out to be no more than wish lists. Good policy relies on challenging views from outside the sector and hard facts, particularly in a technological world where firm ground has become quicksand.

In preparing this submission we have drawn on the selected research and commentary in part 2, beginning with three publications by MANSW. *A Plan for the Future [and] Strategy for the Sustainable Development of a NSW State Museum Network*, published with assistance of the NSW Ministry for the Arts and other bodies in 1991, is a good starting point for evaluating trends over the past 20 years (Part 2, item 1). *The Future of Collecting in NSW: a Discussion Paper*, published by MANSW in 1996, reminds us of the extent to which attempts to funding

sustainable solutions continue to deal with perennial issues (2). *Community Culture and Place: a Local Government Handbook for Museums*, prepared MANSW and the University of Sydney, and published by Arts NSW and the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW in 2000, flags the compelling need for state and local governments to reach firmer agreement on heritage questions (3).

Other important studies and policies include the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities *Report on Archives Survey* (2007), several reports by the Collections Council of Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics' reports on a range of matters (including *Cultural Funding by Government* and *Arts and Cultural Heritage Information Development Plan*), and reports by the NSW Government in relation to regional development, heritage and libraries.

International reports of high relevance to local circumstances include those produced by the Institute of Museums and Library Services, the Museums, Libraries, Archives Council in the UK, and a number of reports published by OCLC in the United States, including some directly related to museums and galleries.

We look forward to analysis of interstate initiatives in Australia. Some issues will no doubt call for more rigorous investigation to produce the grounds for further action.

2.3 GOVERNMENT POLICIES & DIRECTIONS

Federal Government and federal ministerial forums

Over the past decade, the Federal Government and state and territory governments have provided policy contexts through the Cultural Ministers Council. But the past two years have been shrouded in mystery. The Collections Council of Australia and the Collections Australia Network were reviewed by the Cultural Ministers Council. The reports have not yet been made available to the public. Funding for both bodies ceased. There has been no indication of the reasons behind these decisions. The Cultural Ministers Council has itself been disbanded.

NSW Government

NSW Government policies were guided up to March 2011 by the NSW State Plan. Following the election, portfolios have been reorganised under new department and ministerial arrangements. New government plans will provide essential contexts for the sector. The following endeavours by the previous government may inform future policy initiatives.

Regional development

The report by the Department of State and Regional Development's Regional and Rural Taskforce in 2008 provided recommendations on economic, environmental and social issues affecting rural and regional communities outside the Hunter, Illawarra, Central Coast and Sydney. Most of the recommendations are relevant to the museum sector, particularly the proposal for a 5-year Regional Infrastructure Fund, enhanced telecommunication services, improved integration of local educational resources, proposals for library network funding, and supporting regional arts, as were its proposals for partnering local governments, the Commonwealth Government,

In proposing initiatives for partnering the Non-Government Sector, it acknowledged that NGO organisations provide enormous benefits to the communities they serve. The sector, it said, is dominated numerically by very small organisations that rely heavily on the dedication and skill of a few key volunteers or part-time staff. These are prone to 'burnout' and are experiencing difficulties in attracting younger people. Government funding, it said, is

characterised by unrealistic short term grants, and regular changes to administrative procedures that add to the operating burden of small NGOs. There are fragmented, duplicative and sometimes overblown requirements for reporting. Government program design is often inflexible when it comes to the needs and logistics of particular country communities. There is a need to develop skills in relation to tendering for and administering government funded services.

The report promoted a whole-of-government approach, formal and informal arrangements, for developing partnerships to mobilise cross-agency and cross-sector resources, through the State Plan’s regional framework: priority delivery plans, regional delivery plans, and Regional Coordination Management Groups. For further details see our submission part 2 (7).

Tourism

The importance of museums and galleries to international and domestic tourism infrastructure is underlined in a number of government reports, including the Cultural Ministers’ Council report *Economic Impact of Cultural Tourism in Australia*. Challenges and opportunities in New South Wales have been identified in a number of plans, strategies and reports of the previous government including the NSW Government Tourism Masterplan, NSW Regional Tourism Action Plans for particular regions.

Arts NSW

Arts NSW is now among the responsibilities of the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts. The Minister for the Arts also has responsibility for cultural institutions such as the Australian Museum, Art Gallery of NSW, Powerhouse Museum, Historic Houses Trust, and the State Library of NSW.

<p>Grants program</p>	<p>The cultural grants program has been subject to change in recent years, following reviews that have noted flaws in previous schemes. The Western Sydney Arts Strategy has been highlighted as an effective model for development of regional cultural programs. Ideas floated in policies and reviews have included: a commitment to funding for State cultural institutions and partnerships with local governments; maintaining linkages with other Government programs for education and lifelong learning, innovation in business, regional development, services for indigenous people and new community facilities; and initiatives relating to community activities, volunteering, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, regional cultural facilities, working with hotels and clubs and increasing business investment through tourism.</p>
<p>Cultural accords</p>	<p>Cultural accords have for a number of years, provided the mechanism, for managing developing arts and cultural at local level. The fourth accord, 2011-2013 has the following elements: (1) providing Aboriginal people with greater opportunities to participate in, share and strengthen their culture; (2) encouraging the incorporation of provisions for local arts and cultural development into councils’ Community Strategic Plans; (3) gaining a better understanding of existing arts and cultural infrastructure across NSW; (4) encouraging councils to explore local initiatives to provide artists studios and other creative industry initiatives; (5) engaging with councils and other organisations to encourage the development of local capacity, and connections between local arts and cultural groups.</p>

Museums, galleries, libraries

Arts NSW is responsible for NSW Government policy in relation to museums, galleries and libraries. It provides direct recurrent funding to major museums and galleries. Museums and Galleries NSW is the principal government-funded agency charged with provision of services and distribution of funds to regional and community museums and galleries – public and private enterprises which generally do not receive recurrent funding. The Library Council of NSW acts as an advisory body in relation to local government libraries.

Other cultural heritage portfolios & strategies

Records and archives

The NSW Department of Finance and Services is responsible for State Records NSW. State Records NSW has oversight of public records and archives in state and local government jurisdictions, but does not have oversight of archives assembled by numerous library local history services, historical societies and museums throughout the state. State Records NSW has promoted recordkeeping principles and provided related services. Its Archives Outside blog provides useful instruction to both public and private museum and archival enterprises in regions.

A survey of archives by the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities in 2007 provides data for consideration in local government enterprises, including community museums and historical societies.

The findings of the Heritage Health Index, by Heritage Preservation in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the United States, provides data and recommendations that may have relevance to the development of a more coordinated approach for assessing needs and opportunities in New South Wales.

Heritage

The Department of Premier and Cabinet Office is responsible for NSW heritage through the Heritage Branch of the Office of Environment and Heritage. In 2007, an Independent Expert Panel, reporting on the NSW Heritage Act commented on, among other things, the need for improvements to the way in which local heritage items are identified and assessed and the need to refocus the system for the protection of archaeological heritage on heritage significance rather than compliance with the current broad definition of 'relic'.

ICT

The Department of Finance and Services manages the NSW Government's information and communications technology (ICT) strategies and associated programs through the Government Information Management Office. It has tended to focus on policies and funding on managing government systems and services rather than stimulating ICT as part of the wider digital economy.

Education & training

The Department of Education and Communities manages state education services. The importance of museums as educators is supported by a number of overseas studies including reports by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Museums Libraries and Archives Council in the UK. In Australia, focus on the rollout of broadband to schools through the National Broadband

	<p>Network and developing the links to content through work in relation to the National curriculum.</p> <p>In NSW, the Rural and Regional Task Force report acknowledged the importance of the adoption of digital technology as an increasingly important platform for education delivery in school education and agendas for skill development in the TAFE network. It recommended partnerships for local and regional training and skills development, linking community, business and education providers to local employment needs and opportunities, and it urged close examination of the Gwydir Learning Region Model as a possible approach in other rural areas.</p>
Aboriginal culture	<p>The Department of Human Services manages Aboriginal affairs in NSW. The Heritage Review 2008 drew attention to anomalies and inefficiencies in managing existing legislation in relation to Aboriginal places and Aboriginal objects. Presentations at the MANSW symposium in April by Steve Miller and Terri Janke encapsulate work by Arts NSW and M&GNSW and issues for wider consideration.</p>
Volunteers	<p>The Department of Education and Communities is responsible for policies in relation to volunteers through the Office of Communities. The NSW Regional and Rural Task Force report recognised the significant contribution volunteers make to local communities.</p>

NSW Local Government

The Department of Premier and Cabinet manages policy through the Division of Local Government and a number of agencies.

The Local Government and Shires Associations represent the interests of local governments.

The MANSW publication, *Community, Culture & Place: A Local Government Handbook for Museums (2000)*, the subsequent *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries*, the M&GNSW experience of delivering a standards program, and the NSW cultural accords all carry the seeds of future action. The MANSW publication was produced in the hope "that [it] will lead to greater involvement of councils in this important area." To what extent has there been greater involvement or what happened to the momentum? To what extent has the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries changed the detail in the guide? What is the link between standards and accreditation? Is there a case for the State Government and local councils to establish firmer policies and infrastructure for the preservation of cultural heritage and provision of services by museums, galleries, libraries, archives and historical societies in collaboration with professional associations and other stakeholders?

3. DEVELOPING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

3.1 OVERVIEW

Leadership of museums, galleries, libraries, archives and historical societies calls for more effective joint action by governments, major institutions, agencies and other stakeholders to develop the infrastructure, including facilities, information and communications technology, and social capital – the networks of people – that are the vital component of making things work.

Some things need to be coordinated at international and national levels, some are more effectively coordinated at state level and some need to be coordinated at regional and local levels. Solutions are subject to a range of factors and may vary from region to region.

The Watts report provided the springboard for concerted efforts over the next decade. Watts made 19 broad recommendations for future development and proposed 6 models for the continuation of M&GNSW or alternative mechanisms for implementing NSW Government policy and funding.

We focus our submission on three significant issues: transforming the use of technology, clarifying roles and services, and providing appropriate funding strategies. Secondary considerations – such as, for example, types of professional development programs - need to be considered and prioritised by those charged with the responsibility of delivering them.

3.2 TRANSFORMING THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Overview

The main driver and an overriding issue	The internet and technology are driving widespread social change to societies with profound impacts on industries and organisations. Convergence in media and publishing industries demonstrate the substantial nature of these changes and the primacy of the issue. Apart from providing promotional opportunities, technological solutions often address a range of other issues such as questions of significance, conservation needs, and management of rights.
Museums lagging behind	Museums are still at an experimental stage of dealing with networked information. They have operated in the past as standalone corner shops rather than chain stores. To date, the focus is on the promotional power of social media rather than on the discipline required for managing data in a cross-sectoral networked environment. The Watts report did not deal adequately with this issue.
Government responses	At a time when the Federal Government is rolling out a National Broadband Network, it has undertaken reviews of the Collections Council of Australia (CCA) and the Collections Australia Network (CAN), then removed their funding without explanation. What were the recommendations and accompanying analyses in reports on the Collections Council of Australia and Collections Australia Network?

A need for a cross-sectoral mechanism	The latest <i>National Digital Economy Plan</i> future opportunities. Despite the rhetoric about whole-of-government policy development, the converging interests of museums and kindred organisations are not well coordinated federally and in New South Wales in the online environment.
A need for leadership by major institutions	There may be grounds for the New South Wales Government, as the main investor in NSW museums, galleries, libraries and archives, to consider new mechanisms and incentives for cross-sectoral collaboration and cooperation. There is a need for major institutions to lead the development of standards and systems in regional and community museums. The museum and gallery sector itself has mixed views about standards and systems. If these issues can be resolved, state museums and galleries may be the appropriate mechanisms for leading the sector as a whole. The investment by the NSW Government in NSW.net for libraries suggests an approach that could be applied in other sectors.

Selected research and commentary

Relevant issues are flagged in the Collections Council of Australia's work on an Australian Framework for Digital Heritage Collections, the Institute of Museum and Library Service's Status of Technology and Digitisation of of the Nation's Museums and Libraries, the experience of the US National Digital Information Infrastructure Preservation Program, a number of OCLC reports on cross sectoral metadata management, and work by MANSW on ICT infrastructure for regional and community museums in NSW, as outlined in Part 2. The comments by David Bearman and Jennifer Trant (17), Kenneth Hamma, Clifford Lynch and Robert Martin (20), Mary Elings and Gunter Waibel (23), and Professor Christine Borgman (27) are important lightning rods.

Action by Museums Australia (NSW)

What are the best options for managing data to ensure museums, galleries, archives, libraries and historical societies maximise their value in a cross-sectoral online environment?

In 2010, MANSW developed a proposal for a survey of ICT infrastructure and digitisation to capture data necessary to inform future decisions. It is planning to update the proposal and survey details and explore avenues for collaboration in 2011, taking into account recommendations in the consultants' report to Arts NSW and other significant developments during the past 12 months.

Developments include the potential of Trove as collections portal, the work of the Museums Metadata Exchange and Atlas of Living Australia projects, open source and free software, the work of the Victorian Collections Project, the growing use of cloud computing and social networking sites to promote collections and services, the possible use of local council library systems for regional museum and historical society collections, and developments in standards including linked open data.

3.3 CLARIFYING STAKEHOLDER ROLES & SERVICES

Overview

The development of a strategic plan for the visual arts and museum sectors in NSW was prompted by the Watts report in 2010. Watts made 19 broad recommendations for future development of the sector and proposed 6 models for the continuation of M&GNSW or alternative mechanisms. The Watts report undervalued the importance of technology as a driver of new structures and practices.

Model 1	Existing model - refreshing current governance and management and refocussing on more strategic issues.
Model 2	Regional Arts NSW model - downsizing head office to deal with research, advocacy, coordination, leadership, devolved funding, placing regional museum development officers throughout state in similar way to regional arts development officers to deal with service delivery, forming regional boards.
Model 3	Cultural institutions model - downsizing head office to deal with research, advocacy, coordination, leadership, devolved funding and the transfer of responsibilities for regional services to designated cultural institutions.
Model 4	Abolishing M&G NSW and transferring responsibilities to a number of other organisations and institutions.
Model 5	Merging with Regional Arts NSW
Model 6	Abolishing M&G NSW and reverting to 1998 model by provide funding to MA NSW and R&PGA NSW to act as peak bodies for each of the segments.

We need to set up an infrastructure to lead museums and galleries through the next decade, not prop up mechanisms that we designed for the 20th century.

Governments, as the main funder, need to engineer more effective cross sectoral mechanisms that currently do not exist in NSW. Ownership of future strategies by all the stakeholders is essential.

Clarifying the role of MG&NSW is dependent on clarifying the role of all players in the landscape, particularly major cultural institutions in helping to transform the use of technology in all types of museums across the state. Clarifying the future role of CAN is as important as clarifying the future of M&GNSW.

Selected research and commentary on infrastructure

The *Report of the Inquiry into Arts and Cultural Infrastructure outside the Sydney CBD* NSW Legislative Assembly Public Works Committee makes 12 recommendations (Part 2, 30). Alec Coles, CEO of the Western Australia Museum, in his presentation *Museum, Renaissance, Reformation and Reinventing the Wheel: Seeking an Integrated Solution to Museum Provision* at the MANSW symposium in April, drew on his experience with the MLA Renaissance in the Regions program to identify how regional enterprises were transformed by the program, what worked and what didn't quite work (32).

The role of Governments

As Zorich, Waibel and Erway, in their OCLC report on collaboration among libraries, archives and museums, and numerous other reports and projects, governments are in the best position to exercise leadership because they provide most of the funds to museums and galleries.

During the past decade or so, governments in the UK, US and Australia have set up mechanisms to facilitate concerted development. The Australian Government recently axed the CCA without explanation leaving the stakeholders in a state of confusion.

At a state government level, cross-sectoral policies and mechanisms are needed on productivity and other grounds to guide regional museums, galleries, libraries, archives, historical societies and heritage agencies through the next decade.

The role cultural institutions

Major museums and galleries carry a broad range of expertise and resources from which smaller enterprises benefit.

In New South Wales, for example, the Powerhouse Museum Regional Programs and Services, despite limited resources, plays an important outreach role. Powerhouse museum staff and the staff of other major museums frequently contribute their expertise freely to workshops, seminars and other projects. Regional staff and volunteers benefit from the Museum's internships.

The Powerhouse Museum has also had responsibility for managing the Collections Australia Network aimed chiefly at developing the online resources of small museums. CAN's future is currently unclear. Questions persist about future options for aggregating museum cataloguing data, providing free websites and providing communication channels.

The work of the State Library of Queensland's Picture Queensland, the collaboration between the Victorian Government, Museums Australia (Victoria) and Museum Victoria, and LINC Tasmania provide models of cross-sectoral collaboration that invite further investigation and possible application. Standards, systems, contracts, training and support will be the ingredients of future strategies.

The role of Museums and Galleries NSW

Watts made a number of recommendations in relation to the purpose, governance and services of Museums and Galleries NSW. In this submission we comment on major issues. There are questions to resolve about the proportion of funds allocated for overheads and delivery of regional and community programs. After future sector-wide policies and roles have been clarified, programs and priorities need to be determined by M&GNSW itself.

The purpose of M&GNSW

Watts concluded that there was a need to define the future role of M&G NSW and for agreement to be reached on balancing its dual role of service delivery and advancing high level advocacy. He recommended that advocacy be the prime objective of M&GNSW, involving negotiations with local government. M&GNSW questions advocacy as the primary objective for M&GNSW. Rather than saddle it with a difficult objective for which it has limited authority to deliver, perhaps it is more desirable for the State Government in consultation

	with local councils to clarify local government responsibilities and with bodies such M&GNSW, MANSW, RPGNSW providing support and advice.
Engagement with cultural institutions	Watts recommended that Arts NSW consider ways in which it can engage the cultural institutions in a more critical and effective dialogue with M&GNSW to ensure cultural institution and M&GNSW programs are complementary. As we explored in the previous section on technology, MANSW supports a stronger role by the major museums and other cultural institutions, with complementary programs being offered by M&GNSW, MANSW and other bodies.
Governance and management	Watts recommended that M&GNSW consider amending its constitution to allow for the appointment of nine board members - two nominees of MA NSW, two nominees of R&PGANSW, and five further members with appropriate skills. Subject to higher level decisions about infrastructure, MANSW supports this recommendation to ensure of a more effective embrace of stakeholder interests as exemplified in Victoria and Western Australia.
Research and metrics	Sector-wide research is a critical role for M&GNSW to facilitate change and establish benchmarks for measuring success. It is important for research to fill gaps rather than duplicate issues that have been well researched by other bodies.
Other issues	Watts made recommendations for a number of programs, including research, specialised services to regional galleries, professional development, exhibition touring, and management of a standards program, among other activities. In delivering these programs, there are opportunities for collaboration between M&GNSW and MANSW, with its regional network and national connections, and other bodies.

The role of regional hubs & museum development officers

Major regional museums and galleries have a role to play in partnering flagship museums, Museums and Galleries NSW, and other stakeholders to support local needs.

There is strong evidence to support the need for regional centres and personnel for managing the converging interests of the library, archive and museum sectors. Some regional museums and galleries already deliver valuable outreach services to surrounding communities in NSW. In recent years, regional museum development officers, consultants and other itinerant professionals have been used to build knowledge and capacity. MANSW has observed that the benefits of this work have sometimes quickly dissipated after the funding has ceased and the professionals have departed, except in regions where there is a strong regional voluntary network in place to capitalise on the initial effort. To sustain efforts, we recommend that such initiatives be properly funded.

The issue of regional centres was explored by the Collections Council of Australia (CCA), which developed an Australia-wide regional hubs proposal and has tested the idea in Western Australia. MANSW also notes the intention of the previous NSW Government to develop regional cultural hubs, modelled on the Western Sydney Arts Strategy.

Continued exploration of partnerships between the cultural heritage sector, creative industries, higher educational institutions, broadcasters, local councils, social service agencies and other players is needed. We expect that local circumstances will dictate the precise nature of solutions for managing hubs and networks.

The role of professional associations and other organisations

Professional associations and similar organisations have a vital stake in the future strategies. Following the example of Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia future strategies need to make more effective use of their views, experience, networks and programs. Chief among these bodies in NSW are:

MANSW	Museums Australia (NSW) with formal links to national and international bodies operates with 10 regional chapters representing member institutions and workers in museums and galleries across the state.
RPGNSW	The Regional and Public Galleries Association of New South Wales represents the 40 member galleries, all of whom are non-profit organisations intent on making important contributions to the cultural life of their regions.
History Council	The History Council of New South Wales represents historical organisations and those people interested and concerned about the past.
RAHSW	The Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) serves as a focus point and support network for local historical societies and provides a conduit to the activities of small, community-based historical societies around the State.
Other	Other relevant bodies include the National and State Libraries Australasia, Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities, Council of Australasian Museum Directors, Council of Australian Art Museum Directors, the Australian Library and Information Association and the Australian Society of Archivists.

3.4 PROVIDING APPROPRIATE FUNDING

Overview

A more strategic approach is needed in allocating funds. Some policy clarification at the level of an appropriate COAG council is desirable in sorting out what is commonly acknowledged as the funding quagmire of federated Australia.

At a state level, a more astute approach to funding is needed. Why are there different levels and different mechanisms for funding libraries, galleries, museums and archives? Are the current approaches accidents of history rather than examples of coherent policy? How can we achieve a more consistency in funding museums, galleries, libraries, archives, historical societies and kindred organisations, while at the same time take into account the specialised nature of the services they deliver?

NSW allocates funds to major museums, which in turn provide some services to regional and community museums. It provides funds to M&GNSW to support museums and galleries that do not receive recurrent Government funding. And it provides direct grants for based on

proposals submitted for strategic industry development category, capital infrastructure and community partnerships. Small grants are made available through Museums and Galleries NSW. Grants are also available from a number of other government departments.

MANSW estimates that, based on the annual lists published by Arts NSW, direct funding to local councils and others for regional and community museums in 2010 decreased by about 59% (down from about \$553,150 in 2009 to \$227,605) or 13% (if more ambiguous funding to multi-function facilities is included).

It is instructive to compare the level of funding and the mechanisms for delivery with government funding for public library services through the State Library of NSW Public Library Services division. Is there anything to learn from this approach? In 2010/2011, Arts NSW allocated the following subsidies as recommend by the Library Council of NSW:

- Subsidy of \$1.85 per capita, as prescribed by the Library Regulation 2005: \$13,192,879
- Disability & Geographic Adjustment (DGA): \$6,222,210
- NSW.net: \$1,940,000
- Outback Letterbox Library: \$100,000
- Strategic Network Projects supporting the development of the NSW Public Library Network, including the purchase of multicultural collections, professional development, research, statistical collection and dissemination, sector wide communication and programs, association support etc: \$470,560
- State Library services to public libraries to support the delivery of services from the State Library to public libraries, including facilitation of the Strategic Network Projects above. \$422,235
- Library Development Grants: The \$2m Country Libraries Fund component of the State Governments Building the Country package will be allocated via the Library Development Grants program. Note these funds are additional to the \$1,190,119 available.

The quality and accessibility of funding information could be improved to flag strategic intentions, opportunities and performance, in the manner of the Institute of Museums and Library Services in the United States.

Appropriate investment in programs for volunteers and the employment of key staff to manage and coordinate volunteer staff would assist in capitalising on the valuable role of volunteers as protectors of our cultural heritage.

Agreed measures to assist governments to make decisions about funds need to be further developed by all stakeholders, possibly involving a more rigorous and widely-accepted accreditation program that makes use of evolving standards for museums and galleries.

Future funding solutions could also involve incentives for museums and kindred organisations to connect with other cultural, educational, business enterprises and social services within local communities, as promoted by Andrew Mawson in *The Social Entrepreneur: Making Communities Work*.

Selected research and commentary

A number of studies have been explored the nature and levels of funding for Museums Libraries Archives. *Cultural Spend and Infrastructure: A Comparative Study*, (36), looked level of investment in the libraries, archives and museums around the world, including Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Cultural Funding by Government, Australia, 2008-09* (35) provides data on spending of the three tiers of government in museums,

galleries and other sectors. The NSW *Report of the Review of (Local Government) Public Library Funding* (40) has recommendations on the *per capita* subsidy, access funding, and strategic and development grants among other issues. And the report by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, *Exhibiting Public Value: Government Funding for Museums in the United States* (37) raises important issues that are relevant to the situation in Australia.

On the subject of measuring value and effectiveness, we draw particular attention to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Arts and Cultural Heritage Information Development Plan* (44), which reports on the scope and value of the arts and cultural heritage and on existing data and data gaps. Arts Business Ltd, in *Measuring the Arts* (49) offered a checklist of 99 indicators that may be relevant to effective measurement of funding in relation to museum grants. The Museums Libraries Archives Council, in *Developing Performance Indicators for Local Authority Museums, Libraries and Archives* (48), proposed indicators for development of cultural heritage infrastructure, based on volunteering, participation by priority groups, participation in online access, learning, value for money, satisfaction and museum accreditation. Its *Securing Excellence: Delivering for Communities, a Museum, Libraries and Archives and the Local Government White Paper* articulated an outcomes framework for community cultural heritage organisations.