



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**JOINT PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEE**

on

PUBLIC WORKS

**Reference: Development of the Australian Maritime Museum Maritime Heritage
Centre, Wharf 7, Pyrmont**

SYDNEY

Friday, 7 November 1997

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

CANBERRA

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

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Wharf 7, Pyrmont*

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Present

Mr Tuckey (Chair)

Senator Calvert

Mr Richard Evans

Mr Hollis

The committee met at 11.35 a.m.

Mr Tuckey took the chair.

CHAIR—I declare open this public hearing into the proposed Australian National Maritime Museum maritime heritage centre, wharf 7, Pyrmont. I welcome Kay Cottee, the Chairman of the Australian National Maritime Museum, and Dr Kevin Fewster, the Director of the Australian National Maritime Museum, who are attending this hearing.

This project, with an estimated outturn of \$19.5 million, was referred to the Public Works Committee by the House of Representatives for consideration and report to the parliament by 23 December 1997. In accordance with subsection 17(3) of the Public Works Committee Act of 1969, in considering and reporting on a public work, the committee shall have regard to:

- (a) the stated purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose;
- (b) the necessity for, or the advisability of, carrying out the work;
- (c) the most effective use that can be made, in the carrying out the work, of the moneys to be expended on the work;
- (d) where the work purports to be of a revenue-producing character, the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce; and
- (e) the present and prospective public value of the work.

This morning the committee has inspected the museum's premises at Union Street, the proposed site at Wharf 7, the Berrys Bay small craft maintenance facility as well as the main museum building. Today the committee will hear evidence from the National Maritime Museum and the Australian Quadriplegic Association.

[11.35 a.m.]

BOCK, Ms Debra, Financial Services, Australian National Maritime Museum, 13A Union Street, Pyrmont, New South Wales 2007

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CHAIR—The committee has received a submission from the National Maritime Museum dated September 1997. Do you wish to make any amendments to that submission at this time?

Dr Fewster—No, we do not wish to make any amendments as such.

CHAIR—It is proposed that the submission be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. There being no objections, it is so ordered.

The document read as follows—

CHAIR—Would a representative of the National Maritime Museum now read the summary statement to the committee, after which we will proceed to questions?

Dr Fewster—The museum proposes to develop a new maritime heritage centre on the site of Pyrmont Wharf 7, immediately adjacent to the museum's main exhibition at Darling Harbour. The problem we face is that the National Maritime Museum presently relies on commercially leased premises at 13A Union Street Pyrmont to accommodate those functional areas of the museum unable to be housed in its main exhibition building at Darling Harbour. The location of 13A Union Street is adjacent to the new Sydney Casino and is approximately a 10-minute walk from the main exhibition building.

The lease on these premises expires in mid-1999, and there are no other suitable facilities available in the immediate vicinity of the museum's main exhibition building. The property is presently on the market, and it is anticipated that the owner or prospective owner will seek to redevelop the site at the earliest opportunity at the end of the lease. Further, the nature of development in and around Pyrmont means that commercial rents for accommodation of the kind required by the museum will mirror CBD rates and will rise beyond the museum's means.

Given the operational focus of the museum on its exhibition facility and the need for its operational activities to be in constant contact with that facility, the desirability of collocation cannot be overemphasised. The solution we have come up with is as follows—that is, Wharf 7, Maritime Heritage Centre. Firstly, I will address site acquisition. To resolve this dilemma, the National Maritime Museum determined that it would need to develop a purpose-built facility as close as possible to its main exhibition building. To this end, the museum has been negotiating with the City West Development Corporation for almost four years to acquire and develop the site and the adjacent wharf, known as wharf 7, Pyrmont.

The City West Development Corporation and the New South Wales government recently agreed to offer the site to the museum on favourable terms to enable the museum to pursue this proposal. The City West offer was contingent on a number of factors, including the requirement that elements of the Sydney Maritime Museum be included in any facility the National Maritime Museum developed on the site and for any museum development to adhere to the Pyrmont Bay Master Plan, Amendment No. 2, Wharves 7-10, adopted on 19 March 1997. This offer by the City West Development Corporation reflects significant support by the New South Wales government for the proposal.

In relation to the building, it is the museum's intention to construct an attractive and engaging facility around the public domain which will provide a suitable environment for the conduct of the museum's operations. By virtue of its intended use and function and the design parameters of the master plan for the site, the facility will closely resemble the wharf structures typical of the Sydney waterfront. The building will be constructed to fully exploit the available external building parameters, with three internal levels to provide

maximum flexibility for the museum's operational requirements and public accessibility.

The proposed facility will be known as the Wharf 7 Maritime Heritage Centre and will accommodate approximately 40 of the museum's professional and technical support staff, 10 staff from the Sydney Maritime Museum and a number of volunteers from both organisations. The centre will incorporate the museum's libraries, laboratories, workshops, collection display areas, meeting rooms, staff and volunteer amenities and administrative offices.

Visitors will be given access to many of these areas either directly, via guided tours, or indirectly through the use of closed-circuit television, particularly where occupational health and safety issues would prevent such access. Volunteer guides and explainers will be used extensively to support and facilitate the public's access to the facility. It is proposed to include 2,500 square metres of commercial space on the upper level of the proposed building to assist with financing the development.

The benefits: the proposed acquisition and development of the proposed site as an adjunct to the museum's main exhibition building offers the Commonwealth a unique opportunity to secure the museum's long-term accommodation needs in this area at an affordable price. The immediate proximity of this facility will permit greater efficiencies in the operational support of the main exhibition building by the staff and volunteers housed in the new facility and will enable the museum to enhance the benefit derived from the Commonwealth's existing investment in the main exhibition building at Darling Harbour. By providing visitors with a behind-the-scenes access to the museum's collections and the care of the material in those collections, such as the restoration of boats and the conservation of maritime heritage material, the facility will extend the museum visitors' involvement and understanding of their maritime heritage and culture.

This proposal also provides a unique opportunity for the National Maritime Museum and the Sydney Maritime Museum to join in a collaborate relationship in the facility to overcome the prevailing confusion over the identity and function of these two organisations. The facility will permit the provision of further support to water based activities conducted by the two museums.

In relation to funding, the total cost of the project will be \$19.5 million, including the cost of site acquisition at \$4.5 million. The National Maritime Museum is wholly funding this proposal from commercial borrowings and will rely on offset savings from its existing rents at 13a Union St and the commercial tenancies in the proposed facility to repay these borrowings.

Finally, an overview. This proposal is strongly supported by the New South Wales government in recognition of the social and cultural importance of the proposed development to Sydneysiders and visitors. The centre will place Australia at the cutting edge of contemporary maritime museum practice by providing museum visitors with

access to the behind the scenes operations of the National Maritime Museum and the Sydney Maritime Museum, whilst meeting the museum's operational needs in a cost-efficient manner.

CHAIR—We will now move to some questions associated with that statement.

Mr HOLLIS—I took note of the comments you made at the conclusion of your opening statement, but for the record could you tell us how important it is for Australia to have a National Maritime Museum?

Dr Fewster—Australia is known by all of us as the island continent. I am often reminded of comments that a former council member of the museum, Rear-Admiral Peter Sinclair, made that we are a maritime people and yet we are a people who are not aware of that in many respects. The National Maritime Museum was opened in 1991. We see it very much as our brief to make Australians aware of our rich and diverse maritime heritage and also to help visitors to Australia, international tourists, appreciate our rich maritime history and our active maritime experiences of today.

Mr HOLLIS—Accepting that, where does this museum fit into what I would describe as the mosaic of Australian museums? We have a number of museums. We have the National Museum, we have the state museum, we have a couple of maritime museums. We were fortunate yesterday to have a look at the maritime museum in Fremantle. But overall where does this fit into the pattern of museums within Australia?

Dr Fewster—Perhaps I should take that in two parts. In terms of being a national institution and a Commonwealth institution, we are the only Commonwealth cultural collecting institution not located in Canberra, for the obvious reason that Canberra and the sea have some distance between them. We are a sister institution to the National Museum in Canberra, the National Science and Technology Centre, the National Gallery and so forth. As a national institution we take it as our responsibility to present as best we can a national perspective on Australia's maritime experience. You will have noticed when we went through the museum that our exhibitions are often not about Sydney. We have quite deliberately chosen themes and exhibitions which reflect the balance of Australia's geographic, cultural and many other aspects. We try to represent a strong overview. In that sense we are like the other national institutions, although perhaps it is harder for us to get that point across because Sydney is such a strong magnet in a maritime sense.

As a national institution we take our responsibility very strongly of making maritime history available to people outside Sydney. So we tour a lot of exhibitions and programs. We currently have an exhibition touring called 'Thalassa—Greek Australians and the sea'. It is opening in Adelaide as we speak. We have just brought back to Sydney a major exhibition called 'Whales—giants of the deep' that has toured to eight other venues around Australia. We offer an annual small grants program for maritime museums and maritime institutions around the country. So we take very seriously our national

responsibilities as an overriding, almost a parent, body in a sense to assist maritime heritage.

In terms of the maritime museum movement itself, the museum again is very active. With that touring program we provide assistance, support and guidance to other museums. There is a group called the Australian Maritime Museums Council. We have provided the leadership of that since it was established. There is also on the world stage the International Congress of Maritime Museums representing maritime museums all around the world. We are very active in that and at the moment I happen to be president of that international association.

Mr HOLLIS—We never live in an ideal world. If there were an ideal world, would this be the ideal spot for a maritime museum, or is that an unfair question?

Dr Fewster—I will have to go back and revisit the areas all the committee's members represent!

Mr HOLLIS—I did not so much mean Sydney; I mean here in Darling Harbour. Is this an appropriate situation?

Dr Fewster—I think in many ways it is. As you can see around us, Darling Harbour has a very strong profile for Sydneysiders, Australians and international tourists, and hence we have a very high-profile location. We have access to the water with wharves. Believe it or not, there are some maritime museums in the world that have no boats in the water. The National Maritime Museum at Greenwich has no floating exhibits. It does happen; people do not make use of the water, in a sense. It is certainly true, though, that our major exhibition building, while it has wharves, does not have the infrastructure support for vessel maintenance and for a lot of the hands-on activities that a maritime museum cannot avoid. By definition, if we do not maintain our floating exhibits, they sink. This new facility will help us in a very great way in meeting some of the shortfalls in the initial building design, in expanding our work and of course in working with Sydney Maritime Museum as well.

Mr HOLLIS—We have the current building, the museum, and then we are going to have some distance away another building. Will that cause difficulty? Will they be two different buildings? Will that cause difficulties with the staff and other people or not?

Dr Fewster—As you would be aware, at present we have a distance between the main museum building and 13a Union Street. To get between the buildings you have to cross several roads. Traffic in the area is becoming far greater with the casino development. The new building is linked by a public square, and hence there is much greater safety for staff and other people. Telecommunications wise, we did have a microlink between the buildings that we can no longer use and we have had to change because of building construction works. Those problems will be overcome. The additional

water access we have will make the new building a great area for potential expansion of our activities on the water and by the water.

The current building at Union Street does not allow public accessibility after hours and certainly does not allow public accessibility into any area other than the library. The concept that we are very much wedded to with the new building will be to open up as many of the activities in the museum that traditionally were seen as 'back of house' and not seen by the public. They will be accessible. That is our whole philosophy with the building. In fact we propose to ticket the new building as part of your standard museum entry. So it is my hope that a great number of the visitors who come to the museum will now have an expanded treat, if you like, in that they can see many of the things that they perhaps do not even know go on in museums and see the collection in its entirety as well.

CHAIR—To keep this matter orderly, I will take some questions myself. Those people involved in the design may wish to respond to some of these. Dr Fewster, there is quite a significant accent in the submission you have put to us about the generosity of the CWDC in only charging us \$4 million for this particular site and adding a condition that you will provide space for the Sydney Maritime Museum. Considering the support that has been claimed from the New South Wales government, why didn't we get it for nothing?

Dr Fewster—We certainly put that proposition to the New South Wales government on numerous occasions. The response we had was that the market showed great interest in the property. Hence, they were prepared to go straight to the market and leave us with our dream unfulfilled. During those discussions, though, it became apparent that the Sydney Maritime Museum, which is a community based museum, has for many years been an ongoing issue for the state government in terms of what sort of accommodation it would require for its floating exhibits. We were therefore able to reach a compromise whereby we secured the site at greatly below the market valuation.

We have a valuation from the Australian Valuation Office which we could show the committee. It is commercial in confidence, but we can make it available to the committee if you wish. We were able to get the site at a greatly reduced price—admittedly, not at the price for which you and we had hoped. Added to that, having Sydney Maritime Museum co-located with us is a real boon. It is a coming together of the two institutions in a way which I am delighted to see happen. That part of it I see as no burden at all; in fact, it is a great opportunity.

CHAIR—But you are basically telling us that the generosity of the CWDC did not go below \$4 million.

Dr Fewster—Four and a half million dollars.

CHAIR—All right. That is on the record. It is a matter listed under our terms of reference. Under item (d) of the Public Works Committee Act, where the work purports to

be of a revenue producing character, the committee shall have regard to the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce. It is a matter of need that you give us some evidence regarding that. In that regard, you make reference to tenancies. I assume there can be revenue generated from admissions and things of that nature.

One of the issues that concerns me from a design point of view, as someone with a background in commerce, is the desirability of the commercial level, especially if it is all on the upper levels. When one walks into a major department store and their high mark-up items are women's cosmetics, you get hit with them as you walk through the door. I think a lot of people in commerce will be concerned if people come in and see your exhibits and have no special reason to go further by passing their premises. Would you be prepared to comment on that design factor? More particularly, can you give some evidence to the committee of the types of commercial revenues and other revenues you anticipate?

Dr Fewster—Certainly. We have had extensive discussions with real estate people and leasing agents about that very issue. The very strong advice we have been given is that the best returns and the best tenants for an area like this will not be retail but office accommodation businesses.

CHAIR—In other words, possibly unrelated to your other activities.

Dr Fewster—They may be related but not necessarily. In that sector, the top floor will add a premium to the rental because of the well-known fact of views. As you would be aware, the building is designed so that we anticipate when the loan cost is repaid it will provide us with additional space that the museum, if it wishes, can grow into in years ahead. I take the point that, when we look for a tenant, we will not necessarily look at someone who is a maritime industries tenant. I might add that the leasing agents have said to us that there will be many businesses around which will see the unique character of the building as an absolute boon or benefit to them. Hence, they will see great synergy in co-locating into a facility which is unique in its design, especially as the foyer has vessels on display, et cetera.

In terms of the general revenue generation from it, I really see that happening through three ways. First, as you say, tenancy is a major component—the leasing of the top floor. The second is admissions. I would hope that this facility, with the unique ways it will give the public of seeing back of house and the extended collections, will add to our visitation levels. Of course, those people who come to the museum already will have a more wide-ranging experience should they care to partake of it.

The third area is function revenue. We are meeting today on *South Steyne* because we have a major theatre and functions room which are both booked today. Because of the location of the museum—it is adjacent to the CBD—it is used almost on a daily basis for functions. We have the most successful functions business of any museum in the country—based on the latest figures I have seen. We plan to have a small theatrette in this

space in the new building. I can well see that from time to time, that too might be utilised, as a sort of an overflow space. We hope that together they will give a very solid revenue base.

CHAIR—If that then means that you are offering prestige office accommodation primarily on your top floor, what design criteria are set to give these people independent access? Is that a matter to be considered? You are really looking at something that is some distance from your other activities, aren't you?

Dr Fewster—It might be best to ask our architect John Crawford, who can answer that in some detail for you.

CHAIR—We will expand on the questions, if that is the case. You have drawn to our attention this morning the problems confronting any museum. I seem to remember the term 'dusty old museum'—you have a dust problem. So you might like to address some of the other design features, including pressurisation and that of the building if it is to be part of the design criteria because of the associated problems of dust.

You might also like to give us some reassurances as to the sorts of foundations, or the building structure in terms of the foundations, which you describe as clay and sandstone. We are also rather interested in the description of the building. I am just trying to think of the description that was given to us. I noticed that someone wanted to know exactly what it meant.

Mr Crawford—'Wharf morphology', I would imagine.

CHAIR—No, it was to do with the trust work that you are putting in. I have missed it, and I do not want to hold you up any longer. You might like to give us a brief on those matters as you answer the first question.

Mr Crawford—Thank you, Mr Chairman. As to the question of the commercial tenant, the lobby and the access, we are very much aware of three uses in terms of people for the building. There is the commercial tenant; there are the visitors to the museum; and then there are the museum staff themselves. Each of those groups has different needs. Museum security is an important part of it. Commercial tenant security is an important part of it, as is the visitor security.

An analogy for the commercial tenant is that the commercial tenant would come into a lobby, not unlike any major building lobby in the city. Certainly the larger ones—many of them—have displays in them. In fact, this one probably will have a lot more in it than most.

There will be a stair access, located on the second floor, effectively—ground, first and second. So they could walk to their floor. A hydraulic lift also will be available to

them. Their floor will not be accessible to the general public obviously, and there are a number of ways we are looking at dealing with that, not the least of which is card key security and that sort of thing. That is the detailed design that has not really been followed through at this stage. It is a bit early on in the piece.

Dust control is a very good point. We are very much aware of that. We also are very much aware of the museum's brief to us in terms of the conditions that they would like to see in the building. Their greatest concern is to ensure that they have a stable environment within the building. That does not necessarily mean air conditioned; it just means stable, which means that this building has to be particularly well insulated. This is an interesting combination when one puts it with the footings. Because the footing conditions are very poor, we have to put a lightweight building on the site. Lightweight and highly insulated are—

CHAIR—If I can interrupt, that is 'a steel moment resisting frame system coupled with a bracing system for lateral load control.' You can see why we would like that explained.

Mr Crawford—I can. I would probably like to refer that to our structural engineer. Just reverting back to the question on the dust, we are minimising the areas that will be airconditioned per se because we are looking to be ecologically responsible and we are looking to try to use natural ventilation as much as we can. This conflicts with dust. We understand that there is enormous conflict between these two things.

Right at this minute our mechanical engineers are addressing those particular issues. It is my wish that we seal the building as well as possible because that goes hand in hand with creating a stable environment. It also goes hand in hand with enabling us to exercise dust control as best we can. It is not an easy problem, but we are very much aware of it as an issue. Even this morning Dr Kevin Fewster noted that dust was the enemy of those who are putting on exhibits. We are very conscious of that.

Pressurisation is one way of doing it. Certainly in the storage areas, it will be naturally pressurised; it will not be airconditioned space. But we are hoping to create a positive pressure in those areas to ensure that dust finds it difficult to come in. Does that cover the question of dust? It is a big issue for us.

CHAIR—Yes, I just wanted to see where you are coming from, as long as you are giving evidence to the effect that you have that issue under consideration.

Mr Crawford—Certainly. The question of the footings is an excellent one. Our original philosophy of this building was that it be a lightweight structure because we knew way back before we started almost that the conditions on the ground were not going to be good, and that has proven to be the case. We are touching the ground as lightly as we can. We are not piling. There are a number of reasons for that, not the least of which is related

to disturbing neighbours, but also the expense thereof. This means that we have, as described in the report, a lightweight structure, which is basically steel framed and metal clad and well insulated.

We can get our structural engineer, who is here today, to give you a more detailed description of the structure if you wish, but basically we are providing a raft slab that sits on the surface of the ground and building from that effectively.

CHAIR—Just to continue on some of those matters, you are proposing a single fixed lump sum type contract, which I gather is close to what I would call a turnkey contract. That raises questions for us in terms of the provisions you propose in the contract to protect subcontractors. We think it is appropriate that you give us some evidence in terms of the Sydney 2000 building boom that your estimate of \$19.5 million is achievable in that context.

Mr Crawford—I think it is probably a question for our project managers, because I do not think the contract arrangements are finalised at this stage.

Mr Waters—On the question of lump sum, that methodology was selected for the reason of having a fixed budget. Because of this process with the Public Works Committee, we had the opportunity to go through the design phase of the building. I guess at the end of this hearing, with the permission of the committee, there would be concurrent documentation, which means we would be in a position to have documents completed prior to going into a building tendering phase.

In terms of the actual exact cost and ensuring that as we approach 2000 escalation rates and movement in materials and prices are well thought through and achievable, I would like, with your permission, to pass to our cost planner, who has been very involved all the way. He is advising us constantly on the rates in Sydney.

Mr Duckitt—I am with the firm of Rawlinsons, quantity surveyors, which at this stage is providing costing information to the museum. In answer to your question relating to cost increases and especially in the run-up to the Olympics, we have at this stage made provision in the budget for increased costs of approximately 10 per cent. That 10 per cent represents the increase that we believe will be apparent between September when the budget was formulated and the time that we go to tender, which we believe will be in the early part of next year—certainly before June of next year.

Currently, the cost increases are running at approximately seven per cent per annum. At the moment we are reviewing the cost increases that have occurred since the beginning of this year. We believe that those increases will be downgraded to approximately six per cent for 1997. In 1998 we are forecasting increases in the order of 7½ per cent for the full year. So I believe that the allowances that we have made at the moment of 10 per cent adequately cover those perceived increases.

CHAIR—Another question that arises in the design and construct is that normally fire prevention and security is designed around public health standards. But you are protecting some assets of considerable value to the community; in dollar terms, they are probably immeasurable. What attitude are you therefore taking to your fire security measures? Are they designed to protect the assets or just meet public health standards?

Dr Fewster—Again, I would refer that question to John Crawford.

Mr Crawford—The building will be fully sprinklered. This might be at odds with the museum building. But we have discussed this at some length with the museum and the people within it who are responsible for the exhibits. The overriding factor in all these things is personnel safety; the exhibits, no matter how valuable, come second to that. So the building will be fully sprinklered. It will also have smoke and other alarm systems in it; again, we are working through those at the moment. Obviously, we are very conscious of personnel safety as well as the exhibit safety, but there is not much we can do about that in the event of a fire.

CHAIR—We did not get an answer to the question of how your contract conditions propose to protect subcontractors' remuneration.

Mr Crawford—We have not got a contract organised really, have we? The type of contract, I suspect, at this stage has not been finalised.

CHAIR—The committee takes considerable interest in this matter and, in fact, has dealt with it independently. Would you give us some evidence that the contract conditions as far as possible will ensure that, if your prime contractor goes broke, it will not be a major loss to subcontractors?

Dr Fewster—Certainly.

CHAIR—Please take it on notice.

Dr Fewster—Mr Chairman, as you would be aware, when our main museum building was built, the museum was not the direct client. It was built by the Darling Harbour Authority, and it was subject to considerable delays for the very reasons that you have described. So we are probably more aware of that potential than most projects, because we suffered being an observer to that very process back in the late 1980s.

CHAIR—It is an interesting point that, in evidence given to us at Stirling base the other day, the armed services informed us that their policy is now that, once a progress payment has been made, no further payments are made until there is evidence given that the subcontractors who represented part of that cost are paid. We were quite impressed with that as a simple solution to what can otherwise be a fairly complex problem.

Senator CALVERT—I think that meeting you discussed earlier was one of the initiatives of Ray Braithwaite. He was most concerned about subcontractors and the way in which they were treated.

As a national body, what liaison do you have with the state maritime museums? I know that there are a multitude of them, private and otherwise. You have an absolutely priceless selection and collection of artefacts and exhibits, but there are also similar types right around Australia. What role does the national body have in liaising with these other state bodies?

Dr Fewster—We liaise in a variety of ways. Firstly, we have the Australian Maritime Museums Council, which was established in 1989, of which I was the inaugural chair through until this year when the chairing was taken over by a curator of our museum. That body meets every year and is usually linked to the national conference of museums. This year we met in Fremantle in September. Because the national museums meeting moves around the country, we move that meeting around the country pretty much in accordance with that schedule of Australian museums meetings.

What happens is that, given that many of the museums are volunteer based and do not have budgets—in some cases, no budgets—they tend to attend a meeting only when it is in their local area. That means there is pretty much a gathering of the main players. I attend every one of those meetings, and other senior staff get to them as they can. Generally, we have anywhere from 15 to 25 people at those meetings. Also attending them now we often have international guests who might be in Australia for other reasons. This year, the International Congress of Maritime Museums met in Perth, so we made our Australian Maritime Museum Council meeting coincide with that. We had some 70 or 80 delegates from all around the world.

Secondly, the museum offers a small grants program, called the MMAPSS scheme, where we provide a sum of money each year. The individual grants were up to \$5,000 last year. With cuts backs in allowances, we had to cut those back to \$4,000. We have now run that scheme for three years and have offered 29 grants over that time. They have been to all states, including places like Norfolk Island; the Furneaux Islands in Tasmania have also been the recipient of a grant. They have gone to the Northern Territory and right around the country.

In addition to that, we tour exhibitions, as I said earlier. They go to museums and other places. We were very proud, for example, that our first major international tour went to Flagstaff Hill in Warrnambool, Victoria. It was the first time that a major international tour of any exhibition, art or any other, had been to a non-capital city or a non-major population base. We were ecstatic when that exhibition received 53,000 visitors in a town of 25,000. It was just outstanding.

‘Whales’ which we recently sent to Tasmania also had 53,000—it is a magical

figure—visitors, which is one in six of Hobart’s population. That was very gratifying for us in terms of us fulfilling our national brief. We tend to be underwriting, in a sense, those exhibitions.

I should also add that Mary Louise Williams, my assistant director for collections and exhibitions, also sits on the New South Wales Museum’s committee, which is the New South Wales government’s advisory body for museum management in that state. That is another example where we are both a national body but often also participate particularly in New South Wales activities. The same happened with AIMA, the national body for maritime archaeology; we have formal representation on that. So many and varied are the ways in which we participate in a national sense.

Senator CALVERT—Are these exhibitions that you outsource self-sufficient in funding, or do you have to subsidise them?

Dr Fewster—It depends. We certainly aim that they be self-funding. It is not necessarily the case though. It often depends on just where we are sending them. If we send the exhibitions to the major cities, the major museums, then I think yes, they are self-funding. Occasionally, we will be slightly ahead in terms of budget, although that does not take into account the staffing resources and a lot of below the line cost that we contribute.

We then have smaller programs though—‘Thalassa’ is a program on Greek Australians and their maritime heritage which is currently touring—and they certainly do not recover costs. But we are able to attract Commonwealth support through the Visions touring program for exhibitions like that. So at any one time we can have up to three and four exhibitions on the road; generally, though, we are subsidising those.

Senator CALVERT—In the course of your activities you may become aware of something that may be of national significance that is residing, for argument’s sake, in Hobart or Launceston. Do you have the power to say, ‘In the national interest, we should take that and bring it to Sydney and put it in our national museum’? Does that happen at all?

Dr Fewster—That is a very good question. I will answer it with a story. You will have seen in our galleries, if you walked through this morning, the spectacular figurehead from the *Lord Nelson*, which was a British man-o’-war built in 1813, just after the Battle of Trafalgar. The ship never saw battle and was sold to Victoria in the 1860s to be the flagship of the Victorian Colonial Navy. The ship was broken up in the 1890s. The figurehead was kept and was presented to the Royal Australian Navy after its inception after 1910. The figurehead has been in the Royal Navy, the Victorian Colonial Navy and the RAN. The figurehead resided in Victoria at one of the naval establishments.

When the National Maritime Museum was first established and it was said that the

figurehead would be restored by the museum, we spent over \$30,000 on conservation work and moved it to Sydney. There was significant outrage in Victoria that their item of major cultural significance was being relocated to Sydney, the very issue that you are alluding to.

When the museum opened you then get criticism from people in Victoria saying there is not enough in the National Maritime Museum about Victoria. It is one of the trials and tribulations of being a national institution that any object that is of national significance will by definition be of regional significance and local significance. *Australia II* would have to be the definitive example of that.

I think it is fair to say that the museum strives to have very good relations and we work very closely with our colleagues in other states. I happened to be director of the South Australian Maritime Museum before I came to Sydney, so I personally am very much aware of being on the other side, if you like. To be honest, we try to realise the best possible result through discussion and harmony. Sometimes I like to think we have the big picture and the long-term view and sometimes some local groups may have a somewhat short-term perspective. I could give many examples.

Senator CALVERT—You may wonder why I am asking all these questions, but where I am leading to is: where do you see the national museum going? Do you see it becoming a bigger repository of items of national interest and, therefore, is what you are proposing big enough? That is basically what I am coming to.

Dr Fewster—If I can answer the first part of that: we are the only maritime museum in the country with an acquisition budget and, hence, there are often cases where we can acquire material which is simply not possible for state institutions or local institutions to acquire. The best example of that would be the Rice collection, a collection assembled by one man in South Australia who then wanted to sell it and wanted a six-figure sum for this very fine collection of largely merchant marine materials. We had the money—this was back in the early 1990s—to buy it. We did buy it, but we then loaned significant items from it to the South Australian Maritime Museum so that they could be displaying some of its material as well. Had we not had that money, it would not have gone to a museum and the collection would have been broken up and dispersed around the country. In that sense we can provide, I hope, a national overview and an intellectual resource that can help everyone.

In terms of where our collection is going, the museum is unique, to my knowledge, in the world in that most museums start because there is a major collection or someone bequeaths a major collection to the government. What do we do? Let's start a museum. That is generally how the line of argument goes. Whereas in our case, after the Piggott report in 1975 the Commonwealth government decided there should be a National Maritime Museum—going back to the first question this morning—and it was decided that museum would be in Sydney. It would link into the Darling Harbour development. The

decision was taken when there was no collection. They started to design the building before there was staff. Hence, the museum as an institution started and the collection came along afterwards.

We now have a collection of about 25,000 objects which we have acquired in the last 12 years. That may sound like a lot, but in other ways it is very small. Many major world collections have collections in the millions of objects. I think it is fair to say that this building will take care of our needs for the foreseeable future. Undoubtedly, this museum's collections will grow over time. That is one of the reasons why the design of the building has the capacity to extend into the upper floor and to re-jig the internals of the building at a later date. I think that is very sensible for us.

Senator CALVERT—It is most unlikely that you will ever be throwing anything away. You are super magpie collectors, aren't you?

Dr Fewster—Our legislation does allow us to de-accession but it happens very rarely.

Senator CALVERT—Financially, how does all this pan out? How do you raise revenue? I know that you have admission charges, but what is the bottom line? Are you reasonably successful? Are you happy with the way that you are travelling financially?

Dr Fewster—I might pass that question to Quentin Howarth in the first instance. We could all give you an answer from our perspective, but perhaps Quentin might be better placed answer it.

Mr Howarth—I am not quite sure to what extent you want the details. In broad terms, the museum is quite confident that it can support the required level of funding for this particular proposal from rental offset savings from its existing premises at Union Street and from commercial tenancies in the upper floor. We have done a lot of work in looking at what those outcomes would be over the long term.

Debra has certainly done an enormous amount of work in developing various projections of how this might pan out, looking at variable interest rates ranging from quite attractive ones which we are presently finding to ones in the future. The rent we presently pay is about \$1.4 million a year. That gives us a substantial amount to offset or to pay off the loans that we are proposing. On top of that, the 2,500 square metres of commercial tenancy on the upper floor should more than adequately meet the balance of the requirement to pay off that \$19.5 million loan.

Senator CALVERT—Do you have to do those fit-outs, or will they be carried out by the commercial tenants?

Mr Howarth—At this stage it is uncertain, but it is likely that they will be carried

out by the tenant. They might get a rental holiday, for instance, in the first six months to cover the cost associated with that or some other arrangement. It is really a matter for negotiation with the tenant. It is not our intention to do very many fit-outs in the first instance, because generally you find that tenants want to do their own or they want to be able to identify what it is that they require. I might pass this question to Martin to detail what level of fit-out we propose for that sort of area. Certainly the indications are that the marketplace is well placed to provide us with tenants at an appropriate level of rental. We have made those inquiries and we have got substantial advice to that effect.

Senator CALVERT—Have you had anybody knocking the doors down to get in?

Mr Howarth—We have lists of people prepared to take up the space.

CHAIR—That is fairly desirable, is it not?

Mr Howarth—Very.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—My question is an extension on that particular leasing situation. Are they complementary businesses?

Mr Howarth—Some are and some are very commercial in their nature. The key to us is the income from those tenancies. The other key is that we would want a medium- to long-term tenant. The desirability is not to have to manage a major series of tenancies but to have a single tenant. That means that they will have more substance, they can take over the entire space and hopefully be in a substantial position to meet their rental requirements over that period. We want premium rents because that means more income.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—You mentioned that you need premium rents. There is a difference between want and need.

Mr Howarth—I suppose we want rather than desperately need premium rents.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—My next question leads into that. Senator Calvert was talking about growth. When is it anticipated that your planning would require that floor space back again? If you are relying on the rental, what then happens to your funding?

Mr Howarth—Perhaps Debra could answer that question in relation to the actual term that we are presently projecting for the loan. That will probably give you the best indication. To some extent, that is really the containing factor in terms of our growth, because we really cannot grow until we get that loan paid off.

Ms Bock—We do not need premium rentals. We have been quite conservative in our forecasts of the rent. We do have some indication that very good rentals will be available. In the forecasts I have done, our first calculations are based on an income of

around \$600,000 a year. At slightly worse than the interest rates of probably six months ago, which were around eight per cent, it would take us 12 years to pay off the building. If interest rates stay where they are and we get slightly better rental, which we have every indication that we will, we can probably pay it off in about 10 years. That should coincide very well with our decision either to use that upper floor ourselves or to lease either all or part of it for a shorter term at that time.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—As part of your goals package, you have said that you want to develop a new harbourside cafe and function centre. Is that going to be run by your organisation or is it going to be sublet?

Dr Fewster—We are currently constructing that facility in front of the museum immediately adjacent to the water. The museum has a single preferred caterer agreement with Mode catering, one of Sydney's leading function caterers. They work with us, with the Art Gallery of New South Wales and with the Sydney City Council in their Town Hall, and they provide very fine service. As I said earlier, we are finding that we literally cannot keep up with the demand for functions work at the museum. We are also very aware that the museum is going to be a really premium property for Olympics activities in 2000, and we are currently in discussions with various groups about hospitality at the museum in 2000. So we are putting in about a quarter of the construction cost of that new facility and the greater majority of it, which is somewhere in the order of \$½ million, is being paid by Mode, and they have a lease with us to operate that and our other catering facilities.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—You are projecting there will be 350,000 visitors to the museum. I do not know what year you are making those predictions for—probably 1998—and you have residential developments happening. You have Foxtel as a tenant next door and you are going to have working wharves. Could you give me an overview of safety, with the public moving around these areas, and have you covered anything regarding security, in particular, potential crime or that sort of thing? I notice that Foxtel have parking behind the building. What relationships have you had with Foxtel; what sort of communication have you had with them?

Dr Fewster—Do you mean public safety?

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Yes. You are going to have working wharves and 350,000 people transferring from one building to another. Whose public liability is that and what sorts of safety factors are involved?

Dr Fewster—Quentin handles the legal side of things in the museum, so I will ask him to handle that question.

Mr Howarth—I will try to alleviate some of the fears concerning public safety. The museum has a very good record in relation to public safety. Given the fact that people

are looking over floating exhibits—a submarine, a warship—and at wharves and that 350,000 to 400,000 visitors a year come through the site, we have very few accidents and very few claims. The largest claim of the nearly two million visitors we have had has been for about \$45,000 over that period.

That said, we will take every precaution in the new facility as well to ensure that the public is separated from any areas of danger associated with work that is taking place on the site. It is important to allow the public to have access to those activities. Otherwise they are lost to them. So it is that balance and that happy medium that is important. I think we have a good record of being able to facilitate both those things at the same time.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—What about the transfer of land between the two buildings? Who will be responsible for that?

Mr Howarth—At this stage, it would remain either the responsibility of City West Development Corporation or the city council, which will pose an interesting liability issue for them because it is a question of where does one start and where does one stop and, hence, if there is an accident who bears the responsibility? But that currently operates even on our existing site. The most recent claim we had we enjoined the Darling Harbour Authority because they were, to some extent, responsible for the paving and they were prepared to contribute to some of the costs associated with it. Similarly, we will endeavour to enjoin whoever else is responsible if we can.

CHAIR—When we were down there we talked about people flows between the two buildings—that is, both staff and the public. Could you extend a bit on your thoughts there for the record and give us some indication that you would pursue some direct access. From an efficiency point of view, if you are charging admission what do you? Are you going to have two sets of gatekeepers and things of that nature while your own staff are wandering around the place, et cetera? I am sorry, Richard, but while that particular point is under discussion I think you should give us some indications. It is not a negative of the overall project but it is a minor negative that you are already experiencing with your other arrangements.

Mr Howarth—I agree that there is a problem associated with how that park will work in the future. I think, to some extent, that is really going to be dependent upon the outcome of lease negotiations with the City West Development Corporation. The capacity then for the museum to actually develop an appropriate linkage between the two buildings through the park will then be dependent upon the relationship we enjoy through the lease relationship. If we can acquire the site that will be a lot easier for us, otherwise we will have to actually—

Dr Fewster—Can I come in there? What is happening with the museum now is that we have our main building and our walls in front of the museum. We are about to launch a new project called ‘Welcome Wall’, which is where we walked on the

boardwalk. Those of you who may have been to Ellis Island will know that Ellis Island has a thing called the 'immigrants wall of honour', which has been a spectacularly successful program of having people identify with their family members who first arrived in America. Pymont wharves is where tens of thousands of people arrived in Australia. *Dunera*, a famous refugee ship, for example, came into Pymont. We are about to launch a program to recognise that. We are going to develop that wall that we passed as we went along the boardwalk as the 'welcome wall'.

That will become, I think, the spine of the museum so to speak. I think there will be literally millions of people a year who will want to look up names on that and relate in a personal sense to a maritime heritage and their families. I think that wall will become, as I said, the spine between the two buildings and the link as people move between the two spaces. So it will become a lovely joining point where people will focus on from both buildings on to that. Hence, at the moment there is no deliberate link between the two buildings because we do not have physical control of wharf 7, but the welcome wall will actually add that missing link that is not there at the moment.

CHAIR—It occurs to me that even an elevated walkway or a partially elevated walkway, if you have a problem with people's access as required, would be practical—and that could be the corridor rather than the wall. But I am taking Richard's questions. But it is an issue, as far as I am concerned, as to the practicality which you have identified yourself with a bigger problem. But, more particularly, with the public, if you could have a single admission point and then they could cruise the whole thing in a practical way you would pay for the connection over time.

Dr Fewster—Sure. We will need a receptionist in the new building and that point will serve as, potentially, a ticketing point. So I think we will get some people who will come—

CHAIR—You will need two receptionists.

Dr Fewster—You will need one access point into that building. I think we can manage that relatively cost effectively. I should add that Sydney Maritime Museum, as part of the collocation agreement with us, is paying the cost of the receptionist in the new facility.

CHAIR—It is still money, isn't it? It does not matter whose money it is. I am looking at the fact that if there was a single point of admission and people could then range the whole facility you do not need to pay people to check tickets or clip tickets or whatever.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Just to finalise that point, are you happy with the current negotiations with the lease regarding that third party liability?

Mr Howarth—I am not as happy as I would like to be in relation to acquiring that particular park area, but we are working on it and we will continue to negotiate.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—If you cannot acquire it though will you be happy with the third party liability associated with it?

Mr Howarth—We will not have that liability if we do not acquire the site. We would not acquire the liability. That would rest with the other party, I presume, for the park area.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Well, if someone has put a ticket in one spot and gone to the other spot to look at the exhibits you might have a liability.

Mr Howarth—We might have, yes.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Just give me a bit of a feel about the crime aspect with proposed apartments and other things. Sorry, rather than the crime aspect, give me a feel about security.

Mr Howarth—I will pass this over to the director.

Dr Fewster—The museum has 24-hour security on our current site, which will extend across to the new building. We have camera security as well as the human presence both during the day and after hours. It is certainly true that as the whole Pymont area is literally exploding at the moment, and with the casino opening in a fortnight there are many of us in the vicinity of Darling Harbour who have that concern about security in the area and vandalism, to put it bluntly. We have had some damage done over recent months.

We made a representation recently to a state parliamentary committee about the new casino and the problem of security. I know in Darling Harbour that that issue is to the fore at the moment. We are members of the Darling Harbour Business Association and the users group. So we cooperate closely with them in terms of the Darling Harbour rangers group who oversee security. I think it is one of those areas where we are all going to have to suck it and see.

The security at the casino at the moment basically extends to the perimeter edge of the casino and no further. I would not be at all surprised if the casino is encouraged to be a little more expansive in their security operations. But at the moment it is all conjectural because the new casino has not opened. I suppose I can say for us that we have six years experience in managing our site with good security in terms of camera as well as personal. There are some efficiencies that come about through this building. The closer proximity of the building will be easier for us to patrol after hours because of the better proximity. So there are pluses and minuses.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—So the bottom line for that is that you are moving into uncharted waters regarding any future security requirements?

Dr Fewster—It is a term we use often in maritime museums. To be frank, I think all of the Pymont-Darling Harbour area, with the new casino opening up, is moving into uncharted waters. At the community meeting we attended on Tuesday night of the local Pymont area, that issue, as one might expect, was being raised very much by residents and they had the police superintendents from the area in attendance. We are, in a sense, no different to anyone else. But, obviously, in other ways we are, particularly with our vessels. We have major Commonwealth assets and heritage assets tied up at our wharves and we obviously want to ensure that they have the best possible protection. So we have an absolute fixation in some ways on security because of the museum's mission. I suppose the truth is that we will know what is happening before the building opens if that is 18 months away. It is the next six months that are going to be very interesting.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Let us move into shark infested waters and you can tell me about Foxtel and your relationship there. Is it satisfactory? Are things happening okay?

Dr Fewster—Yes, we have a good relationship with Foxtel. For the record, Foxtel have the building to the north side of the Wharf 7 building. They currently have a short-term lease there, and the expectation is that they will relocate to the new Showground site when that is developed as a movie studio et cetera. I think it is probably fair to say, from my informal discussions with their CEO and others, that they are finding the location here in Pymont a very pleasant one, and so whether they will seek to stay in the area time will tell, and whether the state would allow them to stay time will tell. We do have a good personal rapport. We have had meetings with the CEO and their principal managers. We have sought their advice in several cases about buildings and structures in the area. So I think it is fair to say that we will continue with an active continuing brief and the relationship is a very friendly one.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Are they administration only or are they also production?

Dr Fewster—It is everything. They have their studios, their administration—the whole kit and caboodle.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—So what happens about construction—noise and vibration?

Mr Waters—In terms of construction, I guess one of the major assets of our technique of construction is that we are not piling. As you would have noticed, piling, in terms of the satellite dishes there, by the time we get down to the rock it causes vibration and causes risk to their business. We have an obligation to maintain access for Foxtel and to a certain extent some quiet enjoyment. We believe that in future discussions with them

we will find an amicable agreement as to how this is all going to proceed. To date it has been fine.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—When you say an amicable agreement, would that be an amicable financial agreement?

Dr Fewster—I am not sure what you mean by that. It could be the other way, though, where in fact, given that Foxtel has grown very fast, they have certainly at an informal level inquired about the sort of leasing space that we may have in the building. So your question could be taken two ways.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Sure.

CHAIR—With this structure you are erecting, a lot of the actual work would be done off-site and would be brought in as prefabricated units, wouldn't it?

Dr Fewster—Yes.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—You have got about 85 staff and I think 200-odd volunteers. Do you see an expansion of staff and volunteers once you move into new premises, and are they being catered for?

Dr Fewster—I do not see an expansion of staff as being likely in the current climate. There will, though, be additional people in the new building, of course, with Sydney Maritime Museum staff and also Sydney Maritime Museum volunteers. They have a very solid core of volunteers, as we do. The facility is being designed to take account of both those factors. I am very comfortable with all the issues about staffing, whether that be paid staff or volunteers, across both institutions. One of the things for us is to seek to develop the closest rapport between staff in the two museums. The plan, as you know, is that the two institutions will collocate but continue to operate as independent institutions in terms of our governance. It is certainly my hope, and I am sure it is John Smith's at Sydney Maritime Museum too, that we develop the closest day-to-day working rapport between the two groups, and I am sure that will happen.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—I guess you have done this but, for the record, in relation to staff and volunteers and people moving through the building, have the health arrangements been adequately catered for, in particular conveniences and washrooms and things like that?

Dr Fewster—Again, I think the architect would be the best person to give you some information.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Can you give us a rundown on disabled services as well?

Mr Crawford—We are obviously designing the building in accordance with the Building Code of Australia. The disabled access question is a good one. The Building Code of Australia is about to be revised. There is a document being produced proposing amendments to the Building Code to resolve some of the problems of disabled access. The Building Code of Australia generally talks about egress. Access has not been discussed to date. It will be addressed by this document, which is not yet law but is coming. We are taking note of that now in the work that we are doing within the building, so we are assuming that it is going to happen and acting accordingly.

The extent of public access through the building is not fully defined. Obviously it is dependent on design detail and museum management of the facilities. The public will not have access to the whole building, but they will certainly have access to a very large part of it.

The question of toilet facilities, disabled toilets and all those sorts of things are covered in the normal fashion. We are not making any exceptional bits of design to do that. We are just covering the normal basic need. We are also responding to what is likely to happen in the future.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Dr Fewster, you mentioned to Senator Calvert your relationship with other state maritime organisations. Does this include actually getting exhibits from, say, north Western Australia over here—I have an interest in this? I noticed just going through that there seems to be a lot of eastern state, Sydney based paraphernalia, if that is the right word.

Senator CALVERT—I do not think they would like to be called paraphernalia.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—No, exhibits. Artefacts is a good word too. Are you seeking such artefacts from other parts of Australia and bringing them over here?

Dr Fewster—Yes, one area in particular—

Mr RICHARD EVANS—I understand the Victorian point of view, but I am just thinking about the Western Australian point of view as well.

Dr Fewster—One area that I might give as a particular example is the Western Australian famous Dutch shipwrecks. When they were located in the early 1970s, an agreement was reached called the ANCODS agreement whereby any materials raised, the collection, would be shared three ways between the Western Australian government, the Dutch government and the Commonwealth government. Of course we did not exist then, but when the museum came into existence the Commonwealth decided that we should be the custodian of the Commonwealth's third of that ANCODS collection. So you will see materials from that regard in the museum now. In fact, that it is why the Dutch Prime Minister is opening our 'Navigators—Defining Australia' exhibition tomorrow, which in

many ways is reflecting the Dutch influence in Australia.

Yes, we do acquire other materials as and when they become available and depending on provenance, price and other things. In terms of borrowing things, we mount many examples of exhibitions. There is a famous phrase in museums of 'permanent loans', which is a sort of contradiction in terms when you think about it. Modern museums now are loath to go into so-called permanent loans.

If we are mounting an exhibition which has a focus on one area or another, we will seek to borrow the appropriate material from wherever if we do not have it in our own collection. We will borrow it for the length of that exhibition and then return it to its owner, whether that be a museum or an individual. We could cite you many examples of that happening.

I was just reminded of another example of Western Australian things in our collection. *John Louis*, one of the last pearling luggers built in Broome, is in our collection. It is currently being rebuilt at Berrys Bay—we saw it from the *Advance* this morning. So it is a matter of both acquiring and borrowing objects for specific needs, specific purposes. We lend objects as well, of course, to other museums, other institutions.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—I guess the point I am trying to make is that you are not ignoring the other coastlines of Australia with your artefacts and exhibits.

Dr Fewster—No, not at all. For example, we just did two exhibitions for the Year of Dreaming Cultural Olympics. One was of paintings from Arnhem Land—and that was about the Macassan interaction—and the second one was 'Pukumani Poles' from the Tiwi islands. Last year we acquired a significant collection of Ilma from Broome in Western Australia, Roy Wiggins and that group.

Our collecting and our relationships are very wide ranging. In fact, to be honest, if anything, we will sometimes deliberately choose an example for an exhibition that is non-Sydney or non-New South Wales for the precise reason you are describing when there could have been a local example we could have shown.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—I just have one final question in regard to marketing. When you do move and you have got this new exhibition structure, are you planning to increase your marketing opportunities and also your funding?

Dr Fewster—Do you mean funding through admission revenues or appropriation?

Mr RICHARD EVANS—I am just asking—are you planning to have an increase in your marketing—

CHAIR—It is turnover, I guess.

Dr Fewster—Yes, I believe there will be an increase in turnover, as I said, because of the increase in function capacity it will give us. The new building is scheduled to open in mid-1999 which, of course, is going to be premium time for Sydney in the lead-up to 2000.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Will marketing expenditure increase?

Dr Fewster—Hopefully not, in that the new building is, in a sense, allowing you to peek behind the curtain. I think the public will be fascinated to do that. It is probably not, in the first instance, what people think they are going to a museum to see. It becomes the added attraction—it is what the butler saw, in a sense. So in that regard, no, I doubt that it will lead to an increase in our marketing dollars.

I suppose that the best asset for us in marketing new projects, in all frankness, will be the *James Craig*. The National Maritime Museum's collection does not have a tall ship—a large sailing vessel—and having the *James Craig* moored in front of the building will identify the building better than any sign or any marketing I could do. With all the ferries passing by and whatever, I think there will be a great marketing boon from it.

CHAIR—I just want to include another matter for the record. Debra, in commenting about the servicing of your loan, you speculated on interest rates. Can you give us any evidence of what you propose so that you lock in—if you are only talking about a 10-year period—and your interest costs will be fixed for the term?

Ms Bock—Yes. What we are proposing to do is to have a part of our loan on a fixed interest rate. We propose to break it up into two portions: one part will be fixed interest and the other part will be variable. The fixed interest part will be the part we are paying off from the rent on Union St, the rent offsets, and we intend to pay off the variable interest part from our commercial tenancies, on the basis that if you pay variable interest and you make variable repayments you do not get a penalty. But if you take out a fixed interest loan and cannot pay the repayments at the exact rate that you undertook to in the first place, then you will suffer a penalty, depending on what the rates are at the time in relation to the rates that you have taken up.

The banks are happy to give us a fixed interest loan for the term. They do not normally enter into fixed interest loans above 10 years, but in our case they have undertaken to stretch that to 12 years at the moment. After that, we would probably have to re-negotiate if the whole thing is not paid off by then.

CHAIR—You referred to banks. Have you made inquiries outside the banking industry to major financial institutions like the superannuation funds for a sum of money like that?

Ms Bock—No, we have not. We have only spoken to banks.

CHAIR—I suggest you do. You are a very good risk. That is why we are asking you questions.

Mr Howarth—On that advice, we probably will.

CHAIR—Thank you. We will consider this evidence complete because it is our usual practice to bring our principal witnesses back after they have heard the evidence of other parties, of which, in this case, there is only one. It gives them the opportunity to comment and provide any final thoughts they might like to add on anything that has arisen.

Luncheon adjournment

[2.07 p.m.]

RELF, Mr Mark Stephen, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Australian Quadriplegic Association Ltd, 1 Jennifer Street, Little Bay, New South Wales 2036

CHAIR—Welcome, Mr Relf. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

Mr Relf—I am appearing on behalf of ACROD as well.

CHAIR—The committee has received a submission from the Australian Quadriplegic Association dated 23 October 1997. Do you wish to propose any amendment?

Mr Relf—No, no amendments.

CHAIR—It is proposed that the submission be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. Do members have any objections? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The document read as follows—

CHAIR—I now invite you, Mr Relf, to make a short statement in support of your submission before we proceed to questions.

Mr Relf—First of all I would like to say thank you to all the staff of the Maritime Museum for assisting me on board, getting me up the five steps and onto this upper level. In saying that, I would like to see this standing committee commit itself to meeting in accessible venues on future occasions wherever possible.

One of the issues about the submission that was prepared by the Australian National Maritime Museum was that it did include a statement about compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act of Australia, but it did not really say how it would comply with the DDA. In my submission I made mention of and I draw attention to the advisory notes on access to premises which were being developed by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission which give good guidance on how to design building facilities to comply with the DDA and also meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Companion to that would be the Building Code of Australia. It has been recognised in the last couple of years since the DDA was enacted in 1992 that the BCA had some shortfalls, and there has been work to redevelop and modify it so it does conform with the Disability Discrimination Act. Whilst we have an interim BCA in place at the moment and probably one which has been used in part to design this facility, I would ask that the National Maritime Museum seeks to upgrade its plans to conform with the new BCA when it is completed in the middle part of 1998. If there is an opportunity to design quality buildings and give them as much inclusivity as possible to the Australian society, I would guide them towards Australian standards which go a little beyond the minimum requirements of the BCA and provide easy access for the majority of people with disabilities.

One of the issues for coming along today and talking about access is the fact that, if we start at the early stages of planning and monitoring the construction, we can avoid mistakes which can become quite costly later. A recent case study could be the light rail here in Sydney. The construction of that facility was one which committed itself to access but, at the final stages of implementation, they realised that it could not allow easy access for people who use a wheelchair. They are now going about the business of redesigning their carriages and retrofitting their carriages to install electric, automatic ramps on them. It could have been done a lot easier and it could have been done a lot cheaper if they had done it at the planning stages, rather than after the event. That is the sort of thing we are trying to work towards—that is, saving public moneys so they do not get wasted in that sort of situation. That is probably all I have to say.

CHAIR—Thank you, Mr Relf. I will ask the members of my committee if they have any questions for you.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Mr Relf, does your organisation get involved with

building projects much?

Mr Relf—Wherever we can, we will and wherever it is welcomed, we will. In instances where it is not welcomed, we will sometimes need to use the Disability Discrimination Act of Australia to give us, I suppose, that leverage and force ourselves on to the agenda.

Another case study would be a couple of years ago when Sydney buses went out to tender for 125 buses which would not have been accessible. After one of our members lodged a claim with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission—and we supported them in that process—the Sydney buses sought to conciliate the matter. They recalled the tender and redrafted it so it would comply. They also retrofitted any bus that needed to do so.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—On the matter of Commonwealth buildings, as this committee is concerned with Commonwealth matters, is your organisation consulted with in terms of Commonwealth projects?

Mr Relf—I guess one instance of how we are consulted is by being aware of the activities of this committee. But it is no further than that—in the sense that there is no comprehensive proactive way in which parties that are building Commonwealth buildings would come to us and ask us for advice.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—We heard evidence this morning regarding the project, and apparently there are new regulations being developed for disability services. We heard this morning that the project here is adopting the new regulations. Although they could go to the old regulations, they are going to the new regulations. Is that something that would please you?

Mr Relf—Yes, absolutely. Obviously, we are at the early stages of planning and it could be some time before the first sod of soil is turned, so to speak. By that time, the new BCA should be complete in its form, and we would encourage that the building follow the new BCA when it is completed in the mid part of 1998.

CHAIR—The evidence given to us this morning was that, irrespective of whether it is in place or not, the architects intend to use it.

Mr Relf—I am delighted to hear that.

Senator CALVERT—I note in the project that one passenger lift is going to be provided, so that obviously will help those people who are in wheelchairs or whatever. In your submission, you talk about adequate car parking and access from public transport. I was lucky enough to access the new Sydney light rail last night and I must say I was most impressed. It does come into this area and the access to it is level. Did your organisation

have input into that project?

Mr Relf—It almost has level access. When the carriages are unladen, it generally has about a 70 millimetre step, and at three of the eight stations, there is a gap between the carriages and the platform of approximately 150 millimetres, which makes it terribly precarious and dangerous to try to get across that sort of gap and up that sort of rise using a wheelchair. When there is at least a 40 or 50 per cent passenger load on board, the suspension takes up and the carriages are lower and it does create level access at some of the stations.

We did try to convince the company as way back as probably 1994 that they needed to make sure that the carriages would be no more than, say, 50 millimetres away from each of the light rail stops but, unfortunately, they chose to go their own way and did not do that. That has now required them to design some ramps to retrofit those carriages.

Senator CALVERT—I just thought—

Mr Relf—To your eye, it may have seemed like it was nice and level and accessible.

Senator CALVERT—I was not in a wheelchair.

Mr Relf—They have taken a number of progressive steps, but they have just failed at that last little bit to get it right. You mentioned the lift in the design. One of the queries I had—and it was hard to tell from those concept plans in the submissions—is that the lift did not seem to go to all floors. A response from the museum does confirm that it will only go to three or probably four of the levels. The fifth level is one of some question, depending on whether it attracts enough commercial interest to actually construct the fifth floor, et cetera. There is some uncertainty about that at this time.

Mr HOLLIS—I actually have not got any questions, but I have a comment which takes slight issue with you, Mr Relf. I have been associated with this committee since 1985 in a whole range of projects, and I would suggest that the Commonwealth has been very appreciative of people with disabilities and their problems. I have always found—even dealing now with a concept stage when all the finalised plans were not on the table—that the committee has recommended that ongoing consultations with ACROD or various other people take place. I must say that, in all that time, I have never once had anyone representing those with a physical disability come back to the committee and say that what the committee recommended or the actual service was not provided.

That does not mean that one does not have to be constantly vigilant. I cannot speak for state governments, but I think that the federal government has been vigilant in the buildings it has dealt with over the years, even if in the initial stages everything was not

there in the plans. We are increasingly getting plans at the concept stage, and the committee usually recommends that there be ongoing consultation not only with organisations such as your own but with a whole host of other organisations. I must say that we have never had people come back to us and say, 'This wasn't carried out' or 'that wasn't carried out.' No-one is inclined to give the Commonwealth a pat on the back, but it has not got a bad record in coming to terms with the requirements of those with a physical disability.

Mr Relf—Mr Richard Evans earlier asked me if AQA had been consulted by the Commonwealth. I said, 'In our organisation, no.' But, obviously, the Commonwealth has been consulting with ACROD for a number of years; it has been a standing arrangement. So I was just being specific about the comment with AQA.

CHAIR—There being no further questions, Mr Relf, thank you for finding time to give evidence today. We will now invite our earlier witnesses to return. They may wish to give assurances or respond in some way to your remarks. You are very welcome to stay and hear what they have to say.

Mr Relf—Thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIR—Dr Fewster, would you return to the table, with your assistants if you think that is necessary.

Dr Fewster—I was very pleased that Mr Relf could give the committee that evidence. I will just add that we have received a written response to the letters we sent out to various community groups, and we received a response from the Australian Quadriplegic Association on 23 October, in which some of those issues were canvassed. We wrote back in response to that letter on 31 October. I think one point that was relevant was in relation to the internal lift and whether that would be accessible to all areas. I will read the paragraph in the letter. It says:

Access within the building will be provided to 4 internal levels by lift. The fifth level is a small mezzanine—the construction of which is still to be confirmed. The need for disabled access to this level will be assessed when a tenant for the space is determined and that tenant's needs reviewed.

I am sure I can speak for the museum when I say that, if that mezzanine level goes ahead, we will of course consult fully with the AQA. I am sure we will be able to meet that need when it has been identified that that level is actually to be built.

CHAIR—Are there any other matters you would like to address in that regard?

Mr Crawford—You are absolutely right about the lift. The lift also has provision for the disabled in terms of its operating buttons being placed at a lower level to suit people in wheelchairs. We are very conscious—as is the museum, I might add, because of

their requirement for access for the public—of the need to make sure that the building is accessible to the disabled.

As we said earlier today, we are aware of the requirements under the new building code of Australia. We are incorporating those requirements in what we do. If there any contributions that anyone like Mr Relf and his organisations can make, then we will be very happy to receive the information.

Dr Fewster—Today's hearing could not happen in the museum. I note Mr Relf's comments that there is a need to look at the access on and off South Steyne. I was discussing that him over lunch and was able to point out that on our own warship, *Vampire*, we deliberately designed the gangway system so it is possible for wheelchairs to gain access to the main deck level. In that sense we are conscious of such things. We have volunteers in the museum who are in wheelchairs and we have many visitors. So we all have things we can learn but with our six years of experience working with the public I hope we can improve even on what we have in our current building, which has generally been well received. We look forward to that ongoing cooperation.

CHAIR—I understand that the reason you chose this venue today was because the other venues were previously booked out.

Dr Fewster—That is right.

CHAIR—I wanted to bring to your attention, because it did come up at one stage, that when evidence has been completed the committee has considered the request for concurrent documentation and has agreed to that request on the basis that no expenditure is incurred before the committee has presented its report to the parliament. So prior to coming down here at our regular weekly meetings in the parliament we approved of concurrent documentation but on the conditions that you can do the documentation but you have to await our report before you can go out and spend some money.

Mr Howarth—I assume that that means that we can expend on the documentation itself, but not on construction.

CHAIR—You can spend on the documentation but not on the construction.

Senator CALVERT—Over lunch I have reflected on evidence that was given this morning and I perhaps should have asked some more deep and meaningful questions about where we end up with the Australian National Maritime Museum as a national body. There is no doubt that we have a very rich heritage in that area and obviously parts of it should be preserved. I am aware, like Dr Fewster is, that there are items of significance and perhaps items of national significance that are held in private collections or state collections. In the future will you be trying to identify those items and either purchasing them or acquiring them?

Also, further down the track, will the organisation be in a position to, or does it, finance expeditions to investigate some of the better known wrecks that are right around our coastline? For instance, yesterday when we were in Fremantle we were privileged to view the restoration of part of the *Octavia*, which has significance for that area of the world. In my own area we have shipwrecks in Bass Strait, King Island and those areas, that may need further exploration. Does your organisation finance expeditions or will they be fostering further expeditions of some of our very rich early heritage? If does not happen now, it may be too late further down the track.

Dr Fewster—There are two questions there—one on collections and one on wreck sites and expeditions, et cetera. I will take the second part first. The National Maritime Museum has several maritime archaeologists on staff. Each state has a maritime archaeology arm in some form or other. Essentially, as a general rule we have worked with state authorities on projects which are being instigated through the states. A good example in Tasmania would be the *Sydney Cove* that was discovered up in the Furneaux Islands. In that case we worked with the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston for several years, assisting them with their diving. We have some equipment that we can take down and lend to such expeditions.

We have also been active on the *Pandora* wreck site in Queensland, working with the Queensland Museum. No-one in the country really has the resources to undertake major dive programs on their own. It is one of those areas where working together in a collaborative arrangement draws the best results.

It should perhaps be remembered that several years ago the Commonwealth government established a centre of excellence for underwater archaeology through the Western Australian Maritime Museum. To be honest, I do not think it has been quite fully explained what that means, given that we are a Commonwealth institution with expertise and that is a state institution but with a very good track record in the field. There is still some clarification needed there in terms of how we can best work with them. But certainly the will is there and our track record over quite some years is developing as a strong one.

We have also done some recent international projects in our own right. We have just had several of our staff working in Fiji through DFAT and the Fijian government on a survey of wrecks in the bays around Fiji. It is an area in which we are active. We would like to do more. As always, it is a matter of money. Partly, it is a matter of some clarification as to what role the Commonwealth would like the museum to fulfil in terms of our brief.

On the area of collections, yes, the museum does collect actively and, yes, we do have an acquisition budget, although, dare I say it, our acquisition budget is quite modest. It is an area of increasing concern for us as the demands are so great, particularly when you get into areas such as early exploration, Cook material, Bligh material and things like that where the collecting market is very high and an interest is strong. To be frank, we

often don't have the resources to acquire things that we would like.

We find that as a young Commonwealth institution, one of our dilemmas is that often the nation's maritime riches are held by other institutions which may have a general brief rather than a strictly maritime brief. Some institutions such as the National Library have been very responsive to that and have actually transferred significant items from their collections to us, because now that we exist we are plainly the appropriate institution to house it. Some other institutions, whether they be state or federal, say, 'These are in our collection and they should not and will not pass out of our collection.' Personally, I think that is an unfortunate attitude, but you can only deal with personalities in those cases.

I thank you for the opportunity to make some comment on it. It is an area where the museum sees itself as having a true national role. We would hope increasingly in the future that others will acknowledge our status and our ability to bring that national overview to all of Australia's maritime heritage.

Senator CALVERT—Australia probably controls the largest area of ocean in the world. A large part of that is the Southern Ocean. In recent times there has been rather spectacular recognition of that through one or two things that have happened. Do you have any particular area of expertise in the Antarctic area, for instance? Is it proposed that you will have a section here on Antarctica or do you see that being held in other places, like the Antarctic Division in CSIRO? I believe South Australia also has a collection.

Dr Fewster—Tasmania.

Senator CALVERT—Yes; we are hoping to have one very shortly. Dreamworld are running that, aren't they? Are there relevant and significant artefacts—for instance, some of the stuff from Mawson's hut—that should be retained here? Australians were great explorers in Antarctica and probably the most significant.

Dr Fewster—Certainly the museums's viewpoint is that collaboration is essential, and there are areas where we believe we have both expertise or a special case. There are certainly areas where we believe we have a special calling, if you wish. There are other areas, though, where we do not, either through our location or through our staffing resources. For example, we were not established with a strong science based staffing structure—hence, Antarctica is a good example.

A major exhibition was developed two years ago jointly by the Tasmanian museum and the Victorian museum. We took that exhibition as part of our touring program, so it was shown at the museum here in Sydney. But we do not have under our current staffing structure the expertise in-house, so it is really a matter of having strong collaboration where we can.

I was just reminded we did have a staff member on staff some years ago who had

a particular interest in Mawson's hut and who did go to Antarctica with that. She has subsequently moved not to Antarctica but to the ACT. So it is a matter of collaboration.

CHAIR—Same difference.

Dr Fewster—That is right; it depends on what time of year you are there.

Senator CALVERT—The Commonwealth have made moneys available, haven't they, for Mawson's hut?

Dr Fewster—Yes.

Senator CALVERT—I just wondered whether as a truly national maritime museum some section may show some areas that pertain to the magnificent achievements of the Australian explorers in Antarctica. It just seems a bit sad to me that we have these significant items—hence the question I asked you before lunch and during lunch—spread around Australia. Hopefully, one day they will find a home where people can appreciate just what has been achieved by a few people in a very harsh environment.

Dr Fewster—I totally agree. Human beings are possessive by nature, I think, and people are often loathe to part with things but very keen to take funding or whatever to help their preservation. Certainly for us the small grants scheme that we initiated was an acknowledgment that often the best sort of support can be given locally and also encouragement to local groups to have the work they are doing better acknowledged in their local area. I just hope that as time passes and our museum grows in stature and prestige there will become an even stronger sense of prestige for a local area to have something proposed to come into the national maritime collection and to work collaboratively with us. I think we have to earn our stripes in that sense, and I believe we are.

Senator CALVERT—Let us hope that under the very capable chairmanship of your chairman further down the track we may see some evidence from Antarctica in your National Maritime Museum.

Dr Fewster—We would be delighted.

Mr HOLLIS—Not wishing to labour the point of Antarctica but the Commonwealth is establishing an Antarctic museum in Hobart and it would seem to me that the obvious place for things to do with the Antarctic would be in the Antarctic museum at Hobart rather than in Sydney. As for Mawson's hut, as I understand it, because of the work that the University of Adelaide has been doing, there has been considerable debate about whether we should bring Mawson's hut back or leave it at Commonwealth Bay. My understanding is that it is going to be left there. Various areas develop their own expertise. I think that, unless you like spreading the whole thing too thin, the obvious

place for anything to do with Antarctica and the discovery there would be the museum at Hobart—unless a few of Hurley's photographs came here, but mostly they would go to the Hobart museum.

CHAIR—Anyway, it so happens that it has substantially passed our reference at this point in time.

Mr HOLLIS—But it is very interesting, Mr Chair.

CHAIR—Yes, quite right.

Dr Fewster—I want to give one last example of that. I was reminded at lunchtime that recently the museum saw coming up for auction in Britain a log of a ship called the *Wallaby*, which was an early whaling vessel—the second vessel built by convicts at Port Arthur in 1840. We went out to try to secure some sponsorship to acquire it. We also rang the Tasmanian museum because it obviously has great relevance to Tasmania. Out of that discussion, it was decided that we, rather than the Tasmanian museum, would bid for it so there would not be competition. We were successful in acquiring that. Of course, we will lend it to Tasmania at the appropriate time—when they may have need for it for an exhibition. It is a good example of the sort of collaboration we try to foster.

CHAIR—It is very important that Professor Fels read that bit of collusive evidence.

Senator CALVERT—Mr Hollis, do I have a right of reply to Mr Hollis down there? I totally agree with what he said about the Antarctic museum in Tasmania—

CHAIR—I am not going to open this particular hearing to a debate between parochial interests—notwithstanding I understand your concern. Are there any other matters relative to the reference before us? As there are no further questions, it is proposed that the correspondence be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. Do members have any objections? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The correspondence read as follows—

CHAIR—Before closing, I would like to thank the witnesses who have appeared before the committee today and those who assisted our inspection this morning. It is worthy of note that this committee, certainly prior to my chairmanship, has conducted inquiries at some very unique locations. Of course, this particular choice is certainly one of those.

Nevertheless, I draw to your attention that some of the others have been a United States Navy Hercules transport aircraft, flying over the Australian Antarctic Territory. I say that with some trepidation because I do not want to start Paul off again. In the past, public hearings have also been held in remote locations, such as Derby—as we Western Australians call it—Weipa and Christmas Island.

I am told that this is the first time that this committee has conducted a public hearing aboard a ship, and I would like to thank the National Maritime Museum for making this very appropriate venue available for the hearing. I would like to thank my fellow committee members, *Hansard* and the secretariat.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Hollis**):

That, pursuant to the power conferred by subsection 2(2) of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1908, this committee authorises the publication of the evidence given before it and submissions presented at the public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 2.43 p.m.