

**Understanding Museums:
Australian museums and museology**

Des Griffin and Leon Paroissien (eds)



Regional museums

Regional museums dealing with art and with history are distributed around the country, bringing to local audiences items of significance and understanding of the past and the present. They all share several important features: they contain amongst their treasures many works of national as well as local significance; and the contribution to them by volunteers is immense. In the case of local history museums those contributions are often critical, for without them the museum would not exist. All of them share one other critical feature: they contribute to a sense of personal and community identity.

Margaret Rich reviews the development of regional art museums in Victoria. Kimberley Webber with a number of museum people from around the country outlines the recent history of regional museums in mainland Australia. Kylie Winkworth reflects on the achievements and challenges which still face regional museums.

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Online version: http://nma.gov.au/research/understanding-museums/Regional_museums.html

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Understanding Museums - Regional museums: introduction

Introduction

by Leon Paroissien and Des Griffin

The following essays jointly recount a remarkable story of Australians' commitment to their museums. This is reflected in exceptional local initiatives. Dedicated volunteers run many museums; local councils with professional staff govern others; and others again are co-located with libraries in cultural centres.

Many smaller-scale collections in comparison with our state or national institutions nevertheless contain regionally and nationally significant material – even iconic items revealing our natural, historic and cultural heritage.

In the case of art museums, particularly, there are numerous iconic works produced by Australian artists over two centuries, including some of our most famous figures, to be found in our regional galleries spread across the country. Regional art museums today with active collection policies in the contemporary area may even be acquiring works of equal significance to those being collected by our principal capital city institutions.

Margaret Rich's account of regional art museums (or regional galleries) focuses on Victoria, where early local initiatives and state government encouragement and support set an example for other states to follow. In general, regional art museums have fared better throughout Australia than their fellow non-art museum institutions that house other kinds of historic heritage.

In the non-art museum area, the capacities of regional institutions to acquire, manage and develop interpretation and exhibitions of local historical material formed over many years – even to document local historical collections adequately at the level of a reliable inventory – presents an extremely varied picture at a national level. Kylie Winkworth, who has studied regional museums and their collections for many years, adds a cautionary judgement to her analysis of the proliferation of regional institutions: 'Australians far prefer to open new museums than fix the ones they have'.

There has been no consistent rationale across Australia for government support for regional museums since they first emerged under varying colonial circumstances. Many still receive little or no financial assistance from any level of government today, while others may receive some direct or indirect support through their state museums. This strikingly varied situation creates sadly inequitable circumstances surrounding museums' direct connection with and capacity to play a vital role in their communities' cultural development and conservation of heritage at local levels across the nation.

The Australia Council meanwhile has provided a range of Australian government grants supportive of art museums over the years, while funding for touring exhibitions to all types of regional museums is available in some continuing Australian government programs of assistance: through Visions of Australia; and the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program.

The 1975 Pigott Report on Australian museums recommended the creation of an Australian Museums Commission – based on models in the UK and elsewhere. This was envisaged as 'a statutory authority employing its own small staff and enlisting, whenever possible, the advice and specialised services of other government agencies'. [1] No national instrument of support and advice of this kind has ever been established in Australia. Its absence has keenly disadvantaged Australia's regional museums, since only through a national stimulus by the Australian government could comparative standards be raised, better equity be achieved, and other forms of support for regional cultural development be stimulated to match the amenities provided by state and national museums in capital cities. Such disparities in national envisioning and provision represent one of the deepest and most long-standing 'social divides' in the more equitable provision of cultural amenities for the benefit of all Australians.

Relatively few museums across regional Australia have purpose-designed buildings and facilities,

let alone museum-standard environmental controls or satisfactory exhibition facilities. Many historical collections languish in parlous circumstances, without a permanent home and visibility.

Historically, the establishment of a museum and its subsequent growth and maintenance has usually resulted from the efforts of an individual or a group of enthusiasts. In spite of a surprising number of museums having been established in this way through the admirable initiative of citizens over more than two centuries, some important regional cities whose history and culture would seem to recommend themselves as sites for museums have yet to see even modest institutions established to celebrate their history.

Despite such discontinuities in provision, the essays in this section describe many instances of regional museums and their supporters developing expansive and innovative facilities and programs to make significant contributions to the cultural life of their community. Such accounts hold the promise that future years will bring a more equitable development of regional museums in a national perspective, unlocking civic potential and cultural development amenities at the local level in ways that could more closely echo the striking upsurge and successive redevelopments of virtually all substantial museums in Australia's capital cities during the last four decades.

Footnote

¹ Pigott Report, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1975, p. 3.

Understanding Museums - Art museums

The development of regional galleries

by Margaret Rich

Victoria was the cradle for regional galleries in Australia. There were five regional galleries in Australia by 1900 and four were in Victoria. By 1970 there were just 26 regional galleries throughout Australia and 13 of those were in Victoria. It was, in the 1970s, a lively network of poorly funded galleries, with an umbrella organisation, the Regional Galleries Association of Victoria (RGAV).

This organisation emerged out of the earlier and smaller Victorian Public Galleries Group (VPGG), formed in the late 1940s through the initiative of the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) to develop, support and provide greater access to the state's widely dispersed public art collections. The initiative was also of benefit to the NGV as it wished to demonstrate a state-wide interest in the arts to support their own claims for improved funding. The state gallery chose to remain separate from the VPGG, but assisted regional galleries by providing advice and artworks for exhibitions, and acting as a conduit to government ministers. The will to assist regional galleries was there, though limited, with the need to develop the state gallery's own resources a priority.

Regional galleries identified the key areas for attention as operating funding, exhibitions, conservation for their neglected but hugely important collections, and the need for professional staff. By the mid-1960s, they had, with the support of the NGV director and trustees, acquired a minimal level of operating funding, as well as access to state government capital works funding. The possibility of capital funding encouraged some local councils to establish new galleries, while older galleries sought to improve their buildings and add temporary exhibitions areas. Temporary exhibitions had not previously been a regular feature other than annual art prize exhibitions. Most of the newly established galleries were owned and managed by local councils, unlike the earliest galleries in Ballarat (1884), Bendigo (1887), Castlemaine (1913), Geelong (1896) and Warrnambool (1886) that began as incorporated associations. Funding assistance from the state government fuelled this extraordinary new growth of public art galleries in the 1960s and early 1970s, but it also reflected the enthusiastic encouragement by local pressure groups.

Enthusiastic local residents often lobbied local councils, providing an additional impetus. In the case of Benalla, the council held a referendum in 1967 that showed overwhelming support for a gallery to be established. Within four years of a gallery being opened in temporary quarters (in 1968) Mr Laurie Ledger, a local stock and station agent, offered his fine collection of paintings and a substantial gift of money on condition a new building was erected by the lake in the botanic gardens. The Benalla Council accepted. [1]



A view of the Benalla Art Gallery from across the river.

The Hamilton City Council proceeded more cautiously. The acceptance of a 1957 bequest by Herbert Shaw of £6000 to build a gallery and the offer of a significant collection was kept confidential for nearly a year before its announcement. [2] By 1961 a director had been appointed and the gallery opened. Other new galleries were opened in Mildura (1956), Sale (1964), Swan Hill (1964), Horsham (1968), Ararat (1968), Mornington (1969), Langwarrin (1971), and Morwell (1971).

Other gains for regional galleries included the allocation of a small budget at the NGV to use for restoration of artworks from regional gallery collections. By the 1970s the VPGG/RGAV had also established a central role in arranging touring exhibitions from a number of sources, including the state gallery, with each regional gallery paying a share of expenses.

The arts in Australia have always required government subsidies; here was an opportunity for the state government to assist in making art available to communities across the whole state, rather than just in Melbourne. There was enormous local pride and generosity, but little could have been achieved without a share of state revenue.

The issue of professional staff was partly addressed in the late 1940s when a chair in Fine Arts, the first in Australia, was established at The University of Melbourne. By the mid-1950s public galleries had the option of appointing graduates to professional positions. It was not until 1979 that a graduate diploma in Museum Studies was offered, initially at the Prahran College of Advanced Education and then, with the formation of Victoria College, the course moved out to the Rusden campus of the college (Victoria College has since been taken over by Deakin University). The course concentrated on the skills required for managing a public art gallery, registration and handling of artworks, curating exhibitions, marketing and fundraising, and working with committees. This course was immediately popular, and in its early years attracted around 25 students annually. [3] In the meantime gallery directors often lacked adequate preparation for their demanding roles, in spite of having access to speakers at workshops and meetings of colleagues. Museum leadership was an emerging profession in Australia; perhaps nowhere more than in regional galleries were directors so isolated from other arts professionals.

The growth of arts bureaucracies

In the 1970s and 1980s the Australian government gave significant support to public galleries, artists and art audiences. They were exciting times. The Australia Council had its first full year of operation in 1973. Throughout the 1970s its Visual Arts Board (VAB) developed programs of great benefit to small public galleries. These included assistance to exhibit contemporary art, to develop exhibition programs, and to conserve artworks. The Australian contemporary art acquisition program subsidised the purchase of contemporary art by regional and state galleries. There were lecture tours and professional development grants for gallery staff. Directors from regional galleries

were invited to serve on funding panels as peer group assessment was basic to the VAB approach. In the 1970s the director was usually the only art professional on a regional gallery staff, and the VAB programs gave an opportunity to network and consult.

The mood of the times in the 1970s was so supportive and progressive that if the VAB was approached with a stated need and a reasoned argument, a grant would often be possible. Towards the end of the decade criteria were developed and tightened. Exhibitions had to be innovative, and written reports became a condition of grants. For the most generous of all programs, the Australian Contemporary Art Acquisition Program, the applying institution had to guarantee public access, regular display, acceptable storage conditions and proper security arrangements. The works also had to be selected by trained curators and acquired directly from the artist or their agent. These conditions encouraged the establishment of galleries with good facilities and professional staff.

In 1978 the VAB launched a new initiative to assist geographically and culturally remote communities in Australia, the Regional Development Program. Under this program the VAB organised and toured small exhibitions of contemporary art to remote communities, particularly in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, 'for these states, unlike Victoria, have not yet developed a network of cooperative regional art museums'. [4]

Having pioneered these exhibition tours, the VAB hoped that another agency would take on this task, with VAB funding and support. The Australian Gallery Directors Council (AGDC), a not-for-profit company which also accepted regional gallery directors as full members from 1977, took on this role. It enabled exhibitions with well-researched catalogues to be initiated and toured, thus providing unsurpassable professional development experiences for staff in regional galleries. The networking opportunities at its conferences strengthened galleries throughout Australia. Its base funding was through the VAB, but it also attracted major sponsors, because of the involvement of state and national galleries, enabling the presentation of blockbuster exhibitions that excited galleries and their publics. The AGDC became insolvent in 1981, following a couple of large, expensive exhibitions that failed. Its successor did not open its doors to regional gallery representation, possibly in part because there were now so many regional galleries, with varying standards of facilities and staffing. Unfortunately the sheer number of galleries perhaps eclipsed the possibility of the larger, long-established galleries contributing to and benefiting from a national touring program.

The growth of Victorian regional galleries between 1956 and 1971 was unique in Australia, but from the 1970s regional galleries also began to spread throughout Australia, particularly in New South Wales and coastal Queensland. In 1971 there were 29 regional galleries nationwide, 16 of which were in Victoria. By 1995 there were at least 52 regional galleries: 18 in Victoria, 18 in New South Wales and six in Queensland and a further 10 in the other three states.

The number of public galleries had expanded so greatly by the mid-1980s that competition for VAB grants was fierce, with a rigorous assessment process put in place to ensure that available assistance was applied as widely as possible.

Victoria, with its extensive network of public galleries, established a Ministry for the Arts (later Arts Victoria), with its first full year of operation in 1974. By 1976 the RGAV had incorporated, listing its 16 member galleries. The funding formula and the process of approval had possibly been far more successful in encouraging the growth of new galleries than the state had expected, and from this date no new galleries were accepted into the funded network of regional galleries until 2006 as part of the new Arts Victoria Local Partnership Program. Pressure was growing from new metropolitan and university galleries, and from regional performing arts centres, for similar programs of assistance. The expectations placed on regional galleries were daunting, considering their funding and staffing restraints. Salaries in Victorian regional galleries (average \$11,000) were considerably lower than in NSW (average \$16,000). [5] It is not surprising then that the main issues from the galleries' viewpoint concerned salary levels for professional staff and the need for more specialised staff in the larger galleries, as well as conservation and security.

In response to claims for more funding, Arts Victoria focused on attendance figures and service to a region rather than just a town or city, arguing that if a region was served, then funding could be sought from the councils of the wider region. [6] Also, new galleries were encouraged to limit their collecting to specialist areas. Horsham chose photography, Ararat textiles, Latrobe contemporary glassware and Swan Hill naive art.

Other gains were made: part-time seconded education officers were appointed to some galleries,

specifically to serve schools, [7] provision was made for reviews of salaries and the establishment of a base grant formula assisted galleries with their administration and planning. An acquisition fund for regional galleries – the Caltex-Victoria Art Purchase Fund – was begun, with the state matching donations from the corporate sponsor. The most important gain was the opening in Ballarat in 1979 of a conservation centre to serve regional galleries – the Conservation Centre of the Regional Galleries Association of Victoria. It followed a provocative and highly publicised exhibition at the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery in 1976, *Attention your collection is rotting*. The centre's first annual report noted that the combined collections of the 16 regional galleries 'include one of the largest and perhaps most comprehensive collections of Australian art, valuable English watercolours, sizable holdings of nineteenth-century European and English pictures, medieval manuscripts and a considerable collection of decorative arts'. [8]

The conservation centre was never funded to adequately serve the regional gallery sector, and even with subsidised fees the costs were too great for many galleries to make extensive use of the centre. It was briefly reformed in 1986 at Laverton as the Victorian Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Material (VCCCM), but closed in the 1990s. It was easier and less costly, especially through grants, to use trained conservators working privately.

In the meantime, many philanthropic foundations had come to the assistance of regional galleries. The Ian Potter Foundation provided informed, professional help in the purchase of equipment for mounting and storage of works on paper, for acquiring sets of standard size frames, fitted crates, and assistance in the installation of security systems. But the needs of regional galleries continued to outstrip available government resources. Some gains in the 1980s included the establishment of a classification of galleries according to their collections and facilities. This included recommended salary levels for professional staff, important at a time when galleries were beginning to employ specialised staff.

Centralised advice and services were established, leading, amongst other achievements, to the cataloguing of 13 regional collections using the Commonwealth Employment Program to fund positions and a centrally employed registrar to train and supervise the program. [9] A state government insurance indemnification scheme was begun for major exhibitions. The Australia Council and Arts Victoria set up National Exhibitions Touring Support (NETS) Victoria in 1988, a jointly funded body to fund touring exhibitions of contemporary visual arts, craft and design, including exhibitions drawn from the collection of the NGV. Similar bodies were established in each state, all members of National Exhibitions Touring Support (NETS) Australia, relieving the Australia Council of managing its own exhibition funding program. Both the Australia Council and Arts Victoria moved towards assisting arts institutions through specialised grants, advice and services. This allowed the growing number of small galleries, without the blessing of recurrent grants, to have some access to state government funding. Some Arts Victoria program funding was aligned with other current government initiatives, for example multiculturalism or youth outreach.

The Ballarat Fine Art Gallery celebrated its centenary in 1984 by launching a public building appeal. Its collection was now around 6000 items and improved storage space was badly needed, as were more display areas. The gallery doubled its size and included climate control, security systems, and excellent visitor facilities. Newcastle Region Art Gallery (NSW) was the only other regional gallery that had such state-of-the-art facilities, after its new building opened in 1977. Some state galleries were less well equipped.

By 1995 the RGAV resolved to expand its institutional membership and became the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV), a peak body for all Victorian public galleries. The PGAV saw its role primarily as facilitating networking. It developed an intern program for staff from smaller galleries to spend a week at the NGV and for staff from the NGV to spend some days at regional galleries; and in conjunction with arts bodies such as Museums Australia it initiated professional training programs. In 2008 the Association had 44 members. In the mid-1970s there were not even 40 public galleries nationally. In the late 1990s the state-administered Federation Fund provided major funding to all 16 of Victoria's regional galleries, enabling a significant improvement in facilities and services across the whole network. The larger galleries – Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong – with their important collections, benefited greatly, gaining attractive buildings and excellent facilities.



Contemporary gallery, Ballarat, Victoria.

In the early 2000s the arts sector changed even further. Arts Victoria no longer dealt directly with arts professionals. Instead, it began to negotiate memoranda of understanding with local councils. In the new Local Partnership Program [10] the total government grant a gallery might receive depended on the level of funding from its local council, as well as program responses to priority areas. With most regional galleries owned and managed by local councils, this approach held the promise of maximising both local and state government contributions. The relationship between the gallery and its local council became crucial, although not all local councils are supportive of the arts. Innovative, outreach and community and local artist involvement became important words for gaining funding.

The specialisation of the collections of the 1970s has given way to new orientations towards the region and the community. The concept of regional galleries has been diluted, and 'outer metropolitan' is a new term that is often associated loosely with regional. Funding from sources other than governments has become more difficult, as philanthropic funds concentrate on areas other than galleries, with the exception of the very generous Gordon Darling Foundation. Corporate sponsorship in regions far from capital city head offices has never been large, unless negotiated by state or federal agencies.

In the 2000s, the National Gallery of Australia emerged as the new champion of regional galleries through its touring of major exhibitions and a willingness to discuss joint ventures. It is probably no coincidence that its director, Ron Radford, was once a regional gallery director.

The federal government established a new program in 1993, Visions of Australia, to provide funding to eligible organisations to develop and tour exhibitions of Australian cultural material across Australia, in particular to regional and remote areas. This partially filled the gap left by the exclusion of regional galleries from involvement in AGDC's successor following its demise in 1981. It also opened up new possibilities as the program encouraged partnerships between collecting organisations – archives, galleries, libraries and museums – and encouraged community involvement.

Increased community interest in art, stimulated in part by the growth in well-marketed major exhibitions, contributed to a climate that made the arts a legitimate area for government support. New state and federal government assistance programs, as well as targeted grants from philanthropic funds, encouraged the growth of public galleries and also promoted the development of professional standards.

Arts Victoria claimed in 2008 that it was the only state government agency to offer operating

funding to selected regional galleries. [11] It announced in November 2005 that it would focus on bringing regional facilities and programs up to metropolitan standards, spending \$28 million over four years. [12] Both federal and state government funding has gradually become a more 'arm's-length' affair, with grants, advice and services offered through government-funded agencies, or in the case of Victorian regional galleries, through their local government. The initial growth of regional galleries in Victoria can be traced to determined and passionate individuals who inspired their communities and achieved government support.

Footnotes

¹ John Jones, *COLLECTION, The Benalla Art Gallery*, Benalla Art Gallery, 2002, p. 9.

² Danny McOwan, Director, Hamilton Art Gallery, emails to author 18 and 19 May 2008.

³ Roger Trudgeon, Senior Lecturer and Course Co-ordinator, Museum Studies, Deakin University from 1988 to 1994, email to author 21 May 2008.

⁴ Elwyn Lynn, Chairman VAB, Foreword in exhibition catalogue *Roadshow 1: 1978*.

⁵ Summary of Proceedings, RGAV Half Yearly Forum at Sale, 17 November 1979. Dr Eric Westbrook, then Director of Arts Victoria, was the keynote speaker.

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ In a 1965 pilot scheme at the Geelong Art Gallery the education officer had been a quasi-gallery director.

⁸ 'First Annual Report: The History of the Setting up of the Conservation Centre of the Regional Galleries Association of Victoria', October 1977, p. 1.

⁹ Joe Pascoe, Director of Craft Victoria and previously Arts Victoria registrar, telephone conversation, May 2008.

¹⁰ *Local Partnerships Program in Moving Forward: making provincial Victoria the best place to live, work and invest*, Arts Victoria, November 2005.

¹¹ Elizabeth Jones, Senior Arts Officer, Arts Victoria, telephone conversation, May 2008.

¹² *Local Partnerships Program in Moving Forward*.

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Understanding Museums - Regional museums

Let a thousand flowers bloom: museums in regional Australia

by Kylie Winkworth

The idea of the museum inspires Australians. Since the end of the Second World War, Australia has experienced an extraordinary flowering of museums and the accumulation of collections in nearly every rural town and village, in regional cities and many suburbs. From the more than 1000 local and provincial museums estimated by the Pigott Report in 1975, current numbers are probably more than 3000. [1] This is the most remarkable and sustained grass roots movement ever seen in Australia. While organisations such as the Country Women's Association (CWA), the Red Cross, Scouts and more recent movements such Landcare also have a presence in more than a thousand towns and villages across Australia, these are mainly local branches of a parent organisation, sharing core objectives and a governance structure.

In contrast, the development of community museums [2] is a truly local initiative, forged by local enterprise, mad ambition, shared enthusiasm and millions of hours of volunteer work. Most of the museums in regional Australia were created with little or no government funding and that is how they continue to operate. The animating ideas behind these museums include preserving heritage places, researching local history, interpreting a way of life or industry, educating young people, demonstrating traditional skills, attracting tourists, creating a cultural facility for the community and collecting artefacts, archives and images as an enduring legacy for the future. They may be inspired by museums seen elsewhere in Australia or overseas, but the impetus and vision is driven by community passion and a sense of place. Unlike other environmental and community organisations, there is no head office-sponsored template for museums in rural and regional Australia. Affiliation with state and national organisations generally comes after the local campaign to create the museum. And where there might be one CWA or Landcare branch in a community, and one library, many towns and villages have multiple museums. [3]

There have been huge changes in museums since Pigott's Report, but the core idea of a museum still inspires communities. Every state and national celebration is marked by the opening of new museums. The continuing growth of museums underlines the potency of the museum idea for regional communities. Pigott said they were the 'bay window of local pride, especially when a town or district is declining in population'. [4] But if it was only about showing off there are many easier ways to make a display, like signing up for Tidy Towns.

Museum-making in regional Australia is based on a deep attachment to place and it is an expression of community self-belief. It is not just about celebrating the achievements of the past, but believing in the future, even or most particularly where the museum is based on a dying industry or way of life. Making a museum represents a collective commitment to a community in the present and for the future. It takes fundraising, advocacy, teamwork and the gift of family treasures and collections. Long before tax deductions, the Cultural Gifts program and opaque philanthropic trusts, museums in regional Australia were built through true philanthropy. People bought historic properties, took on personal loans and raised funds to restore or build museums. This work creates networks of affinity, trust and obligation between the museum, families, friends and service clubs, among others. In most cases these networks help sustain the museum over many decades, and sometimes across generations.

The result of so much work and local enterprise is the development of what are now important social institutions in their communities. The collections assembled over the last 50 years are significant historical and cultural assets. But the volunteer-managed museum movement is not recognised for its contribution to communities or its work in caring for the history and heritage of the district. While Landcare attracted some \$500 million in funding between 1995 and 2000, [5] just a few years after its branding, there is little funding support for the museums and volunteers caring for heritage collections in regional Australia. Coupled with the continued growth in the numbers of museums, this is creating sustainability challenges for museum custodians and communities.

The history and heritage of each state and territory is exhibited in the types and content of their museums. In South Australia place-based museums auspiced by the National Trust were a

dominant model. [6] Queensland favoured museums of moved buildings organised as pioneer villages, partly due to its heritage of timber buildings, which were traditionally relocated following mining booms and busts. Museums in regional NSW are predominantly historical society museums, generally in heritage buildings. Patterns of museum development reflect the influence of mentors and advocates. They visited museums in the region, reported on museums seen overseas and advised local committees. The lecturer Eric Dunlop was an influential proponent of the folk museum movement in NSW in the 1960s. [7] The legacy of his advice can still be seen in period room displays in many historical societies, influenced by his booklet about setting up local history museums. [8] Victoria's regional museums are richly endowed with collections from the second half of the nineteenth century, evidencing the wealth in these communities drawn from goldmining and the pastoral industry.

Pigott's chapter on 'local and provincial' museums discusses four main types of museums, 'provincial and suburban art galleries ... the string of small local institutions which provide ninety per cent of the self-styled museums, the large 'living history' or open-air folk museums, and ... privately owned museums'. [9] On the ground there is considerable crossover between museum types in regional Australia. Many local history museums also have moved buildings and were framed around demonstrating rural skills and technology, just like the open-air museums. The blacksmith's workshop is nearly ubiquitous in local history museums and pioneer villages, but is unfortunately rarely seen in action these days. In some former mining centres almost the whole town is a museum. [10]

Since the *Museums in Australia* report museum types have become more diverse and mutable. Museums in regional Australia include place-based museums, such as historic house museums, heritage sites and heritage centres; [11] halls of fame and theme museums on subjects including stockmen, mining, shearing, fishing, maritime, migrant communities, notable locals (think Don Bradman in Bowral or Slim Dusty in Kempsey), and even women; as well as railway, aviation and military museums; regional botanic gardens with collections; and keeping places and Indigenous heritage centres. Some state government museums still operate branch museums in regional cities. The Queensland Museum manages the Cobb and Co. Museum in Toowoomba, the Workshops Rail Museum in Ipswich and the Museum of Tropical Queensland in Townsville. The Western Australian Museum has branch museums in Albany, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie. However the majority of museums in regional Australia are volunteer-managed community museums, mainly heritage places or history museums. A smaller group of museums is managed by local government with paid professional staff; these are mostly regional galleries.

In addition to regional galleries new types of regional arts facilities are emerging, such as contemporary art spaces. Some, like Artspace in Mackay, also include historical displays. A number of Indigenous cultural centres have significant collections, such as Jilamara Arts and Crafts on Melville Island and Tjulyuru Cultural Centre in remote Warburton WA. There are galleries based in heritage places once owned by notable artists, such as Penrith Regional Gallery and the Lewers Bequest in the former home of Gerald and Margo Lewers; and Bundanon, based around Arthur Boyd's home on the Shoalhaven in NSW. While there are a number of museums in regional Australia that style themselves as national museums, Bundanon Trust is the only museum in regional Australia to receive recurrent funding from the Australian government. Privately owned galleries operated by philanthropic trusts are a new addition to the cultural landscape, such as TarraWarra near Healesville in Victoria.

Convergence is also creating new hybrid museums, including co-located or combined museums, libraries and galleries. The City of Wanneroo just north of Perth has opened a combined library, museum and cultural centre in a purpose-built facility. The regional museum includes a community access exhibition space, an active schools program and a community history centre. A notable feature of some of the newer developments is an ABM name (anything but a museum), such as Crossing Place in Albury or Dogwood Crossing@Miles in Queensland. Converged museums are not in fact a new development but a rediscovery of an older museum form where natural history, historical collections and works of art were part of a single museum. Perhaps the best example of this type is the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston, established in 1891, the largest regional museum in Australia. Interestingly, redevelopment now underway will separate the art gallery on the original Royal Park site from the historical and natural history collections on display at the Inveresk site.

The living history or open-air museums have not fared well since Pigott, with the notable exception of Sovereign Hill at Ballarat. Two other examples discussed in the report have closed – Old Sydney

Town and the Lachlan Vintage Village at Forbes. Other open-air museums are struggling. Sovereign Hill marked its 40th anniversary in 2010 and is admired for its focus on visitors and education. There are many reasons for the enduring success of Sovereign Hill when so many other museums of this type are in decline. Some of the critical success factors include a compelling story about the impact of the gold rush on Ballarat, a commitment to education, research and historical accuracy, [12] the use of new technology to create memorable visitor experiences, excellent leadership, paid professional staff and committed volunteers, and significant government grants to develop new facilities and renew the interpretation. Then there are the visitors – about 450,000 per year – making Sovereign Hill by far the most popular museum in regional Australia. It helps that Ballarat is an hour away from Melbourne, a city of four million people. And the region is a museum hot spot with a critical mass of other museums and attractions. Also in Ballarat is the Eureka Centre, opened in 1998 adjacent to the site of the rebellion. It is currently developing an Australian Centre for Democracy@Eureka with \$11 million in funding from the Australian government and state and local governments.

Regional galleries are thriving in larger regional cities. Positioned as part of local council cultural services, they are supported in some states by regional arts councils and savvy friends who are well-connected members of the elite in their community. Regional gallery organisations are influential mentors, providing advice about development, design and funding. Inter-council envy or emulation helps drive new gallery proposals. Local government funding is supplemented by grants from state arts departments and occasionally the Australia Council. Fundraising by the local arts society demonstrates community support. Many regional galleries are in purpose-built buildings or have contemporary extensions providing good facilities for collections, exhibitions and visitors. A notable feature of the regional gallery movement is management and funding by local government with paid professional staff. Volunteers are still an important part of their operations, but most regional galleries make a seamless transition from initial advocacy by local arts societies to a new building developed by the council with staff to manage programs of travelling exhibitions.

While local government has accepted libraries and even galleries as an integral part of its cultural services, it is less common for councils to manage historical museums. Many councils support their local museums with occasional grants, waiving rates, paying power bills and maintaining buildings, but there are relatively few historical museums that are the equivalent of regional galleries in staffing, funding, programs or buildings. It is difficult for local history museums to make the transition from a volunteer-managed operation to one funded and managed by local government with paid professional staff, particularly when the museum has been running for 40 or 50 years. [13] It may be that volunteer-managed museums are victims of their own self reliance, funding their operations by admission charges, running markets and stalls, selling crafts, jam, books and research services, offering heritage tours and getting help from service clubs to throw up a new shed. In some tourism areas on the coast a few historical museums are able to pay staff out of earned income.

Reviewing the past decade of museum development, it is evident that Australians far prefer to open new museums than fix the ones they already have. The Centenary of Federation in 2001 saw the opening of many new museums in communities that already had one or more museum crying out for investment and renewal. Australia's passion for museum making, rather than museum fixing, is leading to unsustainable numbers of museums and the neglect of collections held in thousands of museums all over the country. In the UK there is about one museum for every 24,000 persons. The US has about one museum for every 17,500 people. Australia has about one museum for every 7458 persons. [14]

Given these figures, it is not surprising that the human and financial resources to sustain the legacy of the last 60 years of collecting in regional Australia are not keeping pace with decaying buildings and collections, aging volunteers, rising standards and the expectations of visitors. More importantly perhaps, the skills base for museum operations has shifted dramatically. In the 1960s and 1970s volunteer museums were essentially a hands-on operation, with an emphasis on manual skills – renovating buildings, constructing exhibits, moving large objects and buildings, restoring (or wrecking) the collection, and showcasing traditional rural skills. In general the book work of museum practice took a back seat, if it happened at all; hence the legacy of poorly documented and provenanced collections. In many ways these museums were an early manifestation of the community men's shed movement. Museum management now requires a completely different skills set, one which is not so readily found in small communities, and which in many ways is less rewarding for the available volunteers, who may have left school at 15. We do not expect volunteer librarians to catalogue books, which are in any case of low intrinsic value, but we still expect

volunteers in their 70s and 80s to catalogue irreplaceable heritage collections and meet ever more onerous museum standards. That so many volunteers manage to do this is extraordinary.

The sustainability crisis facing museums in regional Australia is exacerbated by a lack of policy and equitable funding structures for museums and heritage collections. Unlike the US and UK, which have well-resourced agencies to support collections in local and regional museums with significant grants, [15] our nearest equivalent, the Collections Council of Australia, was defunded in 2009. The Cultural Ministers Council (CMC), which made this decision, has overseen a succession of abandoned advisory bodies and lost policy opportunities for collections. [16] Despite its title, CMC has little interest in culture in regional Australia, apart from Indigenous culture. Its main focus is the arts in capital cities. In the last 10 years CMC commissioned the Nugent, Strong and Myer reports, which delivered tens of millions of dollars in recurrent funding for major performing arts organisations, orchestras and visual arts and crafts. CMC's commissioned report on collections, the *Key Needs Study*, had no funding outcome for collections. [17] The main outcome was the creation of the Collections Council of Australia in 2004, with grandiose terms of reference relative to its modest budget. [18]

Funding for the Collections Australia Network (CAN), another CMC program, was also discontinued in 2010. [19] CAN is the main online gateway to regional collections and museums, and it offers useful resources for volunteers working with collections. A consultant's report on future directions for CAN was never released. At a time when the Australian government is putting billions of dollars into the National Broadband Network, it is surprising that the main portal for discovering regional collections is now on ice. The digital divide between state and national museums and regional collections is set to widen with this decision.

CMC's primary interest in the professional arts is mirrored in state government arts departments, whose policy and funding priorities are focused on professional contemporary arts practice. Volunteer-managed museums struggle to fit arts policy and funding boxes. Their work and collections are not respected in funding allocations. Over the last 10 years governments have lavished funding on new theme museums without collections, or with collections of low significance. New art spaces and regional galleries are well supported by government funding, although many collections are dominated by artists already represented in other galleries. However there is no policy or funding impetus to uplift community museums which hold unique and irreplaceable collections about the history and heritage of their district. Many of the historical museums developed in the 1950s and 1960s have objects and collections of national significance.

Museums and heritage collections are stranded between arts and heritage policy with little access to the kinds of funds available to the arts. [20] Arts Queensland for example has targeted grant programs for regional gallery development and exhibitions, but no funding program to foster local government investment in museums or assist community museums to make the transition to a regional museum. Various reports on museums commissioned by state government arts departments have done nothing to lift museums and heritage collections in regional areas out of cultural poverty. [21] One possible exception is Victoria's *Strengthening our Communities* strategy, with \$20 million in funding over four years. [22] However community collections are only one strand in an ambitious strategy. It is not clear if it will result in realistic investment in museum buildings and collections, as opposed to more advice.

Instead of policy and strategic development funds, most state governments support advisory services for museums in the regions. Some are managed out of state government museums; others are run through professional associations or by museum and gallery support agencies. After decades of funding of advisory services, there is no evidence that advice leads to more sustainable collections or the renewal of museums in regional Australia. In some ways it is little more than palliative care for dying museums and aging volunteers. Accreditation and standards programs are the current focus of the museum services industry. In other areas of community service, an emphasis on standards and accreditation in the 1990s led to a new compact between community organisations, volunteers and governments, with investment in new facilities and government funding to professionalise services such as Meals on Wheels and surf lifesaving. [23] But there is no equivalent compact for volunteer-managed museums; the responsibilities are all one way. [24] Standards have not led to corresponding pressure on governments to fix decrepit museum buildings and fund professional staff to work on collections with volunteers.

While volunteers working on Landcare projects have been showered with resources and professional support, there has been little recognition of the work of volunteers involved in

collections care. There is no common branding for the plethora of regional and community museums and heritage places. Museums in regional Australia have not had the leadership and strategic advocacy which launched Landcare. When it comes to advocacy for rural and regional museums, museum service organisations generally ask first for more funds for advisory services. Most of the work of museum volunteers is done out of the public eye. Their steady work on archives and collections doesn't leave a statement in the landscape like a row of poisoned willows. Yet volunteers in museums in regional Australia make a remarkable contribution to their communities. [25]

A look at the Manning Valley Historical Society provides a snapshot of the work of museum volunteers in Wingham, (population 4500) on the mid-north coast of NSW. The Society began in 1964 and the museum, which is open seven days a week, is in an historic shop purchased in 1974. It is the oldest commercial building in Wingham. The vernacular timber building would probably not have survived without the Society's acquisition and restoration. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays there may be up to 20 volunteers at work on the collections, archives and building. Recent work in a three-month period includes researching the significance of the collection, reorganising the collection working space, documenting costumes for nomination to the Powerhouse Museum's Australian Dress Register, updating the catalogue database, hosting school visits, digitising photographs, indexing local newspapers, contributing a regular history feature to the *Wingham Chronicle* and answering research enquiries. The Society's archives are the most important local studies collection in the district and are used for all kinds of heritage studies and local history queries. In addition, the Society published its journal, which is issued three times a year, a newsletter and a new book, *Postcards from the Front*, in time for Anzac Day. Working with the tourism information centre, volunteers supplied copies of historic photographs and captions for interpretive signs. And they initiated a project to put historic photos of buildings and businesses in shop windows in Wingham. Museum volunteers were involved in fundraising for the Cancer Council, participating in the Biggest Morning Tea event. And volunteers helped organise the Scottish Festival, a three-day event initiated by the Historical Society. It is now a fixture on the tourism calendar of Wingham. Apart from economic development, tourism services and managing cultural assets, volunteer museums like the Manning Valley Historical Society generate other benefits for their communities, such as workplace training for the unemployed and social inclusion for older people and people with disabilities. A widow confided that the museum was her lifeline in coping with grief and loneliness after her husband's death.

Considering the large number of museums and their range of work and services, it is arguable that more volunteer hours are worked in community museums in regional Australia than in any other charitable or community service. [26] Many of these museums are open six or seven days a week. This shows great dedication by volunteers, considering that many museum buildings are freezing in winter and stifling in summer. Some have no collection working space or kitchen facilities to make a cup of tea, or even toilets. Many museum buildings do not meet local government building codes. Most historical collections in regional Australia are housed in heritage buildings and sheds that fall well short of acceptable standards for collections or people. Rabbit warrens of small rooms in heritage buildings put the collections at risk. Some museums are in former government buildings like courthouses, jails and railway stations which have been foisted on local communities without funding for maintenance or adaptation. The lack of investment in buildings, exhibitions and people means that communities are not realising the educational and cultural potential inherent in the collections. Nor is the asset value of the collections being protected.

Without understanding this background, it is easy to disparage the shortcomings of historical museums in regional Australia. It is true that some volunteer-managed museums prefer keeping to sharing, that some are resistant to new ideas, wary of outsiders and have barely changed their displays since they opened 30 or 40 years ago. Too many museums in regional Australia look like antique shops without the prices. In the jumble of obsolete technology it can be hard to see the unique objects, local innovations and national treasures. They are criticised for their focus on pioneers, lack of interest in migrants – not true, and for insensitive exhibits about Aboriginal people. But there is too little recognition of the value of local history museums, the significance of their collections and the services provided by thousands of museum volunteers across Australia.

There are ready solutions for the challenges facing volunteer-managed historical museums. Pigott had the right idea, recommending regional networks with professional curators, and an Australian Museums Commission to coordinate funding and policy. Variations on this formula have been restated in other papers and policy proposals and it has been tried and tested overseas. [27]

So what is the case for sustaining museums in regional and rural Australia? It is a fact that regional communities are taxed three times for cultural facilities. They fund state and Australian government collecting organisations through their taxes, and are taxed again for cultural facilities through local government rates. If the funding disparity for museums was reflected in education or health it would cause an outcry. Years of cost shifting onto local government makes it harder for councils to develop cultural facilities. Of course state and national collections are important for all Australians. But fairness, economic development and liveable communities mean there should be equitable funding for regional towns and cities to support museums about their history, culture and place. Collections should merit investment based on their significance, not accidents of geography. People should not have to live in Ballarat or marginal seats to get funding for museum development and renewal. Nor should funding for museums and cultural facilities in regional Australia be based on trickle-down economics, with volunteer-managed collections at the bottom of the heap. What's required is a tripartite partnership between the Australian government, the states and local government.

When public culture is already dominated by city-centric media, images and opinion, it is all the more important that diversity is fostered in museum culture and collections. Regional collections hold unique objects, images, ideas and histories. There are many aspects of Australian history that are not well represented in state and national collections, or in mainstream libraries and archives. Collections about mining, transport and agriculture are best understood in their regional context, connected with the place where the work was done and the objects were used. These are vital industries that powered Australia, transformed the environment and underpinned the prosperity of Australian cities. They merit professional curation and interpretation.

The history of frontier conflict and cooperation between Indigenous people and explorers and settlers is hidden in small museums all over the country. In the Cairns Historical Society 400 glass plate negatives taken by Alfred Atkinson include stunning images of Indigenous people in the district. Important histories of migration and settlement are intimately connected with specific geographies in every corner of Australia. Broome, for example, was excised from the reach of the White Australia Act to keep the pearling industry going. In 1900 it was an extraordinary cultural melting pot. This is one of the stories in the collection of the Broome Historical Society. In far north Queensland, museum collections illuminate the contribution and culture of Chinese migrants who flocked to the Palmer River goldfields. And in southern NSW the experience of ordinary rural working women is captured in the humble objects they made and used in daily life. Visionary collecting by the Pioneer Women's Hut at Tumbarumba has given these women and their stories a place in history.

Every region in the country, in its environmental and cultural diversity, is an important part of the mosaic that makes the nation. Australia's remarkable history, people and cultures are documented in the distributed national collection held in museums across the country. The collections are a credit to the enterprise and foresight of thousands of volunteers, and the generosity of Australian families. Building these collections was an expression of trust and optimism in the future of their communities. They recognised their place in a larger national picture. It's an open question whether museum policy makers will do the same and secure the future of these museums.

Footnotes

¹ There are no accurate statistics about the numbers of museums in Australia, let alone regional Australia. Most forms of museum census rely on responses to surveys that may not generate an accurate response rate from small organisations. In Western Australia in 2004, a survey of 250 collecting organisations elicited 143 responses. The Collections Council of Australia (CCA) began to document numbers of collecting organisations before it was defunded, including museums, galleries, libraries and archives. Its unpublished Australian Collecting Organisations Register includes approximately 5000 collecting organisations. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey just 1329 museums, of which 12 per cent are art galleries and the remaining 88 per cent are classified as 'other museums'. Its methodology excludes the vast majority of volunteer-managed museums. Arts Victoria lists 740 community museums and 18 regional galleries. Museums and Gallery Services Queensland identifies 408 heritage places including museums, galleries and keeping places. Museums and Galleries NSW identifies 586 museums, keeping places and galleries in NSW, not counting state and national institutions. Most of these statistics underestimate museum numbers, as many surveys do not count heritage place museums, many of which have significant *in situ* collections.

² The term 'community museum' refers to volunteer-managed museums such as historical societies, while a regional museum is generally managed by local government with paid trained museum staff, supported by volunteers.

³ The small town of Hay in south-western NSW, with less than 3000 people, has five museums. Goulburn in NSW has five museums including the regional gallery managed by council, an historical society and the National Trust house museum of Riversdale. Probably only one of these is counted by the ABS. Goulburn's museum mix of historical society, house museum, heritage places and a newer regional gallery with paid professional staff is representative of the museum profile of many older regional towns.

⁴ PH Pigott, *Museums in Australia 1975, Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections including the Report of the Planning Committee on the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia*, AGPS, 1975, p. 24.

⁵ Quoted in Melanie Oppenheimer, *Volunteering, why we can't survive without it*, University of NSW Press, 2008, p. 177.

⁶ By 1990 the South Australian National Trust managed 61 museums and 97 historic buildings. Carol Cosgrove and Susan Marsden, *Challenging Times, National Trust of South Australia 50th Year History*, National Trust of South Australia, p. 132.

⁷ Nicole McLennan, 'Eric Dunlop and the origins of Australia's folk museums', *Recollections*, Vol. 1, No.2.

⁸ EW Dunlop, *Local Historical Museums in Australia*, The Royal Australian Historical Society, 1968. McLennan notes this booklet was sent free of charge to all affiliates with the RAHS and that the Society also earned \$405 from sales in the first two years after its publication, suggesting a high demand for its advice.

⁹ Pigott, *Museums in Australia*, p. 19.

¹⁰ For example Mt Morgan in Queensland, Burra in South Australia, Hill End in NSW.

¹¹ With the crossover between Hope's *Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate* and Pigott's Report on museums underway at the same time, a decision was made to leave heritage place museums to Hope. This led to a disastrous split in policy making and funding for heritage places and collections that continues to the present.

¹² Graeme Davison calls Sovereign Hill a 'pleasure resort rather than a real mining town. It has many shopkeepers but few miners, several entertainers but no prostitutes, a picturesque school-house but no undertaker'. The dirty reality of an 1850s mining site cannot be reproduced in a form suitable for family outings in the twenty-first century, nevertheless Sovereign Hill is based on extensive historical research which animates every facet of its interpretation. Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, Allen and Unwin, 2000, p. 170.

¹³ One example of this transition is the Museum of the Riverina, created through a partnership between the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society and Wagga City Council. The Historical Society transferred its collection and building to Council in return for Council employing professional staff and investing in the collection, exhibitions and building. Showing what can be done with a little investment and professional staff, the Museum won its category in the ABC's 2008 Regional Museum Competition. See <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/museums/2008/award/museums/MuseumRiverina/>

¹⁴ These figures are derived by dividing the population figures by the estimated number of museums. For the UK museum numbers see www.museumsassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions. For the US museum numbers see http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/abc.cfm#how_many. For a comment on the number of Australian collecting organisations see www.collectionscouncil.com.au/Portals/0/The%20Australian%20collections%20sector.pdf. There is no accurate census of museum numbers in Australia. I estimate the number at a conservative 3,000, see note 1. This may be an underestimation. Local and regional surveys show higher numbers of museums than statistics compiled by state agencies. For example, the New South Wales the town of Hay has one museum for every 527 people, while the village of Carcoar in central New South Wales has 1 museum for every 43 people!

¹⁵ The Museum, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in the UK and the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the US develop policy for collections and provide significant grants to local and regional museums. Since the election of a new Conservative UK government, the MLA has been defunded and its responsibilities transferred to the Arts Council. However it seems certain that its well regarded 'Renaissance in the Regions' program, which supports museums and libraries, will be sustained.

¹⁶ For example *Australia's Heritage Collections; National Conservation and Preservation Policy and Strategy*, Cultural Ministers Council and Heritage Collections Council, 1998; sensible policies and strategies which have mainly been ignored. Collections advisory bodies initiated and abandoned by CMC include the Heritage Collections Working Group 1990–93; the Heritage Collections Committee 1994–96; the Heritage Collections Council 1997–2001; and the Collections Council of Australia 2004–2009.

¹⁷ Deakin University, Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific, *A study into the key needs of collecting institutions in the heritage sector*, Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra, 2002.

¹⁸ The budget was around \$400,000 per annum. The writer was a director of the CCA.

¹⁹ The Powerhouse Museum, which managed development of the CAN website, has agreed to keep the site live, but no new material can be added. This is a blow to those museums in regional Australia who were using CAN to share their collections with a wider audience.

²⁰ There is no equivalent to the Australia Council for museums or collections. The Australian government makes a small contribution to regional collections through the Community Heritage Grants (CHG) Program. And its much-criticised stimulus funding is also supporting some community museums in heritage buildings to undertake urgent capital works. Unfortunately this is one-off funding. Apart from the CHG Program, collections are the one aspect of culture that the Australian government does not support through policy or funding, except for items lucky enough to land in Australian government collections.

²¹ See for example, Jane Lennon, *Hidden Heritage, a development plan for museums in Queensland 1995–2001*, Arts Queensland; and Museum Policy Reference Group, *Developing a Way Forward for Western Australia's Heritage Collections and Collectors*, Department of Culture and the Arts, 2005. While these reports make many sound recommendations, they have not led to significant new investment in museum buildings, interpretation and professional staff. In the case of Queensland, *Hidden Heritage* led to the funding of Museum Development Officer positions in some regions, but it has had little practical impact on the funding and renewal of community museums. In the same period a number of new regional galleries were opened with paid professional staff and significant grants from Arts Queensland. In NSW the Carr government funded a strategy to develop a network of regional museums, which in turn were to support volunteer-managed museums and collections in the region – a hub and spoke museum model. This policy was abandoned by the Lemm/Rees/Keneally governments. The dedicated museum grant program was abolished and direct grants to museums have declined by 60 to 80 per cent. Some \$700,000 per annum that was tagged for capital works and salary subsidies for regional museums appears to have been reallocated to other areas of the arts. See also Anne Dunn, *The Dunn Report: A report on the concept of regional collections hubs*, Collections Council of Australia, Adelaide, 2007. This led to a trial regional hub in the Kalgoorlie/Boulder region of WA, running in 2010–11, with funding from the Myer Foundation, but a wider rollout of the CollectionsCare regional hub concept was not supported by the Australian government.

²² See <http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/Heritage-Victoria/Strategy.aspx>

²³ These changes in the relationship between volunteer organisations and government are discussed in Oppenheimer, *Volunteering*, chapter 7, p. 151.

²⁴ In some states, accreditation or completing a standards program makes museums eligible to apply for certain grants, but the funds available are modest.

²⁵ The ABC's Regional Museums Award web pages provide an interesting summary of the many ways that museums are working with their communities. See <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/museums/>

²⁶ While there may be greater numbers of volunteers involved in sporting activities, museum volunteering is often a seven-day-a-week operation over 363 days a year. Active members of volunteer museums commit more hours to their work on a weekly and year-round basis, without the seasonal fluctuations of volunteering in sporting organisations. It is not unusual for museum committee members to put in 30 or 40 hours a week of voluntary work.

²⁷ *Pigott Report*, p. 28; Dunn, *The Dunn Report*; and Kylie Winkworth, 'Fixing the Slums of Australian Museums', Museums Australia Conference, 2005.

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Understanding Museums - Regional museums

Drawing people together: the local and regional museum movement in Australia

by Kimberley Webber, Liz Gillroy, Joanne Hyland, Amanda James, Laura Miles, Deborah Tranter and Kate Walsh

Recent decades have seen a burgeoning of local museums across Australia, reflecting growing community interest. [1] Their funding sources are largely state and local governments and this contributes to distinct differences: Western Australia and Queensland, for example, have well-established regional museum networks overseen by the state museum; in New South Wales support comes from the Museums and Galleries New South Wales, which aims to nurture 'sustainable museums and galleries within their community'. [2] There is also similarity: the majority of local museums are run by volunteers and rely largely on their energy and commitment to survive and grow. Local and state government support is far from reliable. Regional Australia remains under-represented in the major state museums, and these under-resourced and largely volunteer-run institutions are the principal preservers of the tangible heritage of our past, and the accompanying stories.

In considering the significance of the regional museum movement in Australia, it is important to remember that it is comparatively recent. Unlike the United States and the UK, interest in collecting and interpreting material culture in Australia came late. The Royal Australian Historical Society was not founded until 1901, the National Trust not until 1946. Only in the 1980s, with the prospect of the bicentenary of European settlement, did state museums move from a focus primarily on natural history and technology to embrace the new social history. [3]

When Markham and Richards reported on the state of Australia's museums and galleries for the Carnegie Corporation in 1933, they found only three historical 'exhibits': the War Memorial Museum and Parliament House in Canberra and Vaucluse House in Sydney. [4] Forty years later, the Pigott Report argued that since the 1960s a quickening of interest in Australian history had led through a 'grass roots movement' to the founding of hundreds of small museums across Australia. The Report concluded that:

The nature of Australian history and its relatively long democratic tradition suggests that folk museums might eventually occupy a role as important as that occupied by natural history in our museums in the nineteenth century. [5]

But if the authors found much potential in regional museums, they also found common problems: inadequate buildings, the absence of professional staff or advice, poor conservation and documentation and scarce storage. They also considered there was a 'sameness' about the displays.

Over the last 30 years efforts have been made to address these problems. However, important recommendations of the Pigott Report remain unrealised, including the proposal for regional networks supported by professional advisers; the acceptance of material culture as a research tool; and a 'register of rarities'.

Some of the earliest regional museums are found in Western Australia: Joanne Hyland surveys their development and the impact of government initiatives, particularly the availability of funds through Lotterywest. In Queensland, Deborah Tranter explains the significance of the Queensland Museum's regional branches and the effect of a new interest in the state's cultural heritage on community museums. Kate Walsh and Amanda James identify issues common to all states, but also outline the role of the History Trust [6] in providing support and advice. In Victoria, Laura Miles demonstrates the importance of the Museums Association (Victoria) and government departments in supporting the state's regional museums, where today the majority remain volunteer run. Finally, in New South Wales, Liz Gillroy documents the rich variety of community museums in just one region, Port Macquarie, highlighting their challenges and achievements.

Western Australia

At the time of the Pigott Report's release in 1975, the needs of select regional museums (mostly historical societies) in Western Australia were already being addressed through the Western Australian Museum's (WAM) extension service founded in the late 1960s. Later outreach services – the Local Museums Program (1970 to 1994) and the Museum Assistance Program from 1994 – provided advice and support, initially to 18 'recognised' municipal museums, mostly in the south-west quarter of the state, and subsequently around 330 local museums by 2007.

In the mid-1980s the professionalism of the museum sector in WA was boosted by key developments: the Travelling Curator program, the introduction of quality education programs, and a specific purpose grants program funded by the then Lotteries Commission (now Lotterywest).

The establishment of regular funding for museums from the Lottery has had a significant impact on museums, as well as on the professional consultants who provide services. Contractors have been engaged to work on specific tasks including curatorial activities, development of conservation and interpretation plans, and conducting significance assessments. Lotterywest funding also enables community museums to purchase IT hardware and software, including the locally developed Mosaic collection management system. This system, now used throughout the country, also owes much of its success to the work of those in the Mid West Chapter of Museums Australia.

Since 1988 museums in each region of the state have had access to advisory visits by teams of Western Australian Museum staff, with regular regional training workshops. An annual introductory training course began in Perth and operated, in one form or another, for over 20 years, benefiting hundreds of people working in community museums. Until 2006 organisations were invited to nominate participants and to apply for Lotteries Commission grants to fund their attendance. This program has now been replaced by 'smart' delivery via Web and electronic systems.

With a state representing a third of the Australian continent, WA's collections contend with a range of environmental conditions encompassing tropical, arid and temperate zones. This has required great flexibility in planning for housing and conserving collections. Indigenous cultural heritage, often located in savage environmental conditions, has a unique range of requirements.

The period 2007 to 2010 saw reduced funding for services leading to reliance on technology, especially telephone and Internet, to meet client demand. Regional advisory services, field visits and workshops were cut back, however 2011 has seen the reinstatement of funding to support field advisory visits to the regions. Continuing collaboration with Museums Australia (WA) has seen improved communications with clients via surveys that allow tailored education and training programs to be developed.

Change has been incremental and cumulative. The impetus has come from increased funding sources and trained staff. Volunteers have gained a sense of achievement through training and working with their peers. However, museums that are wholly dependent on volunteer staff remain handicapped. While small, independent collecting bodies are entirely dependent on volunteers, problems that have plagued the sector from its earliest beginnings will continue: lack of recurrent funding; difficulty in attracting and keeping workers; lack of access to training and education; isolation; poor storage and display conditions; and limited documentation and scarcity of conservation services. Contemporary pressures create further demands: the need to accommodate digital technologies; the urgency of succession planning for an aging workforce; and increasing competition for scarce services.

The community museum movement in Queensland

Although there were some early museums in regional cities and towns in Queensland,^[7] a community museums movement only emerged with the economic and social changes of the 1970s. As clearing sale signs appeared on more and more farms, there was growing concern that the region's heritage was being irretrievably lost. Community museums were primarily established to save the contents of farm sheds and other objects left behind by retiring property owners. This was also the time of rescuing buildings and relocating them to a museum 'village' complex. The buildings themselves were treated as artefacts, with the added advantage of their being able to house collections.

The first attempt in Queensland to provide state support to community museums was in 1982, when the Board of the Queensland Museum convinced the government to introduce the *Grant Towards Local Museum Activities Scheme*. Although grants were limited, the scheme was popular in regional communities and enabled the Queensland Museum to provide professional guidance in

museum practices.

The Board of the Queensland Museum also established branches or campuses in regional Queensland from the mid 1980s, [8] bringing the state museum for the first time into direct contact with regional communities, museums and local authorities.

Community museums were increasing at the rate of nearly one a month in the early 1990s, [9] and by 1995 there were 175 small museum grants being distributed by the Queensland Museum. [10] The 1990 *Review of the Arts in Queensland* recognised that the contribution of the community museums to the 'cultural milieu in Queensland had been previously overlooked', but acknowledged that through lack of resources 'a significant part of Queensland's culture and history is underutilised, unknown and inaccessible to the majority of Queenslanders'. [11] Despite these concerns, the only outcome was an official decision to review the Queensland Museum and its relationship to the community museum sector. The subsequent report described these museums as 'one of the most dynamic and little recognised resources in the cultural area' of the state. However the then government took no action as a result. [12]

Two years later, Arts Queensland finally intervened, commissioning an assessment of the community museum sector in Queensland, which recommended the formation of the Museum Resource Centre Network (MRCN). [13] This unique partnership, forged between the Queensland Museum, Arts Queensland and local authorities, employs museum development officers (MDOs) to live and work in the regions and provide professional services to hundreds of heritage collecting organisations in regional Queensland.

Escalating interest in cultural heritage activities, generated through the Queensland Heritage Trails Network and the availability of other Centenary of Federation funding sources in 2001, increased demands on the MDO services. In response, a new strategic direction was introduced in 2005, with the commencement of a project to map thematically almost 300 heritage collections across the state, as had been suggested by the Pigott Report 30 years earlier.

As expected, the majority of the more traditional organisations still project a way of life dependent on traditional rural industries. There is much less collection emphasis on living and working in regional towns than on life on rural properties. A great deal of duplication of artefacts exists across collections.

Of greater concern is the fact that little collecting of recent material is taking place. Anyone born after the Second World War will rarely find his or her stories reflected in regional collections. Further, collections reflecting the state's rich cultural diversity are also few and far between although community groups, particularly in the far north of the state, are starting to realise the value of their collections to society as a whole.

There is also some increased collection-based activity by Indigenous groups such as the Cherbourg and Kowanyama Aboriginal communities and the Joskeleigh South Sea Islander community near Rockhampton. These and other groups look towards the Yugambah Museum, Language and Heritage Centre at Beenleigh as an excellent model for preserving and interpreting traditional and contemporary artefacts and photographs supported by oral histories.

Since 2007 museum development officers have been working on significance assessments across the state. Important material has been documented as a result, including the Chinese Temple Collection in Cairns.

Local government amalgamation in March 2008 has benefited many collecting organisations, with new regional councils seeking more coordinated approaches. The Toowoomba Regional Council has supported the development of a Cultural Heritage Network of 27 separate organisations, thereby having a single avenue for communication. Another development post-amalgamation is the move by some larger councils to employ heritage or museum officers to work across a number of their volunteer-run organisations.

In Queensland there is still much to achieve before heritage collections adequately reflect the state's vast natural and cultural diversity. However the partnership forged between the Queensland Museum, Arts Queensland and local councils provides a pathway to ensuring that all Queenslanders will have their stories reflected in collections and preserved for future generations.

Local and regional museums in South Australia

Numbers of museums in South Australia increased rapidly from about 20 in 1960 to 170 by 1990, and 200 in 2008, spurred on in the 1960s and 1970s by the push for heritage preservation, and in the 1980s by the state's sesquicentenary (1986) and Australia's bicentenary (1988). Often buildings saved from demolition became local museums, with records and objects relating to pioneering families and rural life.

Since the 1970s private collectors have also operated museums in regional South Australia, with displays reflecting their passions – shells, dolls, toys, coins, costume, cars and machinery. These museums have come and gone, with collections often selling on the open market.

Most small community-based museums accumulated mixed collections of furniture, documents and photographs, domestic artefacts, textiles and machinery. Some focused on aspects of the state's history, or were associated with a person of historical interest, such as explorer Charles Sturt (Charles Sturt House Museum) or colonial Premier Sir Henry Ayers (Ayers House). Others, such as the museum of the Embroiderers' Guild of South Australia, acquired specialist collections. Collectively, they acquired, displayed and stored thousands of historical items, relying on community support and their own fundraising efforts.

In 1976, the state government created a Museums Officer position at the South Australian Museum to provide advice and assistance and to mould these diverse and scattered museums into a strategic and supportive network. This network was accumulating and displaying the evidence of South Australia's European settlement and social history at a time when state-funded collecting institutions focused largely on art, natural sciences and anthropology.

The 1981 Edwards Report – commissioned by government to review museum developments on Adelaide's North Terrace cultural precinct – recommended the establishment of the History Trust of South Australia to operate social history museums and fill the gap in the state's collecting areas. [14] The History Trust was duly established as a statutory authority, opened the South Australian Maritime Museum and the Migration and Settlement Museum, both in 1986, and took over management of the Constitutional Museum and Birdwood Mill Motor Museum. [15]

The History Trust's other core responsibility was to 'accredit or otherwise to evaluate museums'. [16] The Museums Officer position was transferred to the History Trust and in 1982 the Museums Accreditation and Grants Program (MAGP) [17] was launched. Since 1982, reviews of the method of servicing museums, program standards and individual museum operations have mirrored the growing development of museological practice for social history collections and displays. In 2008, standards were aligned with the new National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries. A key feature of the MAGP has been its ongoing annual grant allocation which has distributed over two million dollars to assist small museums to improve their facilities, develop policies and procedures, install interpretive displays and preserve their collections. The MAGP has always been voluntary, with participating museums numbering as high as 97 at the end of the 1990s. In 2008 this had fallen to 62, representing about a third of the state's local and regional museum sector.

The History Trust's MAGP has encouraged small museums to develop major displays linking their collections to South Australia's key regional stories, and to work with professional historians and designers. Both the History Trust and the South Australian Tourism Commission emphasise the importance of local stories in attracting visitors and tourists.

Since the 1970s certain trends have typified the small museum sector. First, the vast majority of community museums were established, and are still managed, by volunteers. Only in the last decade have younger volunteers become involved. Numbers have remained steady at about 20,000 since the 1980s, although within particular museums they can vary greatly. The History Trust, Museums Australia and Artlab Australia (the state conservation laboratory) have offered field visits and training programs since the 1980s.

Second, few community museums have collection development policies, and as a result there is significant duplication of object types, especially common domestic and agricultural artefacts.

Third, many collections in small museums are poorly documented. Although more museums are entering collections onto computer databases, information is often scant and confined to descriptions of items rather than a detailed record of provenance.

Finally, local government involvement, especially in regional areas, has been uneven. Council support has been largely confined to helping with maintenance and administration costs, or rent

reduction and access to local community benefit funds. Metropolitan councils, however, have a better track record in supporting and funding local museums and interpretive centres. Most metropolitan councils employ local history officers, usually based in the local library.

Preserving and displaying the nineteenth and early twentieth century (pre-Second World War) British pioneer heritage has been the main focus of regional museums. Most gloss over local Indigenous history and European and Indigenous encounters. One outstanding exception is Melrose Courthouse Heritage Centre in the state's mid-north, where the story of the frontier encounter between the Nukunu people and early European settlers is told. Another is the Lady Nelson Interpretive Centre in Mount Gambier. The story of German settlement features strongly in regional South Australia, with important collections held in several museums. And a number of culturally specific museums and collections represent the post-Second World War experiences of Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish and Ukrainian communities.

There are individual examples of well-organised and viable local and regional museums, actively presenting changing displays related to South Australia's key regional stories and engaged with their local communities, but most small museums continue to operate in isolation, without strategic links to their region's tourist and economic activities. They struggle with scant resources to store adequately, display and care for their collections despite their immense historical significance to South Australia.

Museums in Victoria

The landscape of museums in Victoria has evolved significantly over the last 30 years. In 1981 the then Museums Association appointed Susan Tonkin as the first salaried executive officer to its Victorian branch. In the same year the state government's Ministry for the Arts appointed Roger Trudgeon, whose seminal survey of Victorian museums in 1984 [18] led to the creation of two state government structures: the Museums Unit, which developed grants programs and the Museums Resource Service, and the Museums Advisory Board, which advised the Minister for the Arts on community museums and policy for the Museums Unit. [19]

Between 1984 and its disbanding in 1995 by the Kennett government, the Museums Unit developed a cataloguing program, professional development opportunities, and a small grants program for community museums. These services and associated activities were transferred to Museums Australia (Victoria).

There are over 740 museums in Victoria [20] and 500 members of MA (Vic). Of these, 60 are in the Museums Accreditation Program (MAP) [21] which peer-reviews museums to achieve and develop standards. Museums with MAP status receive preferential promotion from Tourism Victoria and are branded with the Victorian tourism 'tick' logo, a recognised mark of quality.

Victorian museums are supported by a number of organisations and two state government departments, Arts Victoria and Heritage Victoria. Since 2001, MA (Vic) has devolved over one million dollars in small infrastructure and exhibition development grants from Arts Victoria. The variety of grants available in the sector is extensive, however navigating funding rounds and responding to opportunities remains a challenge, particularly for museums with limited resources. Access to sustainable support, both financial and otherwise, is arguably the biggest challenge for the state's museums.

In a 2002 report, a quarter (34 out of 138) of museums surveyed stated that government grants were their main income, and paid staff ran 22 of the 34. [22] This reliance on volunteers is an asset, as they represent a significant long-term resource willing to care for Victoria's cultural heritage. Increasingly, the larger institutions have supported volunteers and paid staff via partnerships, training and outreach programs. Organisations taking an active lead in this effort include MA (Vic), the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the National Trust (Vic), the Public Galleries Association of Victoria, the State Library of Victoria, the National Gallery of Victoria and Museum Victoria.

One model that has addressed this key issue is the 'regional hub'. Arts Victoria has long considered this approach, particularly in the 'Revitalising Victoria's Community Museums' consultation process in 2004-05, [23] and successfully piloted the Goldfields project with an established Community Museums Project Officer to bring together museum organisations and groups to collaborate on projects and best-practice networks.

Like other states and territories, Victoria's 'long tail' of community museums today offers a rich palette of social history collections and stories. However, the old terminology of 'local' museums is too general a definition. Two examples of 'local' or community museums established since 1976 are the Shepparton Keeping Place, now known as the Bangerang Cultural Centre, which was conceived in 1974 and opened in 1982, and the Physics Museum at the University of Melbourne, established in the 1980s. As with so many community museums, both were brought to life largely because of the sustained efforts of a handful of committed and resourceful museum people.

In 1993 organisations fitting the MA definition of a museum numbered 621. [24] Of those surveyed, the vast majority (158) was classified as historical societies, followed by historic collections (71), private collections (52), historic properties (35), heritage/theme parks (32), art museums (32), research collections (23), corporate collections (11) and archives (10). [25]

Most tellingly, half of the community museums are solely volunteer operated. This statistic has remained constant, indicating a relatively controlled expansion of the number of museums and museum people in Victoria, with virtually no increase in state funding. In Victoria today there are an estimated 2000 paid and 4000 volunteer museum staff caring for 1.5 million cultural heritage objects across the state. [26]

Some positive trends are evident from the strong commitment to museums in Victoria. The emphasis is shifting from pure collections management to a more integrated approach to both collections and interpretation when planning exhibitions. There are more collaborative partnerships and significance assessments carried out. Some community museums have found resources to upgrade their physical environment, attracting loans for temporary exhibitions. In the last decade, larger museums have applied technologies to offer interactive spaces both within the physical museum and online. It is now commonplace to have virtual visitors, with some larger organisations actively encouraging visitors to compile their own stories using social media tools and technologies such as 3G mobile phones, Flickr, Twitter, Blogger and mash-ups.

Port Macquarie: a New South Wales case study

As the third oldest British settlement on the Australian mainland, Port Macquarie has a history of convict settlement, economic decline with the end of transportation and free convict labour, followed by eventual prosperity through the timber industry. In recent years, tourism and the 'seachange' phenomenon have re-established Port Macquarie as the region's capital and brought a younger, more affluent and better-educated demographic.

For over 50 years local people have celebrated and commemorated this history in a particularly rich range of historical societies, museums and heritage groups. A local schoolteacher formed the first – the Hastings River Historical Society – in 1956. Today there are 12 museums, historical societies and history and heritage groups in the local government area.

Community volunteers manage all except Timbertown and Roto House. This leads to significant management changes at election time each year. However, a full-time local government curator provides continuity and assists in the development of a regional plan.

The Port Macquarie Historical Museum opened in 1957 and, since 1960, has been housed in an 1840s building in a prime CBD location, purchased by the Society in 1968. Its mission is to collect, conserve, research and interpret the history and heritage of Port Macquarie and the Hastings. Current membership is 100, of whom 70 are 'active'.

This Museum is a good example of the fate that can befall the volunteer museum sector. At first, the committee was far sighted, motivated by a passion to record and collect local history. In the 1960s, for example, members flew to Scotland to purchase the diaries of one-time local resident Annabella Boswell. Twenty years later, they redeveloped the Museum, organising exhibits into a 'street of shops', and winning the Museum of the Year Award in 1981 and again in 1982. However the same displays can still be seen today.

The National Parks and Wildlife Division of the Department of Climate Change now manage Roto House (built in 1890) with volunteers taking daily tours. The collection is specific to the house and to the Flynn family who lived there until 1976. Volunteers also manage Douglas Vale Homestead and Vineyard, dating to 1869. The house remained in the same family until it was left derelict in the early 1990s. The community fought hard to save the grounds and the title was recently handed over to the Douglas Vale Conservation Group. The Homestead has had the advantage of a

consistent group of volunteers, led by a professional conservator. Nonetheless there are tensions between commercial interests – such as the sale of wine from a cellar door on the property – and preservation concerns.

The Maritime Museum in Port Macquarie is spread across three sites: the Pilot Cottages, the Pilot Boat Shed – sales point for MV *Wentworth* tours and a small exhibition venue – and the Hibbard slipway which is used by volunteers and others to restore timber craft. The responsibility for so many sites creates great financial stress.

The 1869 Court House is owned by the Department of Lands and operated by the Friends of the Courthouse. It is popular with school groups who role-play using transcripts of trials, including those of convicts.

Beyond the township is the Wauchope Museum, founded in 1956 and housed in a relocated small heritage church. The Society owns the building but it is on Council land. The collection is not well documented and is managed by 10 volunteers. Another small museum focused on collecting local photographs and writing local histories is located in the recently restored Laurieton School of Arts. The Museum Advisor worked with the Society to produce a strategic plan recommending against further acquisitions. However collecting continues, and the range of domestic objects in the collection lacks documentation.

Other groups in the area include the Port Macquarie and District Family History Society with over 200 members and a younger demographic than museum volunteers; Friends of St Thomas' Church (built 1824); the Kendall Heritage Society; the Comboyne Heritage Group; and the Fire Museum Group who are currently looking for premises, despite the fact there is a fire station display at Timbertown.

Timbertown is a recreated timber village representing the period 1890–1910. Founded in 1986, its chequered history reveals the many problems encountered when local government attempts to maintain such a facility. In and out of Council management but always holding great significance for the local community, it is once again being managed by Council and has a commercial focus. Much of the collection is domestic in focus and collection management and security are problematic.

The number, range and quality of the museums and heritage organisations in the Port Macquarie area are undoubtedly typical of museum conditions in many parts of Australia. Collections tend to focus on saving historic material from dispersal or destruction rather than on interpretation and display. Good collection management practices are not common. Although the many volunteers give generously of their time, few have a special interest in collections and little interest in researching, documenting or caring for them. However, thematic studies have begun to address these problems. *Timber Stories* in 2003–04 and *Her Story* in 2005–06 highlighted the significance of some of the objects in these museums, and revealed gaps in collecting areas.

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Footnotes

¹ As the Pigott Report argued: 'Undoubtedly the country museums fulfil an important need in the local community. They draw people together; they give scope to the old and to the imaginative; they are a bay window of local pride'. *Museums in Australia: Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1975, p. 24.

² 'Overview', Museums and Galleries New South Wales, mg.nsw.org.au/about_us/overview11111/

³ See Kimberley Webber, 'Constructing Australia's Past: The Development of Historical Collections 1888–1938', in Patricia Summerfield (ed.), *Proceedings of the Council of Australian Museums Associations Conference*, Perth, WA, 1986, pp. 155–173.

⁴ SF Markham and HC Richards, *A Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of Australia to the Carnegie Corporation*, Museums Association, London, 1933.

⁵ *Museums in Australia: Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections*, p. 21.

⁶ The name has now been changed to History SA.

⁷ In Queensland in the 1930s there were museums that were open to the public only in Rockhampton and Bundaberg and these were housed in their respective Schools of Art (Markham and Richards, 1933, p. 3).

⁸ *Queensland Museum Act 1970*.

⁹ A Bartholomai, 'Improving access to museum services in Queensland', *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum*, 30 (3), pp. 355–372 at p. 370.

¹⁰ J Lennon, *Hidden Heritage: A Development Plan for Museums in Queensland, 1995–2001*, Arts Queensland, Brisbane, 1995, p. i.

¹¹ Arts Committee, *Queensland: A State for the Arts*, Department of the Premier, Economic and Trade Development, 1991.

¹² Queensland Museum Policy Review Panel, *A Policy Review of the Queensland Museum*, Brisbane, 1992, pp. 29–30.

¹³ J Lennon, *Hidden Heritage*. Starting slowly in 1996, the MRCN now has six centres and in 2009 can finally provide direct assistance to heritage collections across all of Queensland.

¹⁴ Robert Edwards, *Museum Policy and Development in South Australia: Final Report*, Adelaide, 1981.

¹⁵ The Birdwood Mill Motor Museum is now named the National Motor Museum and the Migration and Settlement Museum is now named the Migration Museum.

¹⁶ *History Trust of South Australia Act 1981*.

¹⁷ Now known as the Community Museums Program (CMP).

¹⁸ R Trudgeon, *Museums In Victoria: A Report on the Victorian Museum Survey 1982/3*, Victorian Ministry for the Arts, Melbourne, 1984.

¹⁹ Personal communication, R Trudgeon and H Newton, 2009.

²⁰ Museums Australia (Victoria) (2007) Long-list of Victorian museums, compiled 2 July 2007.

²¹ <http://www.mavic.asn.au>.

²² C Brophy, *Marketing Victorian Museums: A Report on Marketing and Audience Development in Small to Medium-sized Museums in Victoria*, Museums Australia (Victoria) and Arts Victoria Co-operative Audience Development Support Initiative, Melbourne, 2002.

²³ Heritage Victoria, *Victorian Heritage Strategy 2000–2005*, Department of Planning and Community Development, Victoria, 2000.

²⁴ Of these, only 424 were surveyed due to a lack of response from 197 'because we cannot be certain of their level of operation, or if they still exist'. K Freeman, *The 1992 Victorian Museum Survey Report*, Museums Association of Australia Inc. (Victoria Branch), Melbourne, 1993, p. 4.

²⁵ Freeman, *The 1992 Victorian Museum Survey Report*, p. 4.

²⁶ Personal communication with Martin Hallett, 2008.

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