

17 April, 2025

Cultural Institutions Advisory Group meeting with Minister Graham

On 17 April, 2025, the PSA posted a Facebook entry, writing:

Public Service Association of NSW

On Tuesday 15 April the PSA's Cultural Institutions Advisory Group met at the Australian Museum for their monthly meeting. The group, whose delegates represent the [Australian Museum](#), the [Art Gallery of New South Wales](#), [Museums of History NSW](#), [The State Library of New South Wales](#), and the [Powerhouse Museum](#) had recently sent a letter to the Minister for the Arts, The Hon. John Graham, outlining the current concerns of members. Mr Graham attended the meeting to listen to members, and work through the concerns. This is the second meeting of the group that Mr Graham has attended.

A major issue facing members in all our CIs is persistent problems with shared services, including under payments, missing leave accruals and overtime not being paid. Also, the large number of members remaining on temporary contracts, and, particularly at the Powerhouse, the use of consultants and external providers for core business. The minister agreed to engaging with the PSA to work through these and other issues.

PHOTO: PSA's Cultural Institutions Advisory Group with [John Graham](#) and [Troy Wright](#), [PSA Assistant General Secretary](#)

On 16 April, an email circulated from PSA provided this extra information:

This announcement also included the questions asked in 'a letter provided to Minister Graham prior to our meeting and included the questions':

- Are you able to provide an update regarding the state budget process as it pertains to the cultural institutions.
- Can you commit to ensuring that our organisations will receive appropriate levels of operational funding to achieve our goals in line with the government endorsed strategic plans such as creative communities and to help us overcome external factors facing our institutions such as inflation and increased operating cost. Are there any thoughts about further movement in operational budgets.
- The move to a shared services model for some functions including payroll, HR and finance across the NSW cultural institutions has had an overly negative impact on certain groups of staff, particularly front of house casuals, those that work shifts or across multiple departments – leading to underpayment, errors in leave requests, poor relations with vendors due to ongoing invoicing errors, and an extra load on non-finance etc.
- Is the government aware of the issues with the shared services model and what is being done to rectify this.
- There has been a hugely disproportionate capital expenditure on the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences compared to the other cultural institutions. Despite these huge sums of money there are still ongoing cultural and staffing issues at MAAS.
- The Powerhouse Ultimo site has been closed to the public for over 12 months now however cost incurred by the continuing expansion of the artists-in-residence program has created a drain on resources and a large increase in the consumables budget, a large increase in utilities budget, and a much greater increase in the amount of research and collection access required to service the residents'

demands, and the colonising of spaces at Ultimo means that they are longer available for staff to work in.

- This, along with non-employee and external resource being used to develop and deliver the program begs the question, how does the artists -in-residence program benefit the people of NSW when it cost the taxpayer so much, and it has never been part of the Museum for the past 146 years.
- The growing layers of management at the Powerhouse has made the organisation exceedingly top heavy and noting the commitment from the NSW government in reducing contingent labour and non-frontline staff what measures will be taking to ensure that the museum complies.
- As the Powerhouse has a strong reliance on a workforce which includes both temporary and casual staff what will the NSW government do to ensure that there is a more stable workforce within the museum, noting the success of long standing temporary employment into ongoing worlds within the NSW education.

Minister Graham, in reply to the questions with particular note to the state budget advised that they do have a budget which is under pressure but welcomed the PSA in working together on how the state and federal government can work together in support of our NSW institutions.

With regard to shared services, the Minister was very interested in the issues and concerns raised and again encouraged the PSA to advise on possible solutions to these issues.

Regarding the issues at the Powerhouse, the Minister has agreed to work through these separately in the coming weeks with the PSA.

A highlight within our meeting was hearing that the Minister and the NSW Government, when looking to budgets that are under pressure, are not forgetting to invest in people and wages and we look forward to working further with Minister Graham.





----- Forwarded message -----

From: **PSA News** <PSAnews@psa.asn.au>

Date: Wed, Apr 16, 2025 at 4:03 PM

Subject: Cultural Institutions Advisory Group meeting with Minister Graham

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BULLETINS

16 April 2025

Cultural Institutions Advisory Group meeting with Minister Graham

Dear ...

The Cultural Institutions Advisory Group met yesterday at the Australian Museum with Minister Graham and PSA staff including Assistant General Secretary, Troy Wright.

A letter had been provided to Minister Graham prior to our meeting and included the questions:

- Are you able to provide an update regarding the state budget process as it pertains to the cultural institutions.
- Can you commit to ensuring that our organisations will receive appropriate levels of operational funding to achieve our goals in line with the government endorsed strategic plans such as creative communities and to help us overcome external factors facing our institutions such as inflation and increased operating cost. Are there any thoughts about further movement in operational budgets.
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increase in utilities budget, and a much greater increase in the amount of research and collection access required to service the residents' demands, and the colonising of spaces at Ultimo means that they are longer available for staff to work in.

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Know anyone who is not a member
Ask them to join [HERE](#)

Our emailing address is membersupport@psa.asn.au
If you want to [unsubscribe](#) from our emailing list

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