



# ***FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE***

**Members present:**

Mr W.E. Wendt MP (Chair)  
Ms R.M. Bates MP  
Hon. D Boyle MP  
Mr M.J. Crandon MP  
Ms P-K. Croft MP  
Mr R.A. Stevens MP

**Staff present:**

Ms D. Jeffrey (Research Director)  
Mr P. Rogers (Principal Research Officer)  
Mrs M Freeman (Executive Assistant)

## **REVIEW OF AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT NO. 9 FOR 2011—ACQUISITION AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MUSEUM, ART GALLERY AND LIBRARY COLLECTIONS**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2011**

**Brisbane**

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### **Committee met at 10.01 am**

**CHAIR:** Good morning, everyone. I declare this public briefing of the Finance and Administration Committee's meeting with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Arts Queensland, the Queensland Museum, the Queensland Art Gallery and the State Library of Queensland now open. My name is Wayne Wendt, and I am the chair of the committee and the member for Ipswich West. The other members of the committee are Mr Ray Stevens MP, deputy chair and member for Mermaid Beach, Ms Ros Bates MP, member for Mudgeeraba; the Hon. Desley Boyle MP, member for Cairns; Mr Michael Crandon MP, member for Coomera; Ms Peta-Kaye Croft MP, member for Broadwater; and our research team, who do a fantastic job.

The purpose of this meeting is to fulfil the committee's oversight responsibilities in respect of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. This briefing is a formal proceeding of the parliament and is subject to the Legislative Assembly's standing rules and orders. The committee will not require evidence to be given under oath, but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a very serious offence. You have previously been provided with a copy of the instructions for witnesses so we will take those as read. Hansard will record the proceedings and you will be provided with the transcript. For the benefit of Hansard, when you speak can you please state your full name and title and the organisation you are representing.

**CAMPBELL, Ms Terry, Assistant Auditor-General, Performance Audit Division, Queensland Audit Office**

**CLARK, Mr Andrew, Deputy Director, Programming and Corporate Services, Queensland Art Gallery**

**ELLWOOD, Mr Tony, Director, Queensland Art Gallery**

**GALLOWAY, Dr Ian, Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Museum**

**JOHNSTON, Ms Val, Acting Director, Corporate Services, State Library of Queensland**

**LEE, Ms Alison, Head, Managerial Research, Queensland Art Gallery**

**McLEOD, Mr Rory, Director, Client Services and Collections, State Library of Queensland**

**POOLE, Mr Glenn, Auditor-General, Queensland Audit Office**

**ROWLANDS, Ms Shane, Executive Director, Arts Strategy and Planning, Arts Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet**

**TABRETT, Ms Leigh, Deputy Director General, Arts Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet**

**CHAIR:** We are running this hearing as a round table forum to facilitate discussion. However, only members of the committee can put questions to witnesses. If you wish to raise issues for discussion, I ask you to direct your comments through me as the chair.

I remind all those attending the briefing today that these proceedings are similar to parliament to the extent that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. In this regard I remind members of the public that under the standing orders the public may be admitted to or excluded from the hearing at the discretion of the committee. Can I also request now that all mobile phones are checked to ensure they are either switched off or set to silent mode. I remind you that no calls are to be taken inside this room. If you need to take a call you will have to take it outside.

I will now ask each agency's representatives, starting with the Auditor-General, to make a short statement in relation to today's hearing.

**Mr Poole:** The audit that we undertook was focused on the acquisition of collectible items in collections and how they were made available to the Queensland public and the other stakeholders through the Queensland Museum, the State Library of Queensland and the Queensland Art Gallery. We also reviewed Arts Queensland in its oversight, coordination and advisory funding role supporting these agencies. That was effectively the outline of the audit.

**Mr McLeod:** We are reasonably satisfied with the outcomes of the QA report, and in terms of the recommendations we have already taken action to follow up on those. We welcome the opportunities for further collaboration.

**Dr Galloway:** Likewise, we are satisfied with the report. We have provided a formal response to that report and look forward to the discussion today. We are implementing the recommendations of the report within the context of our response.

**Mr Ellwood:** We have also implemented several of the findings and are working through the process of completing the rest.

**Ms Tabrett:** I refer the committee to principally the director-general's response to the audit which is printed in the audit report in full. You will see that it contains a commitment for us as Arts Queensland to implement those recommendations which particularly apply to us but also casts some light on some of the matters that are raised in the audit report where we might have had a slightly different interpretation of the circumstances or priorities. I would also like to say I think that one of the things that does distinguish this group of organisations is the collaborative approach that has been developed over time. We are all very comfortable with moving forward on that recommendation.

**CHAIR:** In that case, what I will do is hand over to the member for Mermaid Beach, Ray Stevens, to ask the first question.

**Mr STEVENS:** My first question is to Leigh in terms of the major agency. In terms of going forward, despite the different requirements between the museum, the gallery and the library, what is the potential for greater progress in efficiencies to be achieved through a more coordinated approach to digitisation? Obviously that will have severe budgetary issues for you to deal with in terms of your cooperation. Is each agency assisting with that? Do you feel there is an unfair burden that you have to incorporate into your budgets to progress the matter? Do you see that there are overall benefits right across-the-board for that implementation as quickly as possible?

**Ms Tabrett:** Thank you very much for that question. I think my response would be that all of these organisations are very focused on their communities and their audiences and that of course they understand that in the contemporary world digitisation is a really important tool for that communication and to create that access. However, as you point out, it is not something that is done for free and it is a matter for organisations to balance the extent to which they spend on digitisation with all the other forms of delivery we expect them to achieve. For example, they tour physically significant amounts of their collection and their artefacts. That is a costly exercise and that has to be balanced against the amount of resources that can be put into digitisation.

The other thing I would like to say is that sticking things on to a digital record in itself is quite an inactive thing to do. The important point with digitisation is that it is a tool for communicating with people. Our preference would be not to see people do that just as a record-keeping tool but in an active way in their thinking about what community are we engaging with and how can a particular digitisation project generate a particular response or educate a particular community.

**Mr Ellwood:** We currently have 100 per cent of our collection online for the public to access but a lot of that is basic catalogue data. However, it does mean as a research tool people are able to understand what is in the collection. The big challenge for us though, as Leigh has pointed out, is the idea of adding more value to the records than that. Thirty per cent of our records include images, but with particularly contemporary art, which is the strength of our collection, we have to also abide by copyright and moral rights issues. I suppose the labour involved in doing that can be something that we have to prioritise.

What we have done as a result of the auditor's report is to formalise our strategy and to formalise the backlog that we would be wanting to address over a period of time so we can try to fast-track that a little more. We have a system where all new items have been recorded but it is getting through the rest as the next way forward, as the next strategy that we have now addressed.

**Dr Galloway:** The museum has invested significant resources in the past 10 years in integrating all its databases into one major database using a Vernon collections management system. That makes all our data that we had on our databases now more widely available. For instance, we are a major contributor to the Atlas of Living Australia project that is currently funded by the federal government. Having said that, there is still an enormous need for greater digitisation. It is an issue for all museums around Australia to get more of our data into a medium that can be more widely accessible. The Atlas of Living Australia is a very ambitious project, but what it has provided is largely a crucible in which we can all put our digitised data and make that more widely available to the public and to the scientific community. But it does not provide funding for digitisation at the museum level, so that is still an issue for us without a doubt.

**Mr McLeod:** Yes, digitisation is seen as a business as usual to a certain extent within the State Library of Queensland, but we acknowledge that the challenge is in digitising a large amount of retrospective collections. Also, I think we need to be aware of the fact that it is digital collections that are now starting to become the norm in the library world with the transition of print to online content, so the long-term storage and preservation of those issues is as much of a concern for us as is digitisation per se.

**Ms BATES:** I have a follow-up question for Ian on digitisation. What sort of funding allocation do you currently have for digitisation and what funding allocation would you need to be able to complete what you want to do?

**Dr Galloway:** The funding we have from the federal government is mostly in the form of infrastructure. We have been provided with extraordinarily high-end digital imaging that we can now put images with a lot of our data. There is some data for staff associated with that. It is of the level of several hundred thousand dollars. As to what we would need to digitise our collections, I could not put a figure on that I am afraid. The museums do have literally millions of items. It is about making those items, specimens, available to the public and to the scientific community, because museums are one of those odd organisations that straddle both the arts, culture and science divide, so there are multiple stakeholders there for us and our collections reflect that.

**CHAIR:** Before we move on, Tony, did I hear you say 30 per cent of your collection is digitised?

**Mr Ellwood:** No, that includes images with the digital record.

**CHAIR:** That is obviously not complete. Is it a costing issue that it is only 30 per cent? Are we looking at going higher?

**Mr Ellwood:** It is the individual management of each work and the rights around each image. If it is in copyright, the rights are still owned by the artist invariably and there are moral rights issues about what platforms we put it on to and so on. So we have to individually check each one of those and that would be doing through a number of agents or dealers or whoever it might be. People who own that copyright might be a member of the family, for example, so it is quite time consuming but it is something that we value going forward.

It is worth noting Ian's point about the digitised world. It does not mean there are not a lot of other platforms that we are using where we are putting information into this sort of environment. We are very active with our social media, our web and our blogging. I think we are all very active and very successful in that space, so it is another way of getting information on our collections.

**Ms BOYLE:** I preface my remarks by telling you all, in case I have not recently, that I think you are wonderful and you are wonderful organisations—maybe not absolutely perfect, though, so we might have a little chat around the edges. I figured that, seeing I come from the electorate furthest from the centre of power, we might talk first about what the Queenslanders who live in Far North Queensland, north-west Queensland or the more remote parts of Queensland get from all of you. As a customer rather than a member of parliament, it is uneven and looks to me as though it is a bit scattered and as though some of you provide some services for all of Queensland that we do not even know that you provide. Would you mind as individual organisations just going through how you try to deliver for all Queenslanders. What is in it for the people of Cairns? I remind Ian Galloway that he and I have yet to succeed in getting a museum in Cairns, but we continue.

**CHAIR:** Where would you like to start, member for Cairns?

**Ms BOYLE:** The State Library delivers for the regions so, given it is an easy question, you might like to start first.

**Mr McLeod:** Indeed, through our public library network and through remote and regional Queensland we deliver all types of services, including training and literacy services. And through the public library network we physically or electronically get books and other material to communities outside of the Brisbane area. We also, where we can, partner with arts agencies or do touring exhibitions of our own collections, because we maintain that, even though online is a good space to be in, the physical connection with our own tours is very important. Regional communities really do tend to respond to those tours when we take them to the Far North and to Western Queensland.

**Dr Galloway:** Last year the Queensland Museum touched the lives of 2.3 million Queenslanders in all of our outreach programs. First of all, as we were mentioning before, there is obviously the online area, which is expanding enormously. Our institutions I think have an enormous opportunity to contribute now to the national curriculum right throughout the nation as well as to the far north of North Queensland. We of course have a regional network of museums in Townsville, Ipswich and Toowoomba but sadly not yet in Cairns, but who knows?

**Mr STEVENS:** Or the Gold Coast.

**Dr Galloway:** Or the Gold Coast.

**CHAIR:** Not at the expense of Ipswich, though!

**Dr Galloway:** We have a network of museum development officers, and they are funded through a special grant through Arts Queensland. There are six of those who work throughout the state, working with small museums and historical societies. There are over 300 small museums and historical societies  
Brisbane

throughout the state and these are professional museum officers, conservators, collection managers and curators who work with small organisations to assist them both in applying for grants and also to lift the standard of their own institution. We have a loans program. It is one of the largest in the world. Last year it reached over 700,000 Queenslanders. It is known as Museum in a Box that goes all over the state. We have 33 different distribution points throughout the state. They go to schools, libraries, nursing homes, kindergartens and a wide variety of institutions. Of course, we also have touring exhibitions which go both to local government and to our own regional museums. We are very conscious that Queensland is the most decentralised state in Australia and very conscious of our responsibility to reach as many Queenslanders as we possibly can.

**Mr Ellwood:** I have to say that the Queensland Art Gallery shares that sentiment. In fact, we are intensely proud of our outreach program. We have toured exhibitions for over 100 years—the oldest regional art program in the country. We are the only state art gallery in Australia that has a dedicated outreach regional service with dedicated staff for that purpose. The recent surrealism exhibition had 54 venues in regional Queensland, and people received a free package of information for children and families to educate them on the core aims of that program and the activities and the sort of playfulness of that particular art style. In fact, we were taken to Cooktown and Hope Vale by a member of our philanthropic community to actually witness those programs in situ, and it was an incredibly touching experience. We actually have 60 venues confirmed for our *Matisse: Drawing Life* program over summer. So we are actually growing every year and we are reaching as far as we possibly can. We are developing our programs, too, so that they can go into all types of infrastructure, not just air-conditioned art galleries if communities do not have those.

**CHAIR:** Tony, that is 60 venues across Queensland?

**Mr Ellwood:** That is right.

**CHAIR:** Including Cairns and the Gold Coast, I hope?

**Mr Ellwood:** Always. They are some of our closest partners. In fact, I know that Cairns, for example, will be receiving our Ron Mueck *In Bed* sculpture, which is the largest sculpture in our collection and which fits into only five venues in regional Queensland, hence its being in five venues. We have between two and four touring exhibitions per year across Queensland and we balance the venues as carefully as we can. We do our best to get as much diversity across the community as we possibly can. We tour ourselves, as talking curators about our major exhibitions, so that we can share the information with people as a previsit experience and also to be ambassadors for that community, to welcome them when they arrive into our communities. So that is just, I suppose, a very small part of what we have done. This year we also brought 100 members of the Torres Strait community out for the Torres Strait collaborative Cultural Centre program. We are mindful of the mixture and diversity that is out there and we will always aim for continuous improvement in that area, but I think our track record as a group is the best in the country.

**Ms BOYLE:** One of the things I am a bit mystified about—and hopefully I will not be by the end of our time together—are the recommendations that the Auditor-General made about improved strategic visions between the organisations, or between all of you as a group. Each of you does your part of things very well but in the report, as I understand it, he was saying that there could be more deliberate action together and more of a combined strategy as well as an urging to involve more maybe with a tourism event strategy with Queensland Events or with Tourism Queensland. However, your responses as I read them were really saying, 'Break it down? We're doing that pretty well already. Leave us alone. We've got plenty on our plates.' I may have misinterpreted your responses.

Back to the discussion we have just had—and thank you for the reminders of all that you do for regional Queensland—I have never seen that in Cairns put together in any sense. When I hear it from you all at the same time, I think, 'Wow!' But it never comes to us in the regions badged as, 'This is all that we're doing to really engage you in the different art forms.' So I wonder if the Auditor-General is not right. Keeping in mind the regions, maybe there would be some ways that you could better put forward the broader agenda by—I do not know—publishing that agenda as a group. Leigh, you might like to comment on whether there does need to be a more overarching kind of visioning and organisation for the wonderful things that you are doing.

**Ms Tabrett:** We publish a number of strategies about our intentions across the state, and they are basically constructed not around art forms or around the particular programs of these organisations but around target populations. For example, we have one called artbeat, which describes the broad range of programs that we have in regional Queensland. As we have been sitting here, Shane has been writing down a list, and there are about 20 different funding programs and partnership programs we have across the state. What we have been doing progressively with those strategies is extending them to incorporate, where we can and where it is relevant, references to the work of the portfolio. Our Indigenous arts and cultural strategy is a portfolio-wide strategy which includes all of these organisations. Our Children, Young People and Me is a portfolio-wide strategy. artbeat is also a portfolio-wide strategy. So we are starting to have tools that describe and bring together the work of all of those organisations, but of course that is very significant. What you get is a high-level description and reference; you do not get the richness that Tony can give you if you are listening to him talk about it. Certainly, our strategies will refer back to the work of the individual organisations in the area. As far as better communications and promotion are concerned, I am very happy to accept that that may be something we are not doing powerfully enough together. I

certainly think we do have good strategies for working on those directions and developing a shared sense of where we are going, but I also accept that the issue of telling the world about how good they are and how broad they are is probably undercooked.

**Ms BATES:** This is a general question to whoever wants to speak to it. I understand that you cannot put a price on art or on artefacts, but how do you determine what you purchase on behalf of the Queensland taxpayers? Is there an audit process which determines that the items you have purchased are purchased in a fiscally responsible manner?

**Mr McLeod:** It is a combination of factors. Sometimes it is demand led for libraries, so it is about what our usage statistics tell us is in demand. That is then married with, obviously, what we can afford and general trends in collecting and then, yes, there are delegations in place. Actually, as part of the audit report there were two random acquisitions that were taken over a period of the last few years and we were able to show due process and how we acquitted that impact cost. So, yes, there are delegations in place. There are experts in the field who work within the library, but we also take a strong view from our customer base as well.

**Dr Galloway:** Relatively speaking in terms of our acquisitions, we would actually purchase only a small percentage. Museums are very much about memory and change, and the acquisition of material and specimens and objects very much reflects those areas. For instance, in terms of our natural history collecting, we are very conscious of climate change and environmental health and exotic species. We are collecting in very focused areas, so our collecting there is determined by strategic priorities. In terms of our contemporary collecting in the culture and history area, that is driven by what we believe is the significance of the objects as signposts for either change within our community or memory. When we purchase objects we have a small budget for that. We also purchase through our foundation where money is provided that way.

**Mr Ellwood:** The Queensland Art Gallery has an acquisitions policy which has a strategy that identifies areas for development and growth. In terms of acquisitions—I have the rough statistics here—around 350 items a year would be purchased, spending just under \$4 million, but roughly 250 per annum are also gifted. They all have to go through quite a rigorous process and assessment through the curatorial body then through executive management then through our council of trustees. Every work, whether it is acquired or gifted, has to comply with that. There are various measures that we place, but I think overall we know that we are highly accountable and take it very seriously.

**Ms BATES:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Tony, with regard to the value of the items you mentioned a moment ago that you are purchasing for \$2.5 million roughly—

**Mr Ellwood:** Purchasing at just under \$4 million.

**CHAIR:** Sorry, \$4 million. The gifted items would be valued, so what is the average there?

**Mr Ellwood:** That can vary widely.

**CHAIR:** I understand that, but on a yearly basis is it similar figures we are talking about—that is, they are valued at roughly \$4 million?

**Mr Ellwood:** I would need to take that on notice I think.

**CHAIR:** If you do not mind, because I would be interested to find out what the figure is.

**Mr Ellwood:** We have actually noticed since the development of GoMA that we have had a radical increase in gifted artworks.

**CHAIR:** That is what I would have thought and that is why I wish to understand if it is improving, if it is increasing, if it is going backwards or whatever the case may be in, say, the last five years for instance.

**Mr Ellwood:** Yes, we will do that.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

**Ms CROFT:** My question is to the Auditor-General. I wonder whether the Auditor-General could inform the committee of why the audit did not review the systems for storage or preservation and the security of collections.

**Mr Poole:** In scoping out all of our audits, we try to identify an area that is auditable and where we believe we can add some value. In this particular one we wanted to focus on the collections and their accessibility. Our review from some preliminary work was that there was probably less scope for significant recommendations in the areas that you talk about. Certainly most of the bodies already have their policies and their systems around the storage, maintenance and the security of their collections. We thought we would get more value from an audit looking around accessibility rather than those other issues, and it was purely a way of ensuring that the scope of the audit did not get too broad.

**Ms CROFT:** In relation to the storage of your collections, do you have enough storage for the collections that you have? What are the systems that you have in place to ensure that there are collections that do not sit in storage for a really long time and that they are brought out for people to see?

**Mr Ellwood:** We have collection management systems which are detailed records of all of the objects that we house, both publicly and in storage. We are very conscious of the rotation of our collections, and I believe that has also contributed to the increase in gifts and philanthropy in general. It is based on the fact that people are saying there is dynamism within the displays, they are seeing something new come out all of the time. We are respecting the donors by circulating their work and making them as public as we possibly can. There is, though, pressure on storage absolutely. We are working quite hard at the moment to scope that out, but I would predict that within a seven- to 10-year period we will have completely maximised all space on both sites—the Queensland Art Gallery building and the Gallery of Modern Art. We are one of the few galleries in the country that does not have major off-site storage. We have a temporary location that does not comply with the needs for international standards for collections, so it is a very pressing issue and one we are taking very seriously at the moment.

**Dr Galloway:** Similarly with us, collection storage is always an issue for museums. We are just starting at the management end, as I mentioned before. We made a very significant investment some years ago in developing a collection management system called Vernon, which integrated all our databases and is now used quite extensively in the audit processes in terms of our collections as well as managing the data associated with it.

In the last three to five years we have invested almost \$3 million in new collection storage infrastructure to optimise the space we currently have available. We have an off-site collection stored at Hendra and recently we spent a significant amount of money re-roofing that and putting in new facilities to house our collections. I would agree with Tony that certainly within the next decade we will be looking for additional storage areas. That is not to say that we are willy-nilly collecting everything that moves or does not move within the state. We are very selective in what we collect and we have an active deaccessioning policy as well. We are constantly looking at our collections and saying, 'In hindsight, was that a very significant item for us to collect, or has it less value now than when we collected it?' That is important.

The other thing we are finding around the world as well, especially with museums, is that off-site collection storages are now not just safes locked away from the public. They are now turning them into treasure houses and allowing the public through them and they become an absolutely fantastic visitor attraction. This whole idea of bringing back of house to front of house and acquainting people with what goes on behind the scenes is enormously attractive. I think when we move to new storage facilities in the future we really need to bear in mind that this is a great opportunity to engage the public in the sort of work that we do in a much more engaging way.

**Mr McLeod:** I have one or two points from the library's point of view. Storage is a challenge for us as well. We have renovated storage at our South Bank premises. We are constantly reviewing how full it is and there is an active deaccessioning policy as well. We acknowledge that this challenge is only going to increase for us through our legal deposit legislative requirements. There is a transition from print to digital which may ease the burden at some point, but we are yet to see that actually take place and happen on any sort of serious level where we might start to see some benefits from it at this point.

**CHAIR:** I know the Auditor-General is keen to make some comment there, too.

**Mr Poole:** Chair, I apologise for overlooking the obvious. All of the collections of course are valued and every year as part of our financial audit we do a fair bit of work around the collection. We have done a lot of work over the years with the museum but also with the other bodies. From that perspective each year we are looking at collections, their location, their value, whether they are being preserved and maintained in an appropriate way. That is part of the normal financial audit work. This audit was looking at the accessibility.

**Ms Tabrett:** Following the January floods, Arts Queensland commissioned a major study of disaster preparedness and recovery arrangements at the Cultural Centre. One of the things highlighted was the merits of taking a prompt look at alternative storage arrangements, because like everybody's private house under the house is where you store a lot of things. We were very fortunate that no cultural treasures were affected by the floods, but we are very conscious of the need to provide in the short term rather than in the longer term for off-site storage. The kinds of conditions we are looking at are to the appropriate storage standards of course—so air-conditioned, temperature controlled, accessible to the public and, of course, safe from floodwaters. If you know of any appropriate spaces or buildings that would suit us, we would be delighted to hear from you. It is quite a challenge.

**CHAIR:** At the Ipswich railway workshops there are a few empty big buildings at the back there we can probably rent out.

**Ms BATES:** Ian, I want to follow up on your comments before about Vernon, I believe it was—the system that you used. Can you elaborate whether that was a purchased off-the-shelf system that other museums use elsewhere or was it a bespoke model, one that was internally built? And what was the cost of the system to implement it?

**Dr Galloway:** There are two major collection systems used around the world. Both of them have been developed in this part of the world. One is called K Emu and it is developed by Knowledge Engineering and it is used in quite a number of museums. It is a very costly system especially to customise. We were quite fortunate when we came to the time of deciding what collection system to look at that quite a number of the systems had gone through major development phases. We finally looked at

Vernon, which had its derivation in New Zealand, which is one of the outstanding systems and a very cost-effective system to integrate because we had both social history and a wide range of different collections including things that perhaps other organisations do not have. We set aside a million dollars at the time to undertake this and we had some change left at the end of the day.

**CHAIR:** How long ago was that?

**Dr Galloway:** We started that in 2004 and have been working through with it ever since. We now have staff dedicated to that area so there is an ongoing cost, but the situation we had was that we had 26 different databases—none of which spoke to one another and each of them sitting on fairly shaky platforms at the time, so it was a high priority for us. We really have reaped some terrific benefits from it now being able to link into national systems to online access—a whole range of different areas.

**Mr CRANDON:** We have listened to a lot of feedback in relation to various aspects of the audit and the plans for the future. Are you satisfied with the overall response from the various areas? Are there any areas that you have concerns about?

**Mr Poole:** Generally we have been quite pleased with the response. We were quite pleased with the audit. We felt that it did add some value. On the one hand, it provided assurance that there was an awful lot going well, that generally the systems were there to do most of the things that we were expecting them to do, but remembering that this was a performance management systems audit rather than a performance audit. The systems we found generally were working well.

The areas where we made some recommendations we felt were appropriate and we look forward to doing a follow-up audit in a couple of years to see how the implementation has gone. I guess the area that was under most contention was the one around collaboration. It is clearly the area where it would appear to me that there are some reservations about it. Our view was that we have a great base in each of those organisations with what they are doing and are doing exceptionally well. Coming out of an audit, you would be looking to move things up to a better level, to a more sophisticated level. Our encouragement would be to build on that great base and one of the ways—not the only way—where we observed there was perhaps less being done was in the area of collaboration, of looking for opportunities to interpret the culture of Queensland through art, through museum collections and through the library. It appeared to us that they were all doing that individually, but our belief was there is surely a story that is able to be told collectively in appropriate circumstances.

**CHAIR:** That is a good point. I was going to pick up on that as well with the member for Coomera. In your audit conclusion you mention—

Arts Queensland, in undertaking its role of advising and supporting the Minister, has good systems in place to engage with the three Art Statutory Bodies (ASBs) at an individual level. There is also some collaboration occurring between the Museum, Gallery and Library. However, there is a lack of systems to fully capitalise on the unique advantages provided by the co-location of the bodies within the one Cultural Centre.

There is no Cultural Centre strategy or plan to promote a shared and collaborative vision for the precinct. Similarly, no cultural tourism and events strategy exists to promote and position Queensland within this competitive domestic and international market.

Firstly, do you agree with those comments and do you think that is a bit of a wake-up call for you? Where do we go from here?

**Dr Galloway:** The museum certainly supports the concept of a Cultural Centre strategy. I think there are great opportunities for us. We do have a unique precinct with all of the cultural agencies within the one area and that is not something that occurs in other states.

**CHAIR:** Is that right?

**Dr Galloway:** The level of cooperation we have had until now I think has been extraordinary. We unite around the areas of common audience. For instance, in the Out of the Box Festival we unite on the audience of young children. We all do young children's programs really well, so that is an area in which we can continue to position ourselves. There are areas where we have content strengths, and clearly one of them is Indigenous culture—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. All three institutions are very strong in that area; hence the Torres Strait Islander festival that was recently undertaken.

I know the art gallery and the museum are looking at similar audience segmentation through cultural segments which segment our audience on the basis of value. So there is strong collaboration, but you can always say that we could do better and that we could do more of it. What is the best mechanism for undertaking it? I think the Cultural Centre strategy could be one of them. Always I think, though, it is about celebrating what we do really well together but also celebrating our differences because we are different organisations. But finding that common ground, I think, would uniquely position Brisbane, Queensland and that precinct.

**CHAIR:** Rory, would you agree?

**Mr McLeod:** I absolutely agree. I have been in this role at SLQ for 18 months and I have seen a tremendous spirit of collaboration at a number of different levels across all of the precinct partners. I think sometimes it is the right partner at the right time, but I do not think there is any harm at all in looking at how we can do this differently or more collaboratively in the future or under a strategy. But certainly the examples that Ian has given of the Torres Strait Islander exhibition and Out of the Box, which is a wonderful children's and young people's program, show that there are future opportunities. We have our *Floodlines* exhibition that we will be opening next year in conjunction—

**CHAIR:** What is that one, sorry?

**Mr McLeod:** *Floodlines*, which is partly about the floods that happened last Christmas. We try not to make it at an anniversary point but into the new year, and that is a collaborative venture as well with the museum. So it is about having the complementary partners together at the right time given the issue that we are focusing on.

**CHAIR:** Good. Tony, would you agree?

**Mr Ellwood:** We would always be very happy to work with Arts Queensland on a Cultural Centre strategy. We also do share a lot of information about audience research and development and children's learning and so on, so there is a lot happening behind the scenes that may not be demonstrated in the more public realm. I have to say though that this is as a comment coming in the year that we did present the Torres Strait exhibition across QPAC; with the launch season of Bangarra, a strong performative program there to reflect the nature of that community; the gallery with a major contemporary exhibition; the museum with its historic collections, the Haddon Collection; and of course the State Library with its *kuril dhagun* program. That has never happened in Australia. That is the first time that four cultural agencies have worked on a common theme. That has captured the imagination of Australia in that the Queensland Cultural Centre does collaborate and does collaborate extremely effectively.

There are subtleties sometimes in the arts that are not always understood. A lot of it is about relationships, shared goals, shared anniversaries. This was the 140th anniversary of the Coming of the Light, which we all felt very passionate about on behalf of the Torres Strait community. We all knew we had strengths and we all knew we could work as equal partners. We also published collaboratively a major publication—the most significant book ever published on that community—across the four different agencies which was countersigned by all four CEOs as a very proud statement on how Queensland works together. So there are some great things that also need to be celebrated and we will look for those to be strengthened in future years.

It is the first time that many of our departments have actually got to know each other across areas that are less common to talk together, like our marketing sections and publicity sections and so on, and we now see across campus those relationships strengthening more and more. That will naturally occur. So I think we have to also balance the strategy and the formal ways to collaborate with the more natural, creative, subtle ways in which that can occur.

Could I also just quickly make a statement on cultural tourism. The Queensland Art Gallery formally put that into its strategic plan four years ago. We know that in the last four years we have generated a minimum of \$48 million in economic impact as a result of our major exhibitions. We have the largest group of local partners behind us for any state institution for our major exhibitions, and that is all to drive tourism. So we are very proud of that track record and that has grown dramatically, as has our audience as a result of a very deliberate tourism strategy.

**CHAIR:** Great. Then in relation to the comment 'Cultural Centre strategy or plan', do we have such a thing? I know you said that it can be formalised, but it can also be unstructured. So is that something we are looking towards? Is there some formal strategy?

**Ms Tabrett:** If you are happy for me to answer that, I want to endorse Tony's comments and Rory's comments that the record of collaboration really is exemplary, and that includes a whole pattern of collaborations also with Arts Queensland. So we were an additional funder and partner in the Torres Strait exhibition. It is just a little frustrating to have a focus on that when we are confident that we work collaboratively together and have a great sense of each other's work.

However, following on from the audit process, we have initiated a set of discussions with the agencies towards the development and articulation of a Cultural Centre plan which will have a number of platforms. One of those of course will be about the facilities and about such things as future developments and disaster preparedness. Another will be about the kind of audience experiences that are offered. The third thing will of course be—and the most fundamental thing—about the value of the cultural contribution that the organisations make separately and together. We have given an end date of December 2012 for the conclusion of that work, so it will rollout now over the next 12 months.

**CHAIR:** Glenn, as the Auditor-General, what is your take on this?

**Mr Poole:** I am encouraged by that action. As I said before, audits are about acknowledging what is going well but also setting the bar a little higher, and I guess in that area we were trying to set the bar a little higher.

**Ms BOYLE:** Presently my view is that the Auditor-General might have been a bit tough on you all on that score. He always wants to set the bar higher but maybe he did not give enough recognition for the collaboration. Another of the areas where he gave you a little bit of a serve was in terms of improving your performance measures. I do not know what your present performance measures are, what you think of them and whether you have yet had any thoughts about if you could do that any better than you are. I wonder if you might individually just give me a glimpse—what are your present performance measures, how satisfied are you, what do you think about his suggestion that you review them? Who would like to go first?

**Mr McLeod:** I will start. We always are rigorously challenging our performance measures, whether they are the internal measures that we use or whether they are the SDS measures that we submit at the end of the year. There is some commonality in those measures, whether it is visitation or satisfaction rate. Beyond that, a lot of our measures are then library specific or they are about database usage or they are about collection growth. So we are reasonably satisfied that they are a good measure for our success at this point in time, but we have always got an eye on the future and we think that the transition again to an online audience is a change that we will need to keep a careful note of as a library.

**Dr Galloway:** We have a whole range of performance indicators that we work to as an institution. They include visitation, audience satisfaction, collection growth, research papers and commercial performance indicators as well. In terms of our outreach and in terms of reaching out to local government areas, we use those same indicators. There is a Council of Australasian Museum Directors that annually aggregate all of the information from across Australia and New Zealand and so we benchmark ourselves against how the other museums are going in the major state national museums. My understanding is that in terms of the precinct the performance indicators cover attendance, online visitation and audience satisfaction. So I think you will find that most of the institutions have very detailed performance indicators for themselves. As I said, though, we would normally measure ourselves against other museums rather than necessarily against the Art Gallery or the State Library.

**Mr Ellwood:** We have five measures that we have been applying the last few years. They look at attendance, number of regional locations serviced, number of exhibitions, visitor satisfaction and website usage, but we are constantly reviewing and amending those as well.

**Ms BOYLE:** Could we put Leigh the spot. That is a hard one for Arts Queensland because you do not control these bodies and yet they are part of delivering your broader vision, are they not?

**Ms Tabrett:** They are.

**Ms BOYLE:** How do you do the performance measures, Leigh?

**Ms Tabrett:** Thank you for that question. We have a series of performance measures which are naturally in the Service Delivery Statements. They focus very much on our role as a funding agency but also on the outcomes from that funding—that is, how many attendances are generated from the input of government dollars. There are a couple of measures which are about client satisfaction with our management of that funding and one which is about the rates of utilisation of arts and cultural facilities. I think it is important to say that Arts Queensland's role has been changing and developing. Up until very recently, for example, we were not responsible for the provision of facilities' services to the Cultural Centre. So we are ourselves catching up with those changes in a way performance measures are developed and stated. But, again, we are very happy to work on this area with our agencies because we do think that there is a bigger story to be told on behalf of the portfolios as a whole rather than just the individual agencies, and that is the challenge for us to do. Thanks.

**Mr STEVENS:** I have a quick general question more than an audit question in relation to Tony at the Art Gallery. We have just had legislation come into the House in relation to an amendment bill to amend the legislation to allow for a board, if you like, to be established. Can you just give me a very brief explanation why it is necessary to amend the current legislation and why the current set-up is not satisfactory to deliver the outcomes you are proposing by this amendment?

**Mr Ellwood:** Would you mind if my colleague answered that?

**Mr STEVENS:** Not at all.

**Mr Ellwood:** He has managed that process far more effectively than I have.

**Mr Clark:** Thank you for the question. The current constitution of the foundation was established back in the 1970s and it has really become very outdated in terms of how it describes the membership of that committee. For example, it refers to things like a position that no longer exists, so it is just a very outdated constitution that we have for that. This approach is really to contemporise and to also make sure that the relevant controls are in place in terms of the foundation and how it works to do the best work for the gallery. It is really something that we have done a lot of work with Queensland Treasury on to look at compliance and also with Arts Queensland. We have really looked at the best model and explored a number of different ways of doing it, but we really feel that the model that we have proposed which is the same as the National Gallery of Victoria, which happens to be the best at this in the country, is actually the best way to go forward.

**Mr STEVENS:** Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** We have a lot more things to get through this morning, so as such the time allocated for this public hearing has expired. If members require any further information, we will certainly contact you or your organisation. Thank you for your attendance here today. We really appreciate your assistance. I declare this briefing closed. Is it the wish of the committee that the evidence given here before it be authorised for publication pursuant to section 50(2)(a) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001? There being no objection, I so authorise. Thank you very much for your attendance today.

**Committee adjourned at 10.58 am**