

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE  
STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO THE “INSIDE AUSTRALIA” PROJECT AT LAKE  
BALLARD (MENZIES)**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN  
AT PERTH  
WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2009**

**Members**

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan (Chairman)**

**Mr A.P. Jacob (Deputy Chairman)**

**Mr I.M. Britza**

**Mr A.P. O’Gorman**

**Mr T.G. Stephens**

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**Hearing commenced at 10.04 am****DORAN, MR SEAN****Arts Producer, Insideworld Imagine,  
examined:**

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Thank you for coming along today, Sean, and welcome to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. On behalf of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, I would like to thank you for your interest and for appearing before us today. The purpose of this hearing is to assist the committee in gathering evidence for its inquiry into the *Inside Australia* Lake Ballard installation, by Antony Gormley. I believe you have been provided with a copy of the committee's specific terms of reference.

**Mr Doran:** I have, yes.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** At this stage I would just like to introduce everyone. I am the Deputy Chair of the committee, Albert Jacob, member for Ocean Reef, filling in for the Chair of the committee, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, who could not be with us today; on my right is Hon Tom Stephens, member for Pilbara, who I believe you know, and Mr Ian Britza, MLA, member for Morley. We also have another apology from Mr Tony O'Gorman, member for Joondalup.

The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee is a committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia. This hearing is a formal proceeding of Parliament, and therefore commands the same respect given to proceedings in the house itself. Even though the committee is not asking witnesses to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing, and Hansard will be making a transcript of the proceedings for the public record. If you refer to any documents during your evidence, it would assist Hansard if you could provide the full title for the record.

Before we proceed to the questions we have for you today, I need to ask you a couple of questions. Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form about giving evidence to a parliamentary committee?

**Mr Doran:** Yes, I do, and I have read them.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Excellent. Did you receive and read the information for witnesses briefing sheet which was provided with the "Details of Witness" form today?

**Mr Doran:** Yes, I did.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Do you have any questions in relation to being a witness at today's hearing?

**Mr Doran:** No, I do not.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Would you please state your full name and the capacity in which you appear before the committee today?

**Mr Doran:** My full name is Sean Pdraig Doran, and I am here today in relation to being the director of the Perth festival in 2003, when I commissioned the sculptures for the fiftieth anniversary festival.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much, and that is all the formalities over with. As Deputy Chair, thank you very much for coming before us today. The process is probably not as nerve-racking as that phrase makes out; it is more of a discussion. You are the first person that we are hearing from in this inquiry, and it is, I suppose in many ways, an opportunity for you to make a verbal submission before us today on the project and the history of how it came to be, and I am

particularly keen to hear your comments on what you hope to see for the future of this project as well.

**Mr Doran:** Thank you very much; it is a pleasure to be here.

As part of my opening remarks, I would like to say that I led the commissioning of the *Inside Australia* project by the sculptor Antony Gormley to mark the fiftieth anniversary festival of the Perth International Arts Festival, which was to take place in 2003. But the impetus, and I suppose the motivation, of where I was coming from, with my authority as artistic director of the festival, was that I arrived in Western Australia in 1999 in preparation for my first festival in 2000, which would have been the forty-eighth festival, and I felt very strongly that the festival needed to be made more accessible to the wider community. Over the four years I was taking the festival out through the suburbs and out into the state, and the Gormley sculptures, in a way, were the end piece, I suppose, of my tenure. They served to raise the debate and promote that Perth is the capital of a state as much as it is a metro, and that there is a legitimate audience, morally, there for the festival to address and support and engage with. Also, it has a very exciting aesthetic from an artistic point of view, and the state of Western Australia is absolutely unique in the world, whereas of course any urban centre is very similar to most urban centres in the world. The point of difference, and what is exciting artistically and aesthetically, is the landscape of the state and the region.

For the fiftieth anniversary, even though we were not given any extra funds to market, I felt it was important, as the oldest and first festival established in Australia of all of the state capitals' festivals—it was established in 1953—to somehow go beyond ourselves in commissioning something that was extra special. I think when you have a three-week festival and you have 49 weeks of the year to prepare for it, it should be extra special in any case among your cultural community. It is a rare position, or luxurious position let us say in some ways, to prepare things. I felt if we could come up with a gift and something extra special for the commission, that would be a legacy and long lasting for the state; it would be a great thing to do. Then basically we asked ourselves who are the very greatest of the artists of our time in the world today—we were not going to take a second best or a third best; we were going to go for the very best, and Antony's name came up. I had not worked with Antony before, although I was aware of his work.

We approached him and persuaded him to fly out here to Western Australia without knowing what he would do or where he would do it. Our artistic producer accompanied him and his daughter in a small aeroplane for two or three days, when they basically flew over the state to find what was, in Antony's mind, a sense of 360-degree flatness to the horizon.

The project began there, and he did eventually find somewhere, and then he phoned in and told us it was 800 kilometres from Perth. That was enriching from an artistic point of view. Obviously from a persuading point of view, as festival director, to say that probably your single most expensive event in the 50 years will be 800 kilometres away from the centre was quite a persuading process, but I think it was very energising for all who, from then to now, have been involved in it. Of course there was no box office either, which was something difficult for a festival that is performing arts-driven to get its head around. But I liked all these aspects because a festival is meant to be about going into virgin territory, and, in the same vein, I feel the responsibility of something like an international festival is that you do what others have not got the resources or the support to do in order to go into that virgin territory, take the pain and then create a precedent that then changes for the other 49 weeks of the year for the rest of the cultural community that you are a part of. That was the ethos behind the festival, for which Antony created *Inside Australia*.

In finishing my opening remarks, I would like to say that my expectations for it were high artistically and in international terms, but it has far exceeded those expectations. I think Western Australia has one of the most extraordinary and significant cultural artworks in the world. My words alone do not just attest to that. I left Western Australia in 2003 to work at the English National Opera in London, and continually on the BBC, and in a two-page spread in *The Times* I

would open up a page showing four iconic pieces of world art; three were in America, and the other one was in Western Australia, being *Inside Australia*. I will talk, if you wish at some point, about why I think this is so special. For instance, a book was published two years ago by Amy Dempsey called *Destination Art*. It is a big tome which pulls together 200 leading pieces of land art in the world, but 50 are prioritised with two-page spreads, of which *Inside Australia* is one, but when you open the book up, the frontispiece is of *Inside Australia*, ahead of absolutely every other. I think it is that extraordinarily special, or as one journalist put it—which when I first read it myself I thought it may have been overreach—that it was Western Australia’s Sydney Opera House. But it is not overreach, because I think it has the potential, and is already showing, how imagery-wise it is a standout piece of work, and that it is iconic in its imagery. You see the image being used in mining companies’ materials and you see the image being used in Geoffrey Bolton’s latest book on the history of Western Australia; it was on the front cover. I think it is an extra-special piece that actually exists in this state.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I have a couple of things to ask out of your opening remarks. What is the artistic director’s name who did the trip with Antony in the aircraft?

**Mr Doran:** It was with the artistic producer. Her name is Alison McArdle.  
[10.15 am]

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I have a definitional question. You used the term “land art”. This is an ignorant question, but I just want to press it: is this accurately described as art installation or an installation piece?

**Mr Doran:** Yes.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** What is the way to describe this?

**Mr Doran:** There are various uses of words but a “site-specific installation” would be an appropriate term, and “land art” would be an appropriate term. Land art is a generic term that was born in the 1960s. It has grown since then in terms of artists wishing to move outside the walls of a gallery space to the earth itself, and to create work that is site specific, that responds to what that place is about. That is what separates it from any other type of sculpture. For *Inside Australia* this is what is key—it is not just because of who the sculptor is, his aesthetic and his quality; it is because of the place. When everybody arrives there, what happens is all that the sculptures does is reveal what is already there. I think that is what is so exciting with this particular project.

Back to the Perth festival—*Inside Australia* connected the capital and the people of the capital with its state, which is a vast space, and which in other terms you would not be enticed to go out into that vast space. You need a very good reason or excuse to tempt you out there. Certainly over the last several years anecdotally the number of people that I have bumped into is just extraordinary—well outside the arts ambit of audiences and interests; of people who have travelled out there and have felt incumbent to take it upon themselves, when international visitors come to visit them, to take them out to this special artwork. So “site-specific installation”—that term is used because it responds to the place. What I was going to go on to say was that this is so extraordinary because it not only gained permission and support from the local community, but it is actually their very bodies that are out on that landscape—so that “personalness” and history that is there forever and connected with the place. I do not know of any other installation anywhere in the world that has gone that deep and that integrated to what the place is about.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** Is that the kind of reason why you stayed away from other sites? We knew about UWA being a possible site.

**Mr Doran:** It was always going to be out in the landscape, from Antony, somewhere. It could have been 15 kilometres out. It really depended on what Antony found was so special. From the plane, where he saw it first, it was the degree of flatness, but then he was not expecting the salt pan. The glistening whiteness gives it just an extra sort of spiritual dimension of a kind, a “specialness”, and

particularly how it looked at different times of the year—the water reacts to the salt and obviously the sun coming off it and onto the sculptures.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** Of all of the members, I am the one that is least knowledgeable. I do not know a lot so I am asking some simple questions. I would like you to give me a description. I do not know it. We are going to see it in a couple of weeks. I am really looking forward to seeing it. If I was describing it to a colleague in America, I would like you to describe to me what it actually is. You mentioned earlier that the sculptures are taken from the actual people.

**Mr Doran:** Yes.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** They were pretty aware the photos were being taken—how did you deal with that?

**Mr Doran:** I have some here if you want to have a look.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** Okay.

**Mr Doran:** I will describe it as concisely as possible. I will keep putting a full stop to stop talking because I could keep talking at length about it! What I say is my reaction, and should only be taken as my reaction and description of the sculptures, because what you find is that everybody has a certain reaction to it. The reaction is as valid and as positive as it has been of those who have gone out to it and have not necessarily understood it and the fullness of terms that the artist wishes to realise. It is a community of sculptures by the artist Antony Gormley. There are 51 of them. They are placed across the Lake Ballard salt lake within something like a 10 kilometre or 16 kilometre square radius. Lake Ballard is 50 kilometres north west of Menzies, the nearest town, of 110 people; of which 30 or 40 of those were scanned for the sculptures out on the lake. For the last 20 or 30 years, Antony Gormley's most famous, I suppose—certainly globally the most famous—work he has created is *Angel of the North*, this huge iron metal angel that stands just outside and looking over Newcastle. It has been transformative for Newcastle in its redevelopment and regeneration, and its positioning as a cultural centre, that is as exciting, as I say, the size of England. It was a real big winner when that was done in 1996.

Back to *Inside Australia*: the sculptures were created, for the first time ever in this technique by Antony, of a computer digital technique that he learned or gained from the American military, of all people, of how they took something like a half-a-million-digital-point scan of the body in order to tight-fit the uniform. Antony used this. Each person had to enter this cubicle that came out from California, naked, and their body would be scanned. It would have whatever it is, 50 000, 100 000 digital reference points on the shape of their body. Then what Antony did was draw horizontal connections across these points, like so many plates going down from head to toe, and then reduced the mass of the body by two-thirds into its sort of skeletal nature. The height of the body is kept. What came through and is so special about these sculptures is that they retained the character of each individual body. You would recognise who the person is, even reduced into that blackened by two-thirds mass of the sculpture. The community would recognise who they were. What happens, I think, when you look at the sculptures out there in the landscape, it just throws up the questions of where art can take place, who is it for, who can be involved in it; the whole spiritual dimension of our place on this planet and the sense of stillness and silence that that brings about.

What also happens in the nature of making the long journey, as most of us would from Perth to see this artwork, is that you spend more time with it. It throws a mirror up against how in our lifestyles today we—in gallery spaces, if you go to see a work of art, we all move around quite fast. We are in and out quite fast. We do not spend time with the work. That is what is achieved—the sense of physical journey that the person takes to go out there and see the work and spend time with it. But I think most importantly the thing I said was that when most people go out from Perth, let alone elsewhere, it is the first time they have ever been out in that area. It is the first time they have seen part of their landscape. That is what stuns them—how beautiful and extraordinary the landscape is.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** You said that the original intent in pursuing this work was that you were looking for something that may be long-lasting. I have read, in preparing for today, that it was actually intended to be temporary as well. I am wondering what caused a change of heart. At what point did we decide that we would keep it?

**Mr Doran:** As director of the festival, we hold tenures of four years. That is our authority. So anything we commission is always temporary. But what can happen, for instance, is a predecessor of mine at one point obviously commissioned the Somerville auditorium for the films. When successful, it continues on. Similarly, when I initiated what was called The Watershed—which was a popular music venue for the festival to bring in a younger audience—it has now gone from strength to strength. It is now called the Beck's Music Box. Things can continue, even though obviously under a predecessor, artistic director, it was temporary. In the public art world, permanent or long-lasting sculpture quite often starts temporary because it has to be received by the community, or rejected. If it is received and welcomed and wanted, then that is what turns it from becoming temporary to permanent. I think one of the most popular examples of temporariness into permanence is the Eiffel Tower. That was built as a temporary structure. It was actually offered to Barcelona but they did not want it, and Paris took it. Then it became permanent. I think something of that nature has happened with these sculptures. It has become permanent because of its success by popular acclaim really.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** One of the aspects that I was most interested in, going into this committee inquiry, was I read Geoffrey Bolton's book and I saw the sculptures as the cover artwork. Also, I was in the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne a few weeks ago—you have got these Lake Ballard installations in a prime place, in the area of the foyer. I live in suburban Perth, but I was aware of it because I was in a fine arts faculty at uni, but most Western Australians that I generally talk to and interact with have no awareness of this amazing sculpture that is right there in our backyard. What we are really interested in looking at as a committee is where to from here. What are possible ways that PIAF as a group would like to see this promoted or to elevate this to a higher status in our own backyard?

**Mr Doran:** I am no longer with PIAF. I finished in 2003. I certainly could not speak for PIAF. I am now an individual who returned to Western Australia 18 months ago and I am looking at other project possibilities, particularly in the region, from my own perspective, and working with regional cities and individuals. You mentioned Melbourne. It is an irony that there are six sculptures which the National Gallery of Victoria bought and it is in their foyer. Certainly, they seem to have claimed it. The east coast, if you are there and you not aware of the origin or where the real big set piece is, you would have no idea that it is in Western Australia.

Just to give background: when we commissioned the sculptures, I persuaded Antony, or we agreed, that he would create 12 prototypes that would help us to raise funds in order to fund the project itself. At that point I was only successful in selling two of the prototypes, which did actually allow us to cross the line to make the project viable from the festival's point of view and make it happen. Since then, the festival has managed to sell the other 10. Ironically as well, it was the most expensive, let's say single event, in the festival's history. It cost three-quarters of a million dollars, which, in Perth festival budget terms then, was high, but to east coast capital festivals that is not out of the ordinary. However, in the end it cost the festival nothing. I think a street artist from Spain probably costs more. These sculptures were part of the 50-year history. What I think is beautiful about that and what it shows and proves in terms of sustainability—and I personally am looking at this now—is that Western Australia has an opportunity, just referring to your question of successors to Antony Gormley's *Inside Australia*, because it is such a model of success of art work of world-class and the highest calibre belonging to a local community, and can only be in that place.

[10.30 am]

I think the Western Australian landscape, particularly, due to what is perceived by some as a negative, let us say, in how flat or vast or empty of people or whatever exists, is actually extraordinarily positive as an outdoor canvas for these types of works that you could build up over the next two decades and be very unique in the world in having them. It also points back into the deep history that Western Australia already has the oldest and largest outdoor gallery of art—the Aboriginal rock art—in the world, and you would have two points of the spectrum. That is something that I am working on separately; I have a paper that I could send to the committee if it so wishes.

But going back to the sculptures themselves, I think the project is incomplete in the original vision of the sculptor, as he envisaged 100 sculptures as opposed to 51. I think the main issue for the future of the sculptures will always be maintenance, so that the increasing number of people year by year who are coming out to see the work will actually see the work in its best condition and do not walk away having seen a work that is damaged or broken or has fallen over. I think that is worse, in many ways, for all concerned, because it makes WA look not very good in terms of the way it has looked after something as special as that. There are people who travel purely to Australia just to see this work alone. I think that would be the number one thing in terms of the long-term future. I was very excited and pleased to hear when I was in London a year and a half ago that the government of Western Australia now owns the sculptures and that it had got to that point. I think that is very exciting. I am also very pleased to see that the tourism commission has clearly embraced the existence of the sculptures as an attraction and an image, and has used that quite extensively as well.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Do you also believe that there is value in completing the project to the full 100 sculptures?

**Mr Doran:** Yes, I do. I think it is a world-class piece of work, but it is incomplete. To complete it and to have the confidence in that and how that is communicated to the world in proactive selling of the work for people to come to and view it, I think that is very important for it. There were other aspects to the project; we commissioned local architects Iredale Pedersen Hook to design a lodge beside the lake. That was commissioned so that those who had travelled so far would have a place of rest. The best times to see the sculptures are at sunrise and sunset, so if you have travelled that far and can spend that time, that is the way to do it, rather than going for half an hour and then speeding off again. Therefore, something of a basic, simple lodge that does not interfere with the aesthetics of the site and the raw beauty of the place is another potential way of going forward.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** I have two questions about this fabulous book, in which I saw all of the faces of the scanned people. Are the scans being held; and, if they are being held, did the people who were scanned know they have not been destroyed yet?

**Mr Doran:** My understanding now is that they have been retained, I think by Hedis, but I am not sure. My understanding is that they have been kept. What was the last bit of your question?

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** Do the people who were scanned know the scans have not been destroyed?

**Mr Doran:** I do not know if they know that they have not been destroyed. All I know is that they know that they have been scanned and they signed agreements for their bodies to be used if the completion of the other 51 sculptures ever happened. Contractual agreements were signed on that basis.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** I was looking through the book and it referred to the installation, and I was looking to see whether I was going to see one installed but there was no picture there. Have I heard rightly, that a couple have been stolen?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** That was something that I had read.

**Mr Doran:** Yes, these are facts that I am not so sure of. I have only heard as much as yourself, because, obviously, having left in 2003, I have not been involved in the curatorial progress of the project, but I have read and heard that two were stolen and some were damaged.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** They look absolutely terrific, and I just did not know how they installed them. Are they pretty secure?

**Mr Doran:** Again, that is a good question. I think the Art Gallery of Western Australia is probably best placed to answer these very technical questions because of its curatorial role, but the temporary nature of our installing them was that the plinths, or the plates, that held them in the lake were temporary. For them to be permanent into the future, those plates would probably also have to be replaced.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** That leads me to my next question: are you happy with Menzies' capability to look after and protect these works of art?

**Mr Doran:** I think the current construct is that the Art Gallery of Western Australia is involved curatorially, which I think is absolutely correct. The most important thing is that it is curatorially looked after to the level that the artist would like to see it looked after, and that it honours the integrity of the idea from the outset. If that is not in the right hands, you could have things happening such as it being made into a theme park, for example, which would ruin it entirely; I am not saying that is going to happen. There has to be a balance between enticing people there, as well as providing the means to look after them or support them getting there. I think, in an ad hoc way, so many individuals and groups have come together around this. When I was in Kalgoorlie for other reasons several months ago, I was quite amazed at the number of people who were providing tours and how much a seat cost to get on the bus to go out to the sculptures. I think the businesses in Kalgoorlie are actually, quite rightly, taking advantage of it and gaining well from it.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** My question is a bit more pedestrian and technical, and more with an eye to the report. Sean, what was the book called about land art that you mentioned?

**Mr Doran:** It was called *Destination Art*.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Is there anything else you want to say about that book?

**Mr Doran:** No, just what I have already said.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Do you know if Gormley has a view on selling some of the work to cover the costs?

**Mr Doran:** We came to an agreement, but, to be honest, I cannot remember who suggested it first; it was probably me, because I was looking at a way to fund the realisation of this project. He agreed to create 12 prototypes, which I had hoped I could have sold, but it was not easy because we were before the fact; nobody knew who he was and nobody knew what it would be. To be honest, various statements were made along the lines of, "Who on earth would go out 800 kilometres to view sculptures? This is a madcap scheme; it is a white elephant." I think what is extraordinary is that it has proved that people will, and they need and want this sort of thing within their environment. Antony agreed to help pay for that. I overcame it financially, with a balanced budget at the end of the day, by selling two. Also I should acknowledge Dr Haruhisa Handa, who contributed \$1 million to the fiftieth festival celebration, which obviously assisted in us taking on something as ambitious as that.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** The sale of the items to Melbourne, will that be on the record as to what was paid? Who will tell us that information?

**Mr Doran:** Julian Donaldson, the general manager of the festival, would know the figures for that.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I have another technical question: was the engineering work done by a local company? I wondered whether the engineering company involved in this project was still in existence and whether it had the capacity to just suddenly ramp up again.



**Mr Doran:** Yes, I believe they are in existence.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** It was Veem Engineering.

**Mr Doran:** That is absolutely right, yes, it was Veem Engineering. It delighted Antony that there was a local engineering firm that could take something such as this on, because it was a very ambitious installation. It is, I believe, the single largest sculpture installation ever done in Australia by a single artist, so it has many firsts to it.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** We have a list of questions to work through, but I am probably jumping ahead in the technical questions to ask about another aspect. On the basis of the experience you have had with this project, seeing that it was a first, is there a way of positioning Western Australia with a structure that can create more of these opportunities? Is that appropriate? How would one do that?

**Mr Doran:** I believe so. I think there is the opportunity, using, now, a precedent—something that exists—of such achievement and quality as *Inside Australia*, to commission a series or works. As I said earlier, I have written a paper on it myself.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Can we formally ask you to provide that to us, to the extent that if you give it to us, it then becomes a public record. If you give us anything, do not give us something that is your intellectual property that you do not want to lose to the public domain.

**Mr Doran:** Yes. I will just say that if you go out and see the landscape—I have gone out quite a bit to see it—it is just so unique and beautiful. I have to say that when I arrived in Western Australia 10 years ago, I was of a typical European mindset; I just did not get it and could not get it. But now there is probably nowhere in the world I am more passionate about; it gets into you in that way. It has a connection with the ancientness of the world. For example, the rocks up in the Pilbara are \$2.6 billion years old; the University of Western Australia or Curtin University found the oldest mother in the world, which is this fish with the umbilical cord, and there are the fossils and the sense of the connection with the cosmos from there. There is just so much about this landscape that I think is extraordinarily special. Therefore, I think that it would not be too difficult to invite the very, very best of not just artists in the world today, but architects as well, to respond in a similar way to Antony Gormley, to come out and respond and do something in a remote location that then becomes something that promotes Western Australia within itself and outside itself. Structurally that could be done, and seeing how, financially—against all the odds—at the end of the day, half the cost of the project, at \$750 000, cost nothing. I think there is the potential to set up a foundation on a basis of just two core staff, whereupon one is a curatorial specialist, and the other is a director/fundraiser. I think the individuals who are interested in art, not just here in Western Australia or in Australia, but internationally, and corporates and trusts and foundations would respond. I think other sources of funding could be found there.

Again, going back to how you could present, as that book does, the existence of this and the response it is getting in the international media, it shows the potential. If you use this as a model of success, by using a quality artist and working with the local community, it becomes a social and economic regenerative asset within a remote community and instils pride within that community. You can completely subvert and invert the normal thinking of surely the best of whatever can only happen in an urban setting, or it can only happen in New York and so on and so on.

[10.45 am]

Not so, I think, with something like this. The vision that I have for 2029 is in the sense that if you mark out what will be the bicentenary of the state and you commission, taking your time, normally every three to four years, you can build up a set of four, five or six, whereupon together they then mark out Western Australia as a very unique place as an outdoor gallery. As I said earlier, that complements the ancient gallery that already exists here.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** When you mentioned more and more artists or architects getting involved, I noticed that Finn Pedersen was one of the people. Is he the same person who is a principal with Iredale Pedersen Hook?

**Mr Doran:** That is correct, yes.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** You mentioned also in another part of your testimony reference to who has got custody of these scans now. I think you used the word “Hedis”?

**Mr Doran:** Hedis—I am not sure on that. Maybe the festival itself has actually —

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** What is Hedis?

**Mr Doran:** Hedis was a scanning firm. Hedis Metamorphosis, I think, is their full title. They carried out the scannings. So there were obviously many partners coming together on this, as well as 100 volunteers who went out lifting the sculptures and sinking into the lake and putting them in. Again, they are based in Perth. But I think the scans—I am not the one —

**The Principal Research Officer:** I think they are located with PIAF.

**Mr Doran:** It is with PIAF, yes.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** One thing we were wondering: do you know how the numbers of visitors to the site are calculated?

**Mr Doran:** No. Again, the tourism commission would know that exactly. I sort of know, because I asked, to get information myself in terms of looking at the potential commission of future works like this. I do not think there is any scientific method that picks it up. The figure I keep getting ranges between 3 000, 5 000, 6 000 and 7 000 a year, and building. I talked with Jac Eerbeek at the goldfields tourism promotion company. Where he is buying into it is a sense that they are going to always be there. He is seeing that audiences or the visitors to it are building year after year just by word of mouth going around or a journalist picking up on it and writing an article somewhere.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I cannot quite see whether there is anything else we need to ask from the list you have got. I refer to the question that relates to the long-term vision and management plan for the project. It could be handed from curator to curator. Is there such a long-term vision and management plan? Should there be one? One of the elements that such a plan would contain is some reference to PIAF having a 100-year vision plan—any quick comment on that?

**Mr Doran:** The only comment I would make is from the standpoint of having commissioned it and believing in the artist and the place, and now witnessing, six years later, to say that Western Australia truly, truly has something of quite an extraordinary nature. Therefore I think whatever it takes to claim it or own it—picking up the example of Melbourne and that confusion: should Perth itself and its cultural centre have a few of those pointing in that direction? It is that sort of proactive, positive claiming and owning and celebrating it that will give back an awful lot. I think certainly everybody within the powers of their remits—this is just a personal observation—has done and can do what they can do, but every group, be it the local Menzies community, can only do so much with their expertise or knowledge. They have a great local engagement with it. The Art Gallery of Western Australia, its focus is obviously the art gallery. How something can go beyond that to take something like this on with these various groups might be where the answer lies to actually proactively ensure that it is either completed or it is fully and properly maintained, marketed and promoted. Back to the Melbourne irony, at the moment, but even ironic I suppose financially since they bought them, they are probably the biggest funder of the sculptures to date in that way.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** It is going to be idle chatter on my part, but I am responding to the comment that Sean made about the art being a way into landscape. For me, having not had a connection with the south west of this state, I found it a hard state to get into down this end. I am used to bigger landscapes. I was lucky enough to be introduced to paintings of the south west. It was only through artistic representations in the south west that I started to realise that this part of the state is not a

disaster! I could see that there was some triumph within the landscape through the eyes of an artist. Likewise for me, the language of the writer Tim Winton has helped me understand the south west's coast and landscapes in ways that I was completely unable to see, because I had been, if you like, blinded by larger landscapes of which this all looked to me like it was devoid of value. I needed an artist to help me into this landscape. I can understand therefore how an art installation of this sort or land art can lead people into a part of the country that is otherwise completely and utterly daunting, but, through art, you can find your way into something that you might otherwise be frightened of.

**Mr Doran:** Absolutely. Historically, obviously whatever it is, 85 per cent or 90 per cent of the population in the main cities of the country are along the coast and you have this division between that and the interior. This work goes to that. That is why it is called *Inside Australia*. You have to go to the inside of Australia to see it, but also you see the inside of individuals; their core beings. It actually prompts you to look at your core being spiritually—what is it and where it is, and where you are on this earth. What excited me most about this particular work was that you have the majority of population obviously living in Perth in the south west, but the majority of the land is elsewhere. Most or many people have not gone out into the far reaches of it. Then you come up with this site-specific installation that word goes round on. It is not just arts people. I think that is the key thing. I am a classical musician and I love it and I go to it, but you have to accept that when you build a concert hall, that you have told 99 per cent of the population “This is not for you”! I try to explain it from my own background. I grew up in Northern Ireland. I grew up a Northern Irish Catholic; therefore cricket was not part of my vocabulary. When I started getting invited to the cricket matches here, I was not comfortable and people were dumbfounded how little I knew about what was going on in terms of the rules and techniques and so on out there. You do not want to go into that space. That is what I think is so wonderful when you have work of such quality artistically that is out there in the shared open public space without any threshold to cross. People go out to it, and, as I said anecdotally, the people I have met over these years, just at parties or somebody mentioned, “You’re involved in that and I was just out there”, in their own words “this mad thing that was out there”, they were blown away by it. Connecting the capital with its state—I think work like this has a great power do that, as you say.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** Is it too strong to say that we—as in Western Australia—have not owned it as strongly as we should have?

**Mr Doran:** I think definitely, but I do not mean that in a criticism or negativity. As I said, the Eiffel Tower was offered to Barcelona and they said no. Then Paris, a year later, said yes. The Sydney Opera House took 30 years to build. It was an awful lot of pain. The architect never saw it. For an outsider, it is one of the two or three main symbols of Australia. It has “culturability” and flair. Certainly when I go to Sydney, I go down and look at this as one of the most extraordinary human creations. It is part and parcel of the pain and the gain. The hardest things taste better when you get there.

Since we initiated it at the Perth festival, from what I have been hearing back, it is being curatorially looked after and responded to to a certain extent and moved on. It has come a long way. There is a moment to actually say, “Hold on. This is in our lap. This exists. We’ve got this. We can really make much more of this.” Not just for the locality of Menzies—as I say, internationally the image has just been used and responded to. As one journalist said, compared it to Western Australia’s equivalent architecturally as the Sydney Opera House, which I think is valid.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** Australians may think going 800 kilometres is a long way, but people from overseas will travel long distances to see something.

**Mr Doran:** Yes. There was one lady, I was told when I was out in Kalgoorlie, from London who rang the tour bus company to go out to see the sculptures. She said, “I’m just coming to Australia to see this work. I’ve heard about it.” They said, “We don’t take bookings. We have to see if there are enough people on the bus before we take the bus.” She said, “How big is the bus?” He said, “10

seats"! She bought all 10 seats to guarantee that when she arrived, there would be a bus there in Kalgoorlie to take her to see the sculptures. There are certainly some individuals of that nature who will travel to see work that they think is quite extraordinary. I have spent 30 years working in the arts. I have worked in several different countries. I have worked across the art forms. Certainly in my lifetime it is the single most exciting initiative that I have ever been involved in. Comparing it to the knowledge that I have globally, it is very, very special.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I understand the project in Liverpool—what is that called?

**The Principal Research Officer:** *Angel of the North*.

**Mr Doran:** Yes; the Newcastle one.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Sorry; my knowledge of the United Kingdom is not good. There might have been some commercialisation that has happened that has helped connect that up in a way to satisfy the market and perhaps give other equal opportunities for local businesses. I do not know a lot about that. There seems to have been something that has discouraged or prevented people from commercialising the work at Lake Ballard. Do you have any knowledge of this issue?

**Mr Doran:** I have no knowledge of anything specific due to commercialising —

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Replicating the image and trying to sell copies of the image; to have something that local people can buy. One of the things I can imagine that people might want to buy is small replicas of the sculptures that they are going to take away.

**Mr Doran:** I have no particular knowledge but —

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Souvenirs.

**Mr Doran:** Somebody wanted to do souvenirs of the sculptures?

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** There is the question about it.

[11.00 am]

**Mr Doran:** I think there would understandably be an issue with the artist. It is artistic ownership more than anything else. These sculptures were specifically individual; created at a certain height and are fixed in a certain place.

I think I would agree that this is the curatorial need, I think possibly, and that is what I mentioned earlier as the number one thing. The authenticity and integrity of the project has to be maintained. I used that wild analogy of a theme park, or if signs are put in the wrong place or give the wrong indication. I think it has to be part of promoting the area and what it is about, absolutely, but obviously a line probably has to be drawn somewhere so that it does not become so commercialised that it begins to taint the project itself.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Apparently, the *Angel of the North* project has resulted in interpretive versions of everything, including pencil sharpeners.

**Mr Doran:** Is that right?

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I can see that perhaps the artist, and perhaps others involved from a curatorial perspective, will have looked at how things have developed in other places and thought that they did not want to have that. But down at the art gallery you can buy a whole range of things as souvenirs of a visit to an art gallery. I suppose the only issue is whether it can be done against a curatorial backdrop and how to ensure that the stuff that is being produced does not damage the artistic integrity.

**Mr Doran:** Yes, I suppose, like any sort of copyright ownership, that gets natted out between the artist and curatorial team. Certainly Antony is not averse to the work positively impacting upon the community—it is all about community—but there are probably individual circumstances that he

may not agree to. But, to be honest, I am speaking really in thin air at the moment on that; I do not know anything in particular.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** It is probably good for us to get that feedback, because you know him and have worked with him. We have a videoconference with Antony coming up in about a month's time, so it is probably helpful for us to lay a bit of groundwork about his approach to this project as well. I think these are very pertinent questions for us about a month ahead of the videoconference.

I have a question along those lines about Antony Gormley, which was whether, in your opinion, knowing him, he would be perhaps more responsive to people who worked with him on the project participating in further things like a possible visitor centre that did not impact on the artwork. Would he be more responsive to people who were as participants in the original instalment, such as Finn Pederson?

**Mr Doran:** I think yes. We brought Finn in, because we opened it up to architects to apply to design the lodge, and the relationship was then created between Finn and Antony. Finn has worked architecturally out in the region quite a bit. He was very knowledgeable about architectural needs in very hot temperatures, and so on, and he completely related to Antony's aesthetics and what Antony was about. He got it intellectually, and he is also an absolute pragmatist, so he was able to execute on behalf of Antony. He was one of Antony's key leaders here, given that Antony lives halfway across the world.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Do you believe that Antony would have a strong desire to see the installation completed?

**Mr Doran:** Yes, I do. As an artwork, it has been left, I suppose, as something fractured or incomplete, in that the original vision was 100, as opposed to 51. Laypersons like myself and others may question what is the difference of another 49 sitting out there as opposed to the 51, but it is the original vision and there is work elsewhere that he has used in certain numbers of 100. He sees them from a decimal point of view. Also, I am surprised that quite a number of people have flown out there and not only flown to land to see the work on the ground, but they fly above it. It is really impressive, looking at it from above, which is another way of looking at it and having the scale of it. I think, yes, it would be a very important desire of his to have it finished. He has not had an instance when a work has not been completed in that way elsewhere.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** Does he have the other 49 scans?

**Mr Doran:** Yes, he does. I think 130 scans were originally taken. They all exist, but only 51 were used.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I thought you said somewhere, Sean, that only 25 or 35 people on the lake were local; have I got that wrong?

**Mr Doran:** No, I probably got it wrong. What I was meaning was, 25 were Indigenous, I think, which is another strength of the project; it was very cross-cultural. It also included pastoralists and mining people, and I think there were two backpackers who were going through the place at the time as well, so it showed a point in time.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** You are absolutely right, because I saw the photo in the book of two European blokes with just their towels round them, getting ready to go into the scanner. I just assumed it was Indigenous people, but it is not?

**Mr Doran:** It is not, no. Of the 51—I do not know—probably in the high 40s are from the local community.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** One person, Kathy Finlayson, was shire president at the time; she is quite big in politics for the National Party. She is one of those who is depicted on the lake and she is very

territorial and proprietary about the whole project and sees it very much as theirs, and it is about their relationship with Antony.

**Mr Doran:** It generated some lovely stories. As I say, as a sculptor he sort of knew what he wanted, but the project became utterly changed and transformed when he saw the place and then when he met the community. It could have eventuated that if the community quite simply did not want to take their clothes off and go into this cubicle, he would have had to get 50 people from elsewhere. That was an eleventh-hour challenge; we did not know if we would get over that. It was remarkable, because we were not expecting people to come out the next morning, but once one or two did, a few more followed. I think a teacher and a doctor went first, and then more followed, and therefore it became the sculptures of the community. How it eventuated could not have been better.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I am not aware of whether Antony Gormley normally does physical forms other than his own; mostly he has relied upon his own physical form, has he not?

**Mr Doran:** To that point I believe that was the case; that in his 20 or 30-year career to 2002-03 he was using his own body. Yes, this may well have been the first instance when he used other bodies and so many different individuals and used the inside of the body as a type of sculpture. His previous evolution of work had been the full mass of body, as you have probably seen in some of his works, but this was the first time something of the inside of the body was fully created in this way, and it has probably influenced any future work that he has done, which I am not aware of.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much for your evidence before the committee today.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Does Sean want to wrap up?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Good point. Was there anything you wished to say in closing?

**Mr Doran:** I made some notes, and if I was to wrap up I would be very quick and brief for you, but I think I have made most of the points I wanted to actually cover. I would only go back to the Melbourne point because it sort of raises its head: the *Insider* has appeared twice on the front page of *The Australian*, once with Geoffrey Rush with his arm round it, and at the National Gallery of Victoria, and unconsciously that ownership has been claimed, more claimed than here. No, I think I have said what I wish to say.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much, that has covered, I think everything that we were hoping to get from today.

Thank you very much for your evidence before the committee today. A transcript of this hearing will be forwarded to you for correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within 10 days from the date of the letter attached to the transcript. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence.

**Mr Doran:** Do you wish me to send you that document that I referred to earlier?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Hearing concluded at 11.10 am**