



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Culture and the Arts**



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CHAIR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE  
STANDING COMMITTEE

FROM: DIRECTOR, ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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## ISSUE

Art Gallery of Western Australia submission to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee Inquiry into the *Inside Australia* project at Lake Ballard (Menzies)

## Background and Status of *Inside Australia* (the “Work”)

The Deed of Transfer between Antony Gormley (the “Seller”) and the State of Western Australia (the “Purchaser”) was executed on 4 July 2007.

Ownership of the Work passed to the Purchaser in the physical state and condition existing at the date of the Deed. The Purchaser was deemed to have inspected the Work and accepted the Work in the condition as at the date of the Deed. The Art Gallery of Western (“AGWA”) is unaware of when an inspection was carried out by the Purchaser.

The Deed outlines the obligations of the Purchaser to maintain and manage the Work. The Purchaser further undertook to procure that AGWA is the sole curator of the Work including ensuring that AGWA is placed in sufficient funds to curate the Work to the standard agreed in Schedule 2 of the Deed.

In accordance with Treasurer’s Instruction 955 ‘Contributions by Owners Made to Wholly Owned Public Sector Entities’, the Minister for Culture and the Arts advised AGWA of the contributed equity transfer of the Antony Gormley work *Inside Australia* from the State of Western Australia to the Art Gallery of Western Australia on 29 July 2008. *Inside Australia* the Work is recorded as an asset of AGWA however it is not part of the State Art Collection.

## **AGWA Submission to Inquiry Terms of Reference**

1. The history behind the instigation and installation of this project, providing in particular information about the original scope and vision for the project

The Work was installed at Lake Ballard by the Perth International Arts Festival to mark their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2003. AGWA believes that the Work was intended as a short duration ephemeral art installation.

AGWA has no documentation other than the material contained in Schedule 2 of the Deed outlining the original scope and vision for the project. As the project was commissioned by the Festival the scope and vision for the project may be available as part of the original commissioning documentation undertaken by the Festival.

2. The role taken by the Department of Culture and the Arts and Art Gallery of Western Australia and other government departments and agencies in reference to this project

AGWA provides conservation and curatorial work to support a Government initiative to maintain and enhance public access to Antony Gormley's sculptural installation *Inside Australia* at Lake Ballard.

In taking up the role as outlined in the Deed AGWA undertook an initial site visit on 19 September 2007. At this time AGWA became aware that only 48 sculptures identified in the Deed of Transfer were on site and noted that several sculptures had been damaged, some had been removed for storage to the Shire of Menzies works depot and two had been stolen.

AGWA's role was to provide conservation and curatorial work it was agreed that the other government departments and agencies involved in *Inside Australia* as a regional tourism initiative would need to undertake to secure the site to preclude vehicular access as an urgent priority. There was clear evidence that this activity was the major contributing factor to the damage and removal of sculptures.

AGWA commenced its conservation and curatorial work shortly thereafter by inventorying the sculptures, conducting metallurgical testing of damaged sculptures assisted by conservation staff from the Western Australian Museum; and commencing the re-fabrication of the first of the missing sculptures "Alison McArdle". Additionally AGWA initiated the tender process which resulted in Artcare and Sydney Artefacts Conservation being awarded the contract to conduct a full conservation survey of *Inside Australia*. This survey was carried out in July 2008 and the final report received in October 2008. The Condition Survey provides the GPS location for each of the sculptures, photo documentation, condition assessment, treatment recommendations and treatment priorities for those objects of greatest risk of degradation.

AGWA has initiated a conservation treatment schedule. To date this has included the removal, repair, heat treatment and relocation back to lake Ballard of works identified as priority one in the Condition Survey which require treatment due to structural instability. AGWA has also re-cast and returned to the site the sculpture "Alison McArdle".

AGWA is currently undertaking the process of re-casting two sculptures that were missing from the original group to be returned to the site in October 2009. Further, two works identified in the next category of treatment priority have been removed from the site. This is the beginning of the next priority group to undergo a process to remove evidence of prior welded repairs which are aesthetically inappropriate so they can be re-welded, heat treated and returned to the site. There are a number of sculptures requiring this treatment and this work is scheduled to be carried out throughout 2009 and 2010.

As part of AGWA curatorial role copy has been provided to Tourism Western Australia for the text panels describing the Work for project signage.

AGWA also provides a representative to participate as a member of the Lake Ballard Advisory Committee.

3. The costs and benefits and role this art installation project is currently providing to the local community of Menzies, the wider goldfields region, and to the wider Australian community

AGWA is not able to comment as to visitation rates or benefits to the community from the *Inside Australia* project at Lake Ballard (Menzies).

In the wider context the art installation *Inside Australia* the Work is unique in the southern hemisphere. It has attracted wide media exposure and as such positions Western Australia and in particular regional Western Australia as an innovative community which embraces contemporary art of international significance.

4. Any support that is needed to assist the Shire of Menzies and the local Menzies community in helping maintain and protect the project

AGWA receives recurrent funding to provide for the physical conservation care of the Work. The provision of this funding on an ongoing basis is an essential component to support and assist the Shire of Menzies in maintaining the *Inside Australia* project at Lake Ballard.

5. What steps if any need to be taken to promote this project as a significant visitor destination in WA

The artist, Antony Gormley, has a significant reputation as one of England's and the world's most recognised living contemporary artists as evidenced by the reception of his current project "Fourth Plinth" in Trafalgar Square, London and "Angel of the North" installation at Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, England.

AGWA believes *Inside Australia* offers Western Australia a unique opportunity to gain international attention if a marketing program was undertaken.

6. The risks associated with any ongoing deterioration of or damage to the project

The risk of ongoing deterioration and damage to *Inside Australia* is extremely high if the conservation plan and the funding as outlined in the Deed for the conservation maintenance of the object were to not continue. It was clear in 2007 after the Work having been largely unmaintained from 2004 onward that the rate of degradation was high. Two works had been removed from the site and have never been located.

The Deed indicates a review period at the fifth year 2011 to ascertain whether the current level of recurrent funding to AGWA and the conservation treatment program is sufficient for the ongoing conservation care and curatorial custody of the work.

7. The opportunities for fully completing this project in accordance with the original scope and vision for the project

The Deed indicates that the Purchaser accepted the Work as a single site-specific work of art in 51 parts and subject to appropriate funding being secured by the Seller that the Purchaser would agree to explore the feasibility of adding additional sculptural figures to the location.

AGWA is aware that the Seller's main artistic representation in Australia, Anna Schwartz Gallery, continues to seek private philanthropy on behalf of the artist to support the fabrication of a further 49 sculptures. To date no funding has been achieved from this initiative of the Seller.

8. What organisational framework and financial support is necessary to protect this project into the future

*Inside Australia* is a major site-specific installation art work of international significance. The ongoing recurrent funding as part of the annual appropriation to AGWA for the conservation treatment and curatorial custody is essential to protect the art work and support the project for the enjoyment of future generations.

9. What opportunities and benefits, if any, exist for additional art installation projects of this type in Western Australia

The evidence that public art works captivate the imagination of local residents and international visitors is irrefutable. Major projects on the scale of *Inside Australia* planned from inception as a long term investment in the community rather than a temporary festival event would undoubtedly be of benefit in raising the profile of Western Australia as a creative community that supports innovation in the arts in all its regions.

AGWA is pleased to have received an invitation for the Director, Dr Stefano Carboni and the Deputy Director | Chief Curator, Gary Dufour, to appear before the Committee on 14 October 2009.

AGWA has identified the enclosed three documents relevant to the Inquiry:

The Deed of Transfer (July 2007)

Lake Ballard Management Plan (September 2008)

Condition Survey (revised October 2008)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stefano Carboni'.

Stefano Carboni  
**Director**

Encs