

ANALYSIS OF A REPORT - MUSEUMS IN AUSTRALIA, 1975.

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I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on the Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections, but I do not feel it appropriate to examine the Report in detail.

In discussing the Report, I believe the Committee did its homework and visited a fair cross-section of museums of all types, about 70 in all. The definitions of museums used in the report are based on the I.C.O.M. definitions, but I do not necessarily agree with these rigid classifications.

Tramway Museums probably fall into the 'Associated Museum' grouping, with some perhaps into the 'Local Museum' Grouping. Although not defined in the Report there are a large number of 'private museums' whose intentions are not always apparent, but usually are for profit and to support the owner, ie., tourist rip-off types. In contrast to this the nominally privately owned Tramway Museums are volunteer, non-profit making organizations, carrying out their tasks as a true labour of love.

Your museums are usually involved in research, expansion of knowledge of the subject and as such are probably ahead of most museums in Australia in the conservation and restoration of relics. In fact, you probably know more about your subject than other museums know about their own. However, you are possibly lacking in areas of organic material preservation and restoration, ie., books, films, textiles, etc.

The Report itself is alright in basic content and about 99% of museum people agree with its outline, although there is disagreement in the detail.

The implementation of the Report, either in part or in full, depends entirely on public opinion and pressure. As individuals or organisations I urge you to write in order to express your opinion of the Report and its recommendations. The Minister responsible for the Report is Senator R.G. Withers, Minister of Administrative Services, Parliament House, Canberra, 2601.