



Australian War Memorial— Curatorial and Conservation Functions

Report

196

Joint Committee of
Public Accounts

DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE

PAPER No. 805
DATE PRESENTED
27 APR 1982

A. Bradshaw
Clerk of the Senate

The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

196TH REPORT

THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
CONSERVATION AND CURATORIAL FUNCTIONS

Australian Government Publishing Service
CANBERRA 1982

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- (a) to examine the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Commonwealth including the financial statements transmitted to the Auditor-General under sub-section (4) of section 50 of the Audit Act 1901;
 - (aa) to examine the financial affairs of authorities of the Commonwealth to which this Act applies and of intergovernmental bodies to which this Act applies;
 - (ab) to examine all reports of the Auditor-General (including reports of the results of efficiency audits) copies of which have been laid before the Houses of the Parliament;
 - (b) to report to both Houses of the Parliament, with such comment as it thinks fit, any items or matters in those accounts, statements and reports, or any circumstances connected with them, to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of the Parliament should be directed;
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 - (d) to inquire into any question in connexion with the public accounts which is referred to it by either House of the Parliament, and to report to that House upon that question,
- and include such other duties as are assigned to the Committee by Joint Standing Orders approved by both Houses of the Parliament.

PREFACE

This Report on the curatorial and conservation functions of the Australian War Memorial arose out of the unfavourable comments of the Auditor-General in his Report of 30 March 1981. His report was fully substantiated in the Inquiry.

Whilst focusing on the state of the War Memorial's collection the Committee examined other aspects of the National Collection. The state of the National Collection can only be described as being at a crisis stage. Years of neglect and a lack of recognition of the worth and value of the national heritage as expressed by the collection has led to this position.

The nature and scope of the crisis is exposed in this Report. It acknowledges that only limited resources can be allocated but points out the need for a more equitable and coordinated allocation, improved management in and expansion of these resources. The Committee sees a need for a review from a national viewpoint as to how much the National Collection is valued and what price the Nation is prepared to pay to retain it.

Late in the preparation of this Report further comments were received from the Public Service Board arising from a study of the transcript of evidence. Whilst being somewhat concerned at the tardiness of these additional comments the Committee is pleased to note that a number of matters recommended in the Report have already been implemented. Where appropriate, the conclusions and recommendations in the Report have been extended to reflect the subsequent developments referred to by the Public Service Board. (Appendix 8)

However, these do not materially affect the main thrust of the Committee's Conclusions and Recommendations given the importance and value of the National Collection of which the War Memorial's collection forms a significant proportion.

For and on behalf of the Committee,

David M. Connolly, MP
Chairman

M.J. Talberg
Secretary
11 March 1982

The Australian War Memorial
Conservation and Curatorial Functions

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

1.1 The Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into the conservation and curatorial function of the Australian War Memorial is its first in such a field and is a foray into mostly uncharted territory. Few studies of such topics have been conducted from the Australian government viewpoint, the most recent and notable being the Pigott Report on Museums in Australia 1975.¹ It is not an exaggeration to say that community and Parliamentary awareness of the problems of preservation of the National Collection is practically non-existent.

1.2 The Committee found that the problems at the Australian War Memorial uncovered by the Auditor-General were not unique within the National Collection and whilst concentrating in greater detail on the Memorial's problems allowed the inquiry to expand to embrace the problems of other major caretakers of the National collection such as the National Library, National Gallery and Australian Archives.

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

1.3 The conclusions and recommendations made in this Report are brought together and listed here for convenient reference. The Committee found that:

• Chapter 3

1. The institutions within the National Collection, in particular the National Gallery, National Library, Australian Archives and the Australian War Memorial do fill a "museum" role when measured against the International Council of Museums (ICOM) criterion.
2. There is a need for the institutions within the National Collection, especially the War Memorial, to take a more active role on campuses of tertiary institutions to persuade curatorial students of their worth as prospective employers.
3. There is a "crisis in conservation" and this Report sets out to create an awareness of conservation and the consequences of neglecting it.

1 Museums in Australia 1975, Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collection A.G.P.S. Canberra 1975.

. Chapter 4

4. There is a need for the War Memorial to formulate a formal corporate plan and establish ongoing corporate planning within its Management function.

5. The title "Australian War Memorial" should be retained.

. Chapter 5

6. The extension of conservation facilities at the National Library are supported.

7. All institutions within the National Collection should prepare a formal general statement of policy including a formal corporate plan.

8. Urgent action is needed within the Australian Public Service to educate staff and institute procedures in preventative conservation of documents.

9. Special attention to the "conservation crisis" appears warranted at Australian Archives, especially in regard to conservation staffing and storage resources.

10. Early action is needed to organise and house the collection of the Australian Museum, presently in a poor state.

11. Early action is recommended in regard to the special needs of the Ethnographic collection, especially in regard to allowance for Aboriginal participation, especially in conservation.

12. The National Gallery is the most favourably placed and endowed institution within the National Collection.

13. Other institutions should study and adopt aspects of the National Gallery's operations, especially in regard to Inventory Control.

14. There is a need for the Department of Home Affairs and Environment to play a greater role in overseeing the National Collection and coordinating the institutions within it.

15. The Committee recommends the Department of Home Affairs and Environment examine the equity of the sharing of resources between the institutions.

. Chapter 7

16. The Australian War Memorial should be accorded special consideration in regard to staff ceilings.

17. An increase in staff ceilings is recommended.

18. The existing salary structure for conservators and curators is inadequate. A new structure based on long term personnel planning is required.

19. The present system of setting salaries for conservators and curators by "going rates" is negative and counter productive.

20. An even handed approach between the institutions in staff ceiling is warranted.

21. A restructuring of the curator and conservator classifications to equate with research scientist classifications is recommended.

22. A more structured and formalised approach to staff training, development and research activities in the Australian War Memorial is needed.

. Chapter 8

23. A Code of Ethics should be adopted by conservators as a means of ensuring maintenance of the highest standards of treatment for all objects conservators handle.

24. A program of management of conservation is urgently needed at the Australian War Memorial.

25. A "database" of conservation should be established to assist in reduction of the conservation backlog. The Department of Home Affairs and Environment should coordinate introduction of this tool.

26. A Working Party should be instituted to study the feasibility of a centralised conservation and/or research laboratory to meet the needs of the National Collection and to provide a centre of excellence for reference by any conservation laboratory in Australia.

. Chapter 9

27. The introduction of an ADP documentation and inventory control system at the Australian War Memorial is essential and should be expedited.

28. The Australian War Memorial should liaise and consult with the National Gallery to assist implementation of an ADP control system.

29. The Australian War Memorial should appoint a Registrar to be responsible for custody, movement, location and security of the collection.

. Chapter 10

30. A review of the finance allocation between all institutions within the National Collection is recommended.
31. A review of the revenue producing operations of the Memorial is warranted.
32. An independent assessment of the security system at the Australian War Memorial building and its Mitchell Annex is needed.
33. A review in the staffing level of attendants at the Australian War Memorial is needed with a view to increasing the staffing numbers.
34. A regular programme of internal audit should be immediately instituted at the Australian War Memorial.
35. The Department of Home Affairs and Environment should ensure all internal audit resources are equitably distributed and allocated throughout the National Collection.
36. Proposals to modify, extend and alter the Australian War Memorial with a view to improving visitor facilities are endorsed.
37. The concept of "disaster planning" for the collection should be examined. The Department of Home Affairs and Environment should coordinate research into this activity for the National Collection.
38. The Committee considers the suggestion of a national heroes' cemetery as part of the Australian War Memorial is worthy of further examination.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND AND CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

Auditor-General's Report

2.1 The Auditor-General reported in March 1981 (see Appendix 1) on a number of weaknesses and inadequacies disclosed during a comprehensive audit of the curatorial and conservation functions of the Australian War Memorial during 1979-80. The object of the audit was to evaluate whether management objectives and policies relating to these functions were being achieved in respect of legal compliance, financial regularity and cost effectiveness in the use of resources.

2.2 Broadly, the Auditor-General found

- . lack of formal written objectives in regard to curatorship, loans and conservation;
- . inadequate control, security, stocktaking and assessment of the collection;
- . gaps in catalogues and registers and no maintenance or restoration programs;
- . inadequacies in the Loans policies.

2.3 The Australian War Memorial was asked to provide a submission in response to the Auditor-General's Report.¹ The submission outlined the significant size and scope of the collection of approximately 4 million items with a value of over \$100 million. In general the criticisms of the Auditor-General were conceded and the Memorial set out action that had already been taken in response. The thrust of the Memorial's response was to blame lack of staff for its inability to take action to overcome these problems. In the area of conservation alone there is an estimated backlog of 450 man years.

2.4 To gain perspective, the views of other bodies with similar problems were sought. Comments were received from the National Library of Australia, the National Gallery and Australian Archives. In general each institution faced a similar conservation backlog, however there were some notable variations in general approach and in the resources each institution had at its disposal.

1 Joint Committee of Public Accounts, Auditor-General's Report March 1981, Australian War Memorial - Curatorial and Conservation Functions, Minutes of Evidence, AGPS, Canberra 1982, pp. 3-33.

2.5 The Public Service Board in its submission was optimistic about the likely availability of suitable staff and pointed out whilst the Public Service employment over the last five years had decreased by 5.7%, the Memorial's staffing had increased by over 30%.

2.6 The Department of Home Affairs and Environment bears overall responsibility for the Memorial and the other institutions mentioned. Support was expressed for the Memorial's staffing proposals and requests for additional resources.

2.7 The Committee saw the Memorial's conception of its role and its image to be a significant factor in shaping its approach to its problems and attracting resources. In a second submission the Memorial argued for the retention of its joint Museum/Memorial role (unique in the world) and saw its functions as fulfilling a three part role of

- . Commemoration,
- . Museum, and
- . Research.

In essence, "it commemorates by being a museum".¹

PAC Public Inquiry

2.8 The Committee visited the following institutions:-

- (i) 2 December 1981
 - Australian War Memorial, Campbell
 - Australian War Memorial Storage Facility, Duntroon
 - Australian War Memorial Mitchell Annex, Conservation Laboratories and Stores, Mitchell
- (ii) 3 December 1981
 - Conservation Laboratory, Australian Archives, Fyshwick
 - National Library of Australia, Parkes
 - Australian National Gallery, Parkes

2.9 A public hearing was held on 4 December 1981 with Australian War Memorial representatives as witnesses. Statements from other interested parties such as the Institute of Strategic Studies, Australian National University, the Institution for Conservation of Cultural Material, the National Library and the Canberra College of Advanced Education were taken. Official observers from the Public Service Board, Departments of Finance, Home Affairs and Environment and the Auditor-General attended.

1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 53.

CHAPTER 3

DEFINITION OF TERMS - MUSEUMS, CURATORS, CONSERVATORS

Museums

3.1 The word museum derives from the Greek word "museion". This was any place which by its general atmosphere was a "place of the Muses". Objects offered to the Muses as aids to contemplation and inspiration became objects for study. It has been argued¹ that these aspects of relaxation, inspiration, study and research are still the essence of museum organisation today and all museum development should be based on them.

3.2 The best known contemporary definition is that of the International Council of Museums (ICOM)²:

"A museum is a non profit making, permanent institution, in the services of society and of its development, and open to the public which, acquires, conserves, reaches, communicates and exhibits for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment."

3.3 The aims for a museum can then be summarised as

- . preservation
- . acquisition
- . research and scholarship
- . education
- . display
- . marketing

Curators and the Curatorial Function

3.4 Curators are normally managers within museums. Their work content embraces administration, accounting, collection management, acquisition and cataloguing, exhibitions and display techniques, public relations and research.

3.5 Curators are usually graduates with a major in a relevant discipline who obtain more specialised experience by research or formal study. Many curators have Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees. Only in recent times has academic training in museology and museography been available in Australia. In 1971 at the conference of the Museums Association of Australia it was decided that a museum studies course should be available in Australia.

1 H.R. Singleton, Keynote Address, Australian UNESCO Seminar, August 1973, A.G.P.S. Canberra 1975.

2 Quoted in Museums in Australia 1975, op. cit., p. 6.

3.6 The University of Sydney offers a Diploma in Museum Studies requiring one year of full time study. The course embraces the history and purpose of museums, their role, organisation and administration, management, accounting, buildings and equipment, collection management, acquisitions and cataloguing, computer techniques, exhibition and display techniques, public relations and visitor research. Vacation training at museums is included in the course. About fifteen graduates per year are produced. There are plans to introduce a Masters degree for part time students in 1983.

3.7 The only other course offered is at the Prahran College of Advanced Education. Again a Diploma of Museum Studies is offered of one year (full time) or two years (part time) duration. The course commenced three years ago and produces ten to twelve graduates per year. The aims of the course and course content parallel that of the Sydney University course.

3.8 These courses equip graduates to become a "Curator 1" in the Australian Public Service. Both institutions report that usually about 75-85% of graduates find jobs locally, while many curators are recruited from overseas.

3.9 The salary and structure for curators in the Public Service as at 9 November 1981 was:

Curator 1	\$19,549 - 20,559 - 21,571 - 22,584 - 23,594
Curator 2	\$25,278 - 26,289 - 27,301 - 28,312 - 29,323

3.10 A new salary rate and structure for curators in the Public Service was promulgated in early 1982, but effective from 22 October 1981:

Curatorial Assistant 1	\$14,090 - 14,840 - 15,590 - 16,340 - 17,090
Curatorial Assistant 2 ¹	\$17,870 - 18,720 - 19,570 - 20,420
Curator 1	\$21,600 - 22,740 - 23,880 - 25,020 - 26,160
Curator 2	\$28,080 - 29,350 - 30,620 - 31,890 - 33,160
Curator 3 ²	\$38,400

3.11 Several institutions reported that the nature of a collection was an important factor in the recruitment of Curators. The Committee believes this may have recruitment implications for each institution and the onus is on each institution to "sell itself" more to students to overcome any prejudices, misconceptions or misunderstanding about their collections. The Committee recommends this action especially to the Australian War Memorial where connections with war could be a negative factor in recruitment.

1 New level added December 1981.

2 At present applies in Australian National Gallery only.

Conservators and the Conservation Function

3.12 Conservation, the preservation of all items of historic or artistic value poses the greatest challenge to Australian museums, in particular those of the Australian Government. Conservation can be defined as:

- management of collections in terms of storage and user control;
- treatment of damaged or degraded materials by chemical and physical means;
- physical protection of new materials.

The conservation "crisis" has arisen from a number of factors:

- late recognition of the problem - conservation is a new profession;
- consequent lack of professional conservators;
- the nature of many of the objects within local collections such as fragile bark paintings, war relics or paintings made by makeshift materials;
- lack of recognition of the need for careful and suitable storage under local conditions or suitable display conditions;
- lack of public knowledge and awareness of the problem.

3.13 Conservation is a painstaking, labour intensive, high cost activity requiring specialists with extraordinary manual skills, taste and an ability to understand and comprehend the object being conserved and even the artist's intentions. The conservator must possess an absolute fear of doing something irreparable to the material. It can take up to ten years to achieve an acceptable level of proficiency. Such people are scarce.

3.14 Traditionally conservators have been trained under an apprenticeship system, attached to an established practitioner. Many existing local conservators have been recruited from overseas. The only course in Australia, which also covers the whole of South East Asia is at the Canberra College of Advanced Education. This course has existed for four years. Currently an associate diploma (two years) and

1 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, Part B(2), Record of visit to Australian National Gallery by Committee.

Masters degree (two years) are offered (Appendix 2) and a three year Bachelor degree will be introduced pending approval by the Department of Education. Establishment of this course was as a result of the recommendations of the Piggot Inquiry in 1975 which argued:

"A professional course is proposed because tasks in conservation are often so complex as to be beyond the competence of technicians applying standardised measures. It is essential that the conservators be viewed as professionals. In salary and status they should be equated with curators".¹

3.15 About ten to twelve graduates per year are produced by the course of which eight on average are Australians. The need to restrict the pupil/teacher ratio and resource limitations at the CCAE preclude any increase in output. As well there are a limited number of vacancies at the lowest conservator level, and employment of more graduates would be difficult. The current conservator shortage exists at the higher levels. It will take up to six years to overhaul this problem.² To increase the output would require greater resources at the CCAE including recruitment of overseas lecturers. Consequently there is no feasible way in which the local supply of graduates can be increased.

3.16 The Committee noted slight variations in the assessments of the standard of the locally trained conservators. In general, the institutions³ indicated a general level of satisfaction with the quality of the graduates. The National Gallery expressed the view that the course taught absolutely basic work and were reluctant to allow them to do more than very basic jobs under the supervision of a skilled supervisor. All institutions participated in training students by providing practical experience through vacation employment.

3.17 About 60% of conservators work in the Public Service. The salary structure at 9 November 1981 was:

Assistant Conservator	\$12,000 - 13,663 (in 6 increments)
Conservator Grade 1	\$15,335 - 16,653 (in 5 increments)
Conservator Grade 2	\$18,705 - 21,665 (in 5 increments)
Conservator Grade 3	\$24,490 - 25,298 - 26,104.

A new salary structure effective from 22 October 1981 but only promulgated in early 1982 is:

- 1 Museums in Australia 1975, op. cit., p. 67.
- 2 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 186.
- 3 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4 Part 8(2) - Record of visits to the institutions and submissions from institutions.

Assistant Conservator	\$13,180 - 15,010
Conservator Grade 1	\$16,740 - 18,180
Conservator Grade 2	\$20,380 - 23,430
Conservator Grade 3	\$26,400 - 27,240 - 28,080
Science 4 ¹	\$29,160 - 30,110 - 31,060

Difficulties in recruitment associated with this structure are discussed in Chapter 7. The Public Service Board believes this salary structure to be competitive both locally and overseas.²

3.18 The general consensus of all government institutions in regard to the use of contract conservators was that the costs involved were prohibitive. Dedication and a profound knowledge of a collection were considered essential attributes of the conservator and only in exceptional cases was the use of contract conservators considered feasible. The Committee accepted this viewpoint.

Conclusions and Recommendations

. Definition of Museum

3.19 The Committee considers the ICOM definition of a museum to be a useful, though ideal, yardstick against which to measure an institution as a "museum". On examination of the functions of the Australian War Memorial and the other three institutions dominating the National Collection, namely the National Gallery, National Library and Australian Archives, the Committee concludes that these institutions can be described as to be currently filling a museum role.

. Curators and Curatorial Function

3.20 The Committee recommends that institutions especially the Memorial, take a more active role on campuses of tertiary institutions in "selling themselves" to curatorial students as prospective employers.

. Conservators and the Conservation Function

3.21 In summary, the Committee wishes to create an awareness of conservation of the National Collection and the serious consequences of its neglect. The Committee again stresses the problem of the current "crisis in conservation".

- 1 Applies in Australian War Memorial only at present.
- 2 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 73 and Appendix 8.

CHAPTER 4

THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL - BACKGROUND

Legislative Basis

4.1 The Australian War Memorial was established by the Australian War Memorial Act 1925. Its constitution was changed in the Australian War Memorial Act 1962 and a Board of Trustees empowered to manage the memorial. In 1980 a further Act¹ was proclaimed with the following consequences:

- . The primary purpose of the Memorial i.e. to preserve the memory of Australian Servicemen and women who have died on or as a result of active service, was unchanged;
- . the Memorial and its Board of Trustees were unified into a corporate body, controlled by a Council consisting of between eight and ten members as well as the Chiefs of Staff of the three Services;
- . the Director was to be appointed by the Governor-General and have the powers of a Departmental Permanent Head;
- . the Council was to have total autonomy over funds and staff;
- . the Memorial was to have complete ownership of the collection;
- . the educational and historical role was to be expanded.

Functions and Objectives

4.2 The Memorial is a statutory body (as are the National Library of Australia and Australian National Gallery) under the control of the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment. The Auditor-General in his Report was critical of the Memorial for its lack of stated objectives. Several institutions and academics expressed the opinion informally to the Committee that the image of the Memorial as a "memorial" may be detrimental to its recruitment and management plans.

4.3 The Memorial, initially in response to the Auditor-General's criticisms, pointed to the policies and objectives stated in the Act (Appendix 3) and restated in their original submission.² When asked if the Memorial had

1 Australian War Memorial Act 1980, No. 104 of 1980.

2 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit. pp. 3-33.

a formal corporate plan, the Memorial conceded that there was no single document "which sets out a combined and concise strategy",¹ for certain areas there are specific plans, for example in conservation, as well as a staff development plan. The Memorial indicated that a consolidation into a readily accessible single document of the major policies and objectives as laid down in Council records was in preparation.

4.4 In a second submission,² the Memorial again argued that its role could only be understood in relation to the functions set out in its legislation. Three basic inter-related functions of commemoration, a museum role and research would always underpin the Memorial's future, only the approach to meet the changing needs of each generation need vary.

4.5 The Committee agrees that there is a general thrust discernible about the objectives, functions and plans of the Memorial from these sources, but believes that there still is a need for a formal well defined corporate plan to be formulated. This plan must embrace these functions but more importantly set out in detail how the Memorial intends to carry out its role. From this document all contingent and supplementary resources and staffing plans must develop.

4.6 The Memorial sets its priorities in regard to its concrete³ objectives as being firstly conservation, then education of visitors, and finally documentation of the collection. Achieving these objectives is dependent on resources. These issues are further discussed in Chapter 6.

Memorial or Museum?

4.7 The name and image of an institution may have some significance in its ability to attract staff and establish its reputation in the world of museology, especially in overseas circles. The Memorial concedes that the title Memorial has been a burden in this regard. Attempts in the past to initiate a change have foundered under pressure from groups such as service associations.

4.8 The Committee accepts the view however that the arguments for retaining the title of Memorial outweigh these objections. It is a unique institution which is both a museum and a memorial. The collection within the museum section is meant to serve as a memorial to those who served and died. It commemorates by advancement and diffusion of knowledge. The Committee believes the onus is therefore on the Council and

1 Minutes of Evidence, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 34-50.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 65.

staff to make known the worth and reputation of the Memorial as a centre of excellence in the museum world so that the title of the institution becomes an issue of little importance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

. Functions and Objectives

4.9 The Committee concludes there is a need for the Memorial to formulate a formal corporate plan as a matter of priority and establish ongoing corporate planning within its management function. The Committee argues that not only are individual objectives required for each area of the Memorial but the coordination between and inter relationships between these objectives must be understood and clearly spelt out in a corporate plan.

4.10 The Committee believes this plan must follow several basic principles:

- . It must have the support of both the Council and Director, in essence it must be their plan.
- . It be considered a developing process and not a single effort.
- . The Council and Director must participate in this process.
- . This plan must involve an environmental analysis to identify the main contingencies that may arise and the options available to meet them.
- . It must identify the priority areas within and between major functions.

. Memorial or Museum

4.11 The Committee supports retention of the title "Australian War Memorial".

CHAPTER 5

THE NATIONAL COLLECTION - OTHER MAJOR INSTITUTIONS

5.1 The National Collection consists of a wide variety of objects spread throughout many Departments (Appendix 4). Some are official, many are incidental to the main functions of Departments.

5.2 The bulk of the National Collection and the official collections reside in the following:-

- . The Australian War Memorial
- . The National Gallery
- . The National Library
- . Australian Archives

The Museum of Australia is in its infant stages and yet to develop its collection or establish a permanent home. The National Ethnographic Collection resides in the Institute of Anatomy.

5.3 The most significant and recent report on the National Collection has been the Report of the Inquiry on Museums and National Collections (including the Report of the Planning Committee on the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia) of 1975.¹ Its major recommendations relevant to this Inquiry were:

- . "Responsibility for all the Australian Government's own museums should be placed under one Ministerial portfolio...."
- . "As the deterioration of valuable collections in Australian museums great and small has reached the proportion of a crisis, conservation should have high priority when additional funds are provided by the Australian Government. We recommend the creation of a Cultural Materials Conservation Institute...."
- . "Establishing a post graduate course to train professional conservators at a degree-granting institution, a system of training technical staff for museums on an apprenticeship basis...."
- . "A Museum of Australia be established in Canberra and that the board of trustees be charged by Act of Parliament with the collecting, preserving, study and display of materials related to the history of man in Australia and the interaction between man and the Australian environment."

¹ Museums in Australia 1975, op. cit., pages 3-4.

- In regard to creation of a variety of specialist museums, "no more than three themes merit special museums" - maritime, aviation and Australian Biography.
- For the Ethnographic Collection, construction of a "Gallery of Aboriginal Australia" was proposed, with immediate requirements being
 - appropriate storage for the National Ethnographic Collection;
 - an adequate purchasing fund; and
 - implementation of a program of training Aborigines in museology and conservation.

5.4 Since that Report, from the Committee's view, progress has been slow. A number of initiatives have been taken:

- Responsibility for the Australian Government museums was placed under the control of the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment.
- The conservation course has been instituted at the Canberra College of Advanced Education.
- The Museum of Australia Act was passed in 1980.
- An Interim Council has been established with the powers of a permanent council to plan the establishment of the museum.
- Studies are in progress on other recommendations.

5.5 The remainder of this Chapter is a brief description of the functions and collections of the institutions other than the War Memorial, which dominate the National Collection. The Committee has not by any means made an exhaustive or complete study of their operations and problems, but in the course of its Inquiry has identified features which it feels should be made known. This is especially so where problems are very similar to that of the Memorial's.

National Library of Australia

5.6 The functions of the National Library are "to maintain and develop a national collection of library material including a comprehensive collection relating to Australia and the Australian people".² This collection includes a large

- 1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 139, and Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, op. cit., submission by Department of Home Affairs and Environment.
- 2 National Library Act 1960.

variety of items other than books such as paintings, maps, photographs, films, newspapers, historical objects and memorabilia. The collection concerns itself mostly with the historical nature of objects rather than the aesthetic.

5.7 In terms of man hours the Library shares a similar backlog of conservation work to that of the Memorial. The Library employs no curators. It has a conservation staff of five led by a Class 3 Conservator. The existing conservation facilities preclude staff expansion. These were in the Committee's opinion most unsatisfactory appearing makeshift, cramped and crowded - a direct contrast to the Memorial's Mitchell Annex. Extensions, incorporating a new laboratory, were recently deferred for two years and completion is now expected by 1985/86. The conservation staff approach projects on a team basis in order to meet treatment deadlines. This approach makes it difficult to sustain other work programs on a systematic basis.

5.8 The Library also believes a general policy document on the Library's approach to conservation is necessary and plans to prepare such a document in 1982. This will relate the needs of individual collections to a set of management objectives for the long term preservation of the collections.²

Australian Archives

5.9 Australian Archives functions as an "archival authority, responsible for the survey, evaluation, disposal, custody, conservation and preservation of Commonwealth Government records and archives and for the regulation and servicing of official and public access to them."³ Unlike the other institutions, Archives is not a statutory body. The Committee understands that this is not possible due to the nature of the records Archives maintains.

5.10 Archives do not deal with a vast variety of material. The basic concern is with paper and to a lesser degree film, tapes and paintings are conserved. Again, a huge backlog of conservation is faced. Estimates were given to the Committee⁴ of a backlog of 160 shelf miles of paper in Archives and 200 shelf miles in Departments. Many conservation problems are attributed to poor Departmental storage and Registry procedures. Great scope exists for preventative conservation

- 1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 190.
- 2 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, op. cit. Submission from National Library of Australia.
- 3 Commonwealth Government Directory, 1981, A.G.P.5 Canberra.
- 4 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, op. cit., Record of visit to Australian Archives Laboratory, Fyshwick by Committee.

in Departments and the Committee endorses all action that can be taken in this regard.

5.11 The conservation facilities of Archives, a temporary arrangement pending construction of a new National Building, appeared adequate to the Committee but again the staffing level of conservators was very low. Four conservators serve the whole organisation. Archives also face a major storage problem. A National Building is urgently required to house the backlog and increasing stock of documents. The consequences will be to place the load back to Departments, thereby consuming expensive office space.

The Museum of Australia

5.12 The Museum of Australia whilst existing at present only as a Secretariat under an Interim Council does have a Collection. This is a group of vehicles, furniture and memorabilia of varying historical significance housed in a non air conditioned and cramped warehouse in Fyshwick. Very little conservation has been done, although some preservation of certain items such as steam engines has been privately organised by an historical society. A basic register of the collection exists but no cataloguing or photography is done. Many items need repair or re-location, especially horse drawn vehicles which require special treatment to prevent deterioration. Other items which may eventually form part of the Museum of Australia's Collection are spread throughout several Government Departments and Statutory Authorities.

Ethnographic Collection

5.13 The National Ethnographic Collection destined to form the basis of the Gallery of Aboriginal Art, an integral part of the Museum of Australia, remains where the 1975 Inquiry into Museums and National Collection¹ found it - in the basement of the Institute of Anatomy. This important collection resides in a non air-conditioned environment, the 10,000 items stacked and piled within the limited space. Very little conservation is done. This unique collection, of unestimable value, is wasting away whilst it awaits a permanent home.

5.14 In regard to the conservation of this collection, it throws up new challenges. It will be necessary, for example, to train Aborigines in conservation techniques as well as employing them at all levels within the Gallery.

Australian National Gallery

5.15 The Gallery's functions are to develop and maintain a national collection of works of art and exhibits, or make

1 Museums in Australia 1975, op. cit., part 2, page 1.

available for exhibition by others, works of art from the collection.¹

5.16 As the Gallery itself will not open until October 1982, it enjoys the advantage of flexibility of approaches to the conservation and curatorial functions that the other institutions do not share. For example, within the new building, excellent conservation facilities have been incorporated. The existing job structure for Curators and the Head Conservator has been expanded to allow appointment at a higher level than exists elsewhere. The Gallery, as it approaches its official opening is very much in the public eye and enjoys a good "image" which assists recruitment of staff. In regard to conservation, the Gallery does not face a severe backlog and the load will be controlled by purchase of works of Art only in the correct condition.² The Gallery has been successful in attracting suitable conservation staff and three out of five positions are filled to date.

5.17 The Gallery also has an effective cataloguing and accessioning system and inventory control is ADP managed. These aspects are managed by a Registrar of Collections. A stringent Loan Policy is also enforced. Items of value greater than \$100,000 are escorted when on loan. Conservation work is programmed to ensure restoration of works most in need and the aim is to restore these works by opening day in late 1982.

Relationships between the Institutions within the National Collection

5.18 The Committee probed to ascertain what relationships, cooperation and joint effort existed between the Institutions to resolve their mutual problems. The Committee observed that whilst many problems of conservation, curatorial functions and inventory management of collections were common to all institutions, there were different approaches, some more successful than others. The Committee was anxious that there be interchange between the institutions of these approaches and innovations for the benefit of the overall collection.

5.19 Several instances of cooperation at the "bench level" in conservation were cited.³ The Committee also noted the usefulness of the Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (ICCM) as a forum of interchange of knowledge between conservators.

5.20 The Committee noted the interplay and contacts engendered by membership of bodies such as the International Council of Museums, Commonwealth Association of Museums,

1 Australian National Gallery Act 1975.

2 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, op. cit. Record of visit to Australian National Gallery.

3 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 114-117.

Museums Association of Australia and the Council of Australian Museum Directors.

5.21 It was also reported to the Committee¹ that the executive heads of the Library, Gallery, the War Memorial and the Museum of Australia had been conducting informal meetings and were on the point of establishing a somewhat more formal grouping. The Committee supports this move.

Conclusions and Recommendations

. National Library of Australia

5.22 The Committee supports plans for extension of the Conservation facilities at the National Library and recommends implementation of these plans as quickly as resources allow.

5.23 The Committee endorses preparation of general policy documents for all institutions and recommends a "corporate plan" approach to the Library.

. Australian Archives

5.24 The Committee recommends to all Departmental Heads that urgent action be taken in regard to the production, handling and storage of documents and papers to ensure

- . staff are fully aware of the need for preventative conservation;
- . paper of appropriate quality is used for documents (Archives can recommend appropriate sources);
- . long-life inks are used;
- . appropriate storage conditions and facilities are allowed for in the handling and care of documents.

5.25 The Committee recommends an immediate examination of the current conservation crisis at Australian Archives and action to increase conservation staff and storage resources. The consequences of not doing so, it appears to the Committee, may result in greater future expense.

. The Museum of Australia

5.26 The Committee recommends that early action be taken by the Department of Home Affairs and Environment to re-house and store the existing collection in an organised and effective manner, to fully catalogue the collection and determine the conservation backlog. It suggests that the

1 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, op. cit. Record of visit to National Library by the Committee.

experience of other institutions in regard to conservation, curatorial functions and inventory control be examined carefully, in the hope that existing inadequacies, identified in relation to other institutions will be avoided.

. Ethnographic Collection

5.27 The Committee recommends that the Department of Home Affairs in cooperation with State and Commonwealth museums and academic institutions examine the unique problem of Australian ethnographic conservation at the earliest possible time. It also suggests that Aboriginals must be equipped to hold not only positions within the conservation sphere but at all levels of the museum organization.

. Australian National Gallery

5.28 The Committee concludes that the National Gallery in many aspects is the most favourably placed and endowed institution within the National Collection. This is in stark contrast to the other institutions, especially in regard to the conservation and curatorial functions.

5.29 The Committee commends to the other institutions that certain aspects of the Gallery's operations may be worthy of study for possible adaptation to their own institutions. This particularly applies to Inventory Control of collections.

. Relationship between the Institutions within the National Collection

5.30 The Committee acknowledges that an inter-relationship exists between the institutions of the National Collection but concludes a greater relationship of a more formal nature co-ordinated by the Department of Home Affairs and Environment is necessary. This should ensure a more equitable distribution of resources, greater sharing of expertise and encourage more joint approaches and effort in regard to resolution of mutual problems such as staffing and salary structures, common conservation problems, sharing and rotation of staff.

5.31 The Committee recommends that the Department of Home Affairs and Environment examine the equity of the sharing of resources between the institutions.

CHAPTER 6

THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL'S BURDEN

6.1 The specific criticisms of the Auditor-General (Appendix 1) have not been denied by the Australian War Memorial. These deficiencies relate to:

- . Curatorial functions
- . Conservation functions
- . Inventory Management and Control
- . Loans

The Auditor-General indicated also that there were few written management objectives in these areas.

6.2 The Auditor-General's report appears to the Committee symptomatic of a greater malaise which has existed within the Memorial for some time. As the current Director said in evidence.

"I have had forty-four years in public service and I have been around quite a lot. I think of every institution I have been in this has been the most run down and neglected".¹

6.3 The consequences of this neglect are the deterioration and loss of exhibits and the huge backlog of conservation said to total 450 man years of effort. This problem relates to the enormous variety of items within the collection and the poor state of the material when it was received into the Memorial. There was also a lack of awareness of the nature and mechanisms of deterioration of objects over time. Only within the last decade has there been an awakening to this "unwitting neglect".²

6.4 In more concrete terms for example, this neglect has resulted in:

- . Loss of twenty per cent of the military heraldry, uniforms and weapons collection (8,000 items).
- . Dumping of seventeen out of eighteen World War I planes (worth approximately \$100,000 each in current terms).
- . Deterioration of exhibits, particularly uniforms but also including exterior exhibits such as the Japanese submarine.

1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

2 Ibid., p. 56.

- Presumed loss of four paintings by Donald Friend and two by A.H. Fullwood (the uncertainty reflects the inadequate documentation and cataloguing procedures in the past).
- A large quantity of missing books (again, because of sheer diversity of the material in the Library collection and inadequate documentation procedures, exact estimates are not available).
- Deterioration of the Roll of Honour, one of the most important commemorative features (and one of prime interest to many visitors) to illegibility in many sections.

6.5 In addition to inherited problems, the Memorial must meet its other responsibilities within the Australian War Memorial Act. The 1980 Act has broadened these functions (Appendix 3). As well as maintenance and development of the memorial and its collection the Memorial is required to exhibit its historical material, conduct, arrange for and assist in research, and disseminate information on military history and the collection. Other powers within the Act relate to the Memorial's ability to:

- purchase, hire or receive as a gift historical material;
- lend material;
- collect and make available information, replicas etc. relating to Australian military history;
- assist educational institutions, Defence Force Museums and provide facilities to stimulate interest in military history.

6.6 The indications are that such demands are being made increasingly on the Memorial. This has been reflected in:

- the steadily rising number of visitors to the Memorial (over 800,000 in 1981 - apparently second nationally only to the Sydney Opera House);
- a steadily growing collection as a result of donations by individuals and Service bodies and establishments;
- a significant jump in the enquiries directed to the Memorial library (a fourfold increase in the last three years) in particular:
 - by the Department of Veteran's Affairs in determining pension claims and appeals,
 - by individuals due to the growing interest in family histories,

- by the media, in production of films such as "Gallipoli",
- by academic researchers and historians. The Committee heard evidence¹ from Dr R. O'Neill of the Institute of Strategic Studies and Official Historian for the Korean War of his dependence and demands on the War Memorial in preparation of these important histories. The official histories of the Vietnam War, the Malayan Emergency, Zimbabwe peacekeeping force and other areas are yet to be tackled.

- the growing demand for educational services (over 15,000 pupils visited the Memorial in the 1979/80 financial year as schools are recognising the educational value of the exhibits).

6.7 The Committee also notes other tasks facing the memorial such as development of its publishing program, its contribution to the Australian Bicentenary Anniversary in 1988, its proposed oral history program, sound recording library and facilities. The task facing the Memorial is awesome. The following Chapters examine the reasons for the "unwitting neglect" and some solutions for improvement.

¹ Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., pp. 169-173.

CHAPTER 7

STAFFING

Staff Ceilings

7.1 In their submissions to the Committee and during the Inquiry, the Memorial has ascribed its problems to a lack of resources, in particular staff shortages. For many years in its Annual Reports, the Memorial has been consistently making this problem known.¹ The first attempt² to quantify work was made in 1950 when a submission to increase the number of positions from eighty to 130 positions was lodged. Four extra positions were granted.

7.2 Twenty-five years later, in 1975, a review³ of the total establishment and classification structure was undertaken. An establishment of 190 was recommended. This report drew on, as a reference, the organisation structure which had been approved for the National Gallery at that time. Since 1975, the actual staffing has increased from 84 to 114 (as at 30 September 1981), the approved ceiling. This increase, the Public Service Board points out,⁴ compares with a decrease of 5.7% in the Australian Public Service employment over the same period. As a comparison, the current ceiling as at 30 June 1982 of the National Gallery is 173. The Australian Museum, Sydney and the Western Australian Museum with smaller collections and lower visitor turnover both have staff of the order of 200. The Memorial, in December 1981 had an establishment of 141 and in its then most recent submission (Appendix 5) to the Public Service Board believed that a staff level of 146 at 30 June 1982 was justified. This staff estimate has been endorsed by the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment.

7.3 The Memorial in its forward staff estimate for June 1983 proposes a level of 180. The Memorial's Proposed Staff Program 1982/83 shows areas the Memorial considers essential for development (Appendix 5). These areas are in:

- . documentary and audio-visual records
- . conservation
- . education

1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit. p. 9. Australian War Memorial Submission.

2 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, Part B(3) - Extract from Parker/Draheim report 1975.

3 Ibid., Parker/Draheim Report 1975.

4 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, Part B(2) - P.S.B Submission 18 November 1981 and Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 69.

- . finance and accounts
- . attendants

7.4 The Memorial argues¹ that for various reasons, but chiefly a lack of understanding of the role and needs of the Memorial by previous Boards of Trustees, it has not been able to keep up with the normal progressions which other Departments may have had. Whilst the Memorial may have experienced a large percentage increase in the past six years, when compared with other large Government Departments, it has not fared well in terms of absolute staff numbers.

7.5 The Public Service Board points out² that the Government within the context of its own objectives and priorities determines the staff ceiling to apply to each organisation and

"...it is the prerogative of the Permanent Head (in the case of the AWM, the Director, with guidance from the Board of Trustees and Minister as necessary) to allocate ceiling units to each activity in the organisation in accordance with his assessment of its priority relative to other activities."

and

"...when organisations point to manifestly important tasks which are alleged to be suffering because of ceiling restraints, it is appropriate to seek information on the steps they have taken to review priorities critically..."

7.6 The Memorial denies that such flexibility and options are available:³

"To say that it is up to the management to allocate another eight or nine conservators within our 114 staff is nonsense. We cannot do it."

and

"Until we get an increase in the ceilings we can make no inroads whatsoever and to say we can within the options of 114, use more conservators and fewer attendants is something I cannot accept."

also

"The options of course are to close the building for a day

- 1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 70.
- 2 Public Accounts Committee file 1981/4, Part B(2) - PSB Submission 18 November 1981.
- 3 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 122.

a week or something and sack all the attendants or cleaners and bring in more conservators. But I think the Australian public could really not accept that".

Or as Dr R. O'Neill puts it in regard to production of Official War Histories:¹

"We now have a situation in which some money has been voted by the Government but as I understand it from the Director we run into the problem of staff ceilings as far as appointing historians is concerned. So Dr McKernan and I are going to run a crash program for the War Memorial Cleaners to do the Vietnam History."

The supplementary comments provided by the Board (Appendix B) indicate that as a result of an appeal by the Memorial to the Ministerial Appeals Committee the 30 June 1982 staff ceiling for the War Memorial has been increased by 10 to 124. Also consideration is to be given to relative needs of the Memorial and the National Gallery by the Board when developing its advice to the Government on 30 June 1983 provisional ceilings.

Staffing the Conservation and Curatorial Positions Current Situation

7.7 In Appendix 5 the Memorial sets out the establishment and staffing levels current at 21 December 1981.

7.8 In the conservation area, where the backlog is most daunting, the Memorial has significant gaps in its structure. The current establishment approved by the Public Service Board is seventeen permanent staff. Eight are currently employed. Four of the six important laboratory leader positions are vacant. Overall control is exercised by a Science 4. There are no Class 3 Conservator positions in the structure.

7.9 As a result, the Mitchell Annex, a most impressive and costly facility, is being used at only a fraction of its capacity. The Memorial claims that with the establishment fully staffed it may be possible to make some inroads into a planned program of conservation.²

7.10 In the curatorial area, gaps are not so large. (refer Appendix 5). Shortages exist in the specialties of military heraldry and technology and artworks. In both these areas there is a sorry history of losses³ and lack of accountability of the collection.⁴ In the area of documentary

- 1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 172.
- 2 Ibid., p. 63.
- 3 Documented in Chapter 6.
- 4 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., pp. 157-160.

and audio-visual records mention has already been made of the increasing demands on this area. After a recent review¹ of the Library Section, a proposal was formulated to seek additional staff. A need was seen to create curatorial positions instead of the existing Librarian structure. The role of a Librarian is not considered broad enough, given the importance and scope of the collections and the need to care for, exhibit and promote them.

Problems of Recruitment - Salary Structure and Levels

7.11 Existing staffing structures and salary levels, the War Memorial argued, hinder the recruitment and advancement of conservators and curators. All other national institutions, ie. the Library, Gallery and Archives supported this view, as did the Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material.

7.12 Specific criticisms directed at the existing structures² were:-

- for conservators, the structure was not itself a true "career" structure. In government institutions the Grade 3 level was considered an administrative position, thus reducing the effective levels to two. The length of time it takes to gain sufficient experience in an area of conservation can be up to ten years and many conservators tend to reach the Grade 2 levels with no future prospects. In fact there are no Grade 3 positions at all in the Memorial;
- the salary level for conservators is not sufficient to attract staff from overseas and retain them. It will be necessary to continue to recruit overseas graduates until enough local graduates with sufficient experience are produced;
- conservators tend to suffer in "status" in relation to curators and other professionals and the disparate salary levels promote this;
- there is a risk of losing valuable and experienced conservators to mainstream administration areas of the public service or to private enterprise;
- to make inroads into a conservation backlog, a stable conservation group is appropriate and staffing structures should be designed to encourage this;

1 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, Part B(3) - A.W.M. memorandum of 23 December 1981, Attachment F.
2 Refer paras. 3.9, 3.10 and 3.17 of this Report.

- many of these difficulties are also evident in the curatorial functions as a result of the limited curator structure.

7.13 In response, the Public Service Board (P.S.B.) saw the problem as being basically "a chronic shortage of high calibre professionals in these fields."¹ The P.S.B. argued that salaries were competitive and when the Commonwealth acted as pacesetters, State museums tended to complain. Higher salaries were not needed to attract staff from overseas as most staff were attracted from the States into the Commonwealth rather than from overseas.² The P.S.B. however conceded that "by comparison with curators, the conservators fare rather badly at the present time", and "We do note some changes overseas where conservators are receiving greater recognition and higher salaries..."³ The supplementary comments (Appendix B) received by the Committee just prior to the compilation of this report did not convince the Committee that sufficient positive action had been put in train.

7.14 The Committee notes the efforts of the National Gallery in recruitment of staff. The Gallery has access to a number of Senior Curator positions at Second Division (Level 1) salaries - one for the head of the Conservation Section entitled Senior Curator. The Gallery argues that this classification is justified as the role of this officer will go beyond merely heading the conservation facilities and include provision of help in promoting conservation courses and advice to galleries throughout Australia.⁴ In contrast, the Head of conservation at the Memorial was classified at Conservator 3, recently upgraded to a Science 4 with a difference of over \$4,000 between the two positions.

7.15 The Committee questioned:

- Why there was a need for the difference in classifications?
- Why had this "revised structure" not been granted to the other institutions?
- If salary rates are "competitive" as the P.S.B. claims why was it necessary to upgrade the salary to attract overseas staff?

The Committee rejects the argument that one collection is more "valuable" or worthy than the other and believes that each deserves equal care and consideration.

1 Public Accounts Committee file 1981/4, Part B(2) - Submission from P.S.B. of 18 November 1981.
2 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 78.
3 Ibid., p. 84
4 Public Accounts Committee file 1981/4, op. cit., visit to National Gallery by Committee.

7.16 In response, the P.S.B. replied¹ that

- The Gallery is not staffed under the Public Service Act, although a statutory relationship with the Board in relation to terms and conditions of employment is defined by Section 33 of the Australian National Gallery Act 1975.
- The classification structure for curators approved by the Board for the Gallery in 1978 was intended to cover strictly curatorial work.
- The Board has formally objected to the Chairman of the Gallery Council over the inapplicability of the Curator designation to conservation work.
- The Board would have in principle no difficulty in approving Curator 3 positions within the Memorial or elsewhere provided the relevant criteria are satisfied, ie that it is necessary to demonstrate that the incumbent has achieved world standing in his or her field of curatorship, and curatorial work must be of a level to justify the appointment.
- The Board states that the Memorial has not yet met these criteria and points out that a Second Division position has recently been granted to the Memorial, namely, Assistant Director (Collections).
- The Board is also examining the case for introducing a new level of Conservator Grade 4 into the existing Conservator career structure.

7.17 The Committee was impressed by arguments for a revised staffing structure along the lines of the research scientist grades in the CSIRO. This allows advancement and reward on merit within a particular grade as the individual does not have to change his job to gain promotion. This approach appears most applicable in areas where academic, research and service overlap and would encourage scholarship and greater specialisation. These latter factors, it would seem to the Committee, would enhance even more, an Institution's ability to attract staff.

Staff Training and Development

7.18 The Committee sought to elicit from the Memorial what action it took to retain existing staff, eg. training, travel, research. The Memorial advised that there were no formal training programs as the limited number of senior staff

1 Public Accounts Committee file 1981/4, *op. cit.*, Supplementary Submission of 25 January 1982 by Public Service Board.

precluded this, and most training was done by visits to other institutions. Travel was limited by the travel vote (in the current year about \$33,000).

7.19 The Committee believes research and scholarship to be an essential aspect of the Memorial's activities. Firstly it is important in regard to the Memorial's image (a matter discussed in Chapter 4). Secondly it is essential to enable the attraction, retention and development of high quality staff. Thirdly from their academic viewpoint alone, the need for research, especially in conservation, was stressed during the Inquiry by Dr C. Pearson of the Canberra College of Advanced Education:

"There is a big need in Australia to do research; we have a lot of conservation problems that are particularly peculiar to Australian collections. Because of the environment over here we cannot use techniques that are used in Europe..."¹

7.20 The Memorial considers research to be one of its three main functions. Its current research activities are:-

- Operation of a research grants scheme - this scheme supports the research of outsiders such as military historians and to perform this supportive role, museum staff "have to be good research workers themselves or else their judgement is not trusted".²
- Individual research activities by staff members (there are no staff specifically working on research) which includes in house reports, publication in academic journals, attendances and presentations at seminars, consultation work etc.

The Committee notes that the Board's Supplementary Comments (Appendix 8) have included reference to National press advertisements which were published on 23 January 1982 calling for applicants for a senior position responsible for writing the official history of the Vietnam War and the Malaysian Emergency.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Staff Ceilings

7.21 The Committee is sympathetic to the problem of staff ceilings facing the Memorial. The Committee also acknowledges the realities facing the Public Service Board in its role allocated by Government in staff control. However the Committee has considered the array of major problems facing the Memorial, its history and the demands of the future and

1 Minutes of Evidence, *op. cit.* p. 176.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 112.

concludes that it is a unique case which warrants special consideration in regard to ceiling allocation. Without this, the Committee questions how the functions of the Memorial, recently broadened by Government, can be met. The Committee notes the Departmental and Ministerial support. The importance of the Memorial to Australians, borne out by the demands made on it, is equal if not greater to that of other institutions.

7.22 The Committee recommends an increase in staff ceilings and commends to the Public Service Board the need for further action in this regard.

. Problems of Recruitment

7.23 The Committee concludes that the existing salary structure for conservators and curators is inadequate. The Committee recommends that the Public Service Board conduct a study to develop a new structure based on long term personnel planning which is positive and tailored to meet the needs of the Government institutions in the future in regard to the conservation crisis. The Committee does not consider that an ad hoc approach to a career structure, based on subjective assessment such as outlined in the Board's "Senior Curator criteria", appropriate to achieving this result.

7.24 The Committee concludes that the present system of setting salaries by "going rates" in these classifications is negative and counter productive.

7.25 The Committee believes that a more even handed approach to all institutions within the Government National Collection is called for and sees no need for discrimination in regard to staffing structures between institutions.

. Salary Structure and Levels

7.26 The Committee recommends a restructuring of the curator and conservator classification in the Australian Public Service to equate with research scientist classifications.

. Staff Training and Development

7.27 The Committee has concluded that the Memorial's staff training, development and research activities are mostly of an ad hoc nature and recommends the Memorial adopt a more structured and formalised approach in these areas. This is especially essential if the organisation and staff structures are to be based on research scientist lines and the Memorial is to perform its Museum role. The Committee sees these factors as being yet another argument for the strengthening of staff resources.

CHAPTER 8

OTHER CONSERVATION ISSUES

Work Standards

8.1 The Auditor-General criticised the Memorial for the lack of development of and/or adoption of technical standards in conservation. The Memorial disagreed and argued that technical standards and procedures within the conservation area could not be set out in detail as each object had its own problems.

8.2 In a submission¹ to the Committee, the National Library identified a number of problems related to developing standards:

- . the complexity of the operations required for treating objects;
- . the "newness" of the profession in Australia;
- . inadequacies in staff numbers in Commonwealth institutions. Development of standard procedures was dependent on data collection and recording procedures and staff resources are inadequate to do this.

The views of the Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material² were similar.

Management of Conservation Workload

8.3 The Auditor-General noted the lack of maintenance or restoration programs for relics and artworks at the Memorial. The Memorial replied that lack of staff prevented programming. The Committee believes that regardless of the staffing situation an attempt must be made by the Memorial to manage its program. In this way existing staff resources can be optimised.

8.4 The Committee commends to the Memorial, the programming activities of the conservation group of the National Library.³ An attempt has been made to apportion resources against the demands of the individual sections within the Library. This program is currently planned in terms of a two year work program, with quarterly reporting to senior management. The Library is also considering a program

1 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, op. cit.

2 ibid. Submission from I.C.C.M.

3 ibid. Submission from National Library of Australia.

developed by the U.S. Library of Congress (Appendix 6) based on a "points scheme" for forward planning, allocation and assessment of conservation work priorities.

Conservation Database

8.5 The Committee saw as one important means for alleviation of the conservation workload the introduction of a "database". This would be a conservation treatment file, into which all institutions could contribute and gain access.

8.6 The National Library has already instituted a preliminary examination of this concept and the Committee suggests that such a program deserves the maximum support and cooperation from all institutions within the National Collection. This database could not only service government institutions but State and private museums as well.

Centralisation of Conservators

8.7 The distorted allocation of conservation resources and the overlapping of conservation skills that the Committee observed during the Inquiry led it to consider the feasibility of the centralisation of the Government's conservation resources. The institutions however argued strongly against this concept. It is argued that:

"..since long-term 'patient care' is an important component of this sort of issue it would not do to centralise conservators in one place, because as well as having an immediate remedial responsibility, the conservator also has a long term and continuing responsibility to the collections with which he or she works."²

8.8 It was also argued that it may be better to opt for a centralised research institute made up of scientists rather than practical conservators. The Institution for the Conservation of Cultural Material³ also supported the idea of coordination in research areas and suggested formation of a national advisory council to advise government on such matters. There may be a role for other bodies to play in conservation techniques and research such as for example, the CSIRO or Department of Defence Research Laboratories.

8.9 The Committee recognises that a conservator must develop an affinity for the collection on which he works. The Committee notes however that conservators do move from

1 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, op. cit.,
submission from National Library of Australia.
2 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 115.
3 Ibid., p. 191.

collection to collection and that generally the quality of conservation work required does not vary. The Committee does not completely discount the concept of a centralised conservation and research facility as the conservation crisis facing the National Collection may necessitate drastic measures.

Conclusions and Recommendations

. Work Standards

8.10 The Committee concludes that the solution to this problem is not to attempt to set standards for each and every object a conservator handles. The Committee agrees that this task is not feasible. The Committee believes responsibility must be placed on the conservator himself who should adhere to the highest and most exacting standard of treatment. The Committee has noted the introduction of a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice by the American Institute for Conservation,¹ and recommends to local conservators and the professional institutions that a similar code of practice be adopted to guide local conservators.

. Management of Conservation Workload

8.11 The Committee concludes that a program of management for conservation must be implemented by the Australian War Memorial as a matter of priority.

. Conservation Database

8.12 The Committee concludes that a conservation "database" is an essential tool for overcoming the conservation backlog. As the concept is of relevance to the entire National Collection, the Committee recommends that the Department of Home Affairs and Environment maintain a coordinating role in the introduction of this tool.

. Centralisation of Conservators

8.13 The Committee recommends that a Working Party be established to investigate the option of a centralised conservation and/or research laboratory to meet the needs of the National Collection and to provide a centre of excellence for reference by any conservation laboratory in Australia. Membership should comprise all the Australian Government institutions, State institutions, CSIRO and other relevant government scientific bodies.

1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 178.
2 Museum News, March/April 1980, p. 29.

CHAPTER 9

INVENTORY AND DOCUMENTATION CONTROL

9.1 The Auditor-General criticised the deficiencies of the Memorial in regard to inventory and documentation control. The consequences of these inadequacies have already been described in Chapter 6. Specific criticisms related to:

- . accessioning
- . photographic recording/cataloguing
- . gaps in relics accessioning registers
- . lack of regular inspections or stocktakes
- . deficiencies in the Loans policy

9.2 The Memorial conceded that control over documentation and the collection was currently unsatisfactory.¹ For example, the collection has never been subjected to an annual stocktake. As the collection is progressively moved to Mitchell (due to be completed by March 1982), accessioning and documentation is being carried out. The Memorial believes its loan policy is under control.² However a backlog of requests running to eighteen months has built up, attributed to staff shortages.³

9.3 There is an obvious need for a computer based cataloguing, accessioning and inventory control system. A series of studies have been undertaken at the Memorial since 1978 and installation of a system is yet to occur. Several studies were conducted by officers from the Science Museum in Melbourne, and the National Library but whilst specific collection control problems of the Memorial were identified, little in concrete terms resulted. In December 1980, the Canberra College of Advanced Education (CCAEC) was commissioned to do a further study⁴ at a cost of \$25,000. Firm recommendations⁵ were made for:

- . a computer based accessioning procedure to be instituted;
- . the appointment of a Registrar and recording team to establish a computerized data base;
- . a Registrar to be appointed at a level equal to that of a professionally qualified Curator; and
- . specific ADP equipment be purchased (the same equipment as the Australian National Gallery uses)

1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., pp. 117, 128, 130, 163.

2 ibid., p. 162.

3 ibid., p. 163.

4 ibid., pp. 10 and 151.

5 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, Part B(3) A.W.M. memorandum of 23 December 1981 Attachment B.

The report was received by the Council in May 1981.

- 9.4 The Committee found subsequent events disturbing.¹
- . Firm bids for staff and finance were submitted to the Public Service Board and Department of Finance.
 - . The Public Service Board responded that the requirement need be seen in a broader context and a "strategic plan" of the Memorial's ADP requirements was needed. The Department of Finance whilst agreeing to the proposal could not supply funds until the Board's procedures were fulfilled.
 - . The Memorial could not prepare a strategic plan until qualified staff were obtained.

9.5 The Committee has considered the C.C.A.E. Study and concludes that very little effort should be required to develop the necessary proposals. The Public Service Board has since indicated that it has been able to second an experienced Computer Systems Officer Grade 5 to the Memorial for several months to assist in the preparation of an ADP strategic plan for submission to the Board as required by procedures recently introduced by the Government (Appendix 8).

9.6 The Committee commends the computerised control systems of the National Gallery² to the Memorial. In 1979 a computerised catalogue system was introduced into the Gallery and the Gallery expects to complete the backlog of cataloguing (an estimated 70,000 works of art) in three years. Responsibility for the computer catalogue rests with a Registrar of Collections.

9.7 The Gallery believes responsibility for the custody, movement, location and security of works of art must rest with the Registrar. Curators are then responsible for the safety, use and development of the system, with one control system only in operation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

9.8 The Committee considers provision of the ADP system to be one of high priority and commends the direct and quick action by the Public Service Board and Memorial to resolve this problem.

9.9 The Committee suggests that the Memorial liaise and consult with the Gallery to assist implementation of an ADP control system.

1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., pp. 152-157.

2 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, Part B(2), submission from Australian National Gallery.

9.10 The Committee endorses the proposal to appoint a Registrar at the Memorial and believes the Registrar should be solely responsible for custody, movement, location and security of the collection. The Committee notes that the Board has approved the provision of a position at the Class 8 level to perform the function of Registrar of Collections. This position is expected to head up a small section responsible for the development and administration of a comprehensive registration system. (Appendix 8).

CHAPTER 10

OTHER AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL ISSUES

Finances

10.1 The revenues of the Memorial derive from parliamentary appropriation (for salaries, administration, plant and equipment) and "commercial operations" under the Australian War Memorial Fund. The Fund, \$181,243 in 1979/80, is used for activities such as research, grants, displays and acquisitions for which insufficient money is available under the appropriation. The Memorial believes that whilst fund raising exercises will be needed in the future for specific requirements, the Memorial must remain largely dependent upon appropriations.¹

10.2 The Memorial believes its share of the public purse to be inadequate and cites instances where lack of funds has hindered development.² Difficulties in obtaining urgent finance to restore the Roll of Honour were cited.³

10.3 The Committee is unable to evaluate the issue of the equity of fund allocation, but to offset some of these "inequities", notes that the Memorial has fared well in the provision of the \$2 million conservation and storage facility at Mitchell and the \$2.5 million dollar plan for upgrading facilities at the Memorial.

10.4 The Committee believes there is scope for improving revenues of the Memorial by introduction of a more realistic charging scale for provision of its services to commercial groups. The Committee notes that action has been taken to review the revenue producing operations and endorses this review.

10.5 The issue of admission charges as a source of revenue was considered as an appropriate means of raising funds, and an attractive one in view of the growing number of visitors. The Memorial strongly opposed this proposition

"... because of its status as the Memorial to the great service of these Australians, it would be quite inappropriate to charge admission to Australians who wish to commemorate by entering its doors".⁴

10.6 The Committee has noted the opposition from the management of the Australian War Memorial and other groups to

1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 57.

2 Ibid., p. 103.

3 Ibid., pp. 134/135.

4 Ibid., p. 58.

the introduction of charges for admission, even to the museum section of the Australian War Memorial. However, while the Committee makes no firm recommendations on this issue we are concerned that if the Memorial does not fully utilise its revenue raising potential its current position as the "poor relation" within the National Collection may be exacerbated.

10.7 The Committee further noted that an admission charge is to be raised by the National Gallery and there is a strong possibility of admission charges for the Australian Museum. This is in accord with a current world wide trend to charge for admission to such institutions.

10.8 If admission charges are not raised by the Australian War Memorial there will be an obvious need for special grants to the Memorial to ensure that it maintains a relative position within the National Collection appropriate to its value and importance to the Australian Community in general.

Security

10.9 The Auditor-General indicated in his Report on curatorial functions of artworks and relics that there was inadequate control and security over accessioning. The Committee considered a number of aspects of security at the Memorial and a number of deficiencies were identified.

10.10 The consequences of these deficiencies were reflected in:

- . a number of instances of theft¹
- . increasing vandalism²
- . lack of control of many items in the collection after accessioning.

The Memorial believes that the Mitchell Storage facility security is adequate. The Committee suggests an independent evaluation by a security advisor may be of value, in view of the worth and nature of the items stored there. Many items such as small arms, are attractive.

10.11 The Memorial cites a shortage of Attendants as one important factor inhibiting its ability to strengthen security. The Memorial estimates³ it needs a minimum of thirty-eight attendants if each of the twenty galleries, two entrances and the bookshop are to be secure. In contrast, other institutions throughout Australia employ significantly greater numbers of attendants. The National Gallery of Victoria with a display area and visitor turnover less than the Memorial, employs eighty.

1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 125.

2 ibid., p. 126.

3 Public Accounts Committee File 1981/4, Part B(3), additional data supplied by Australian War Memorial.

Internal Audit

10.12 The Committee was disturbed to find that the Memorial did not have an internal auditor and there had been no regular program of internal auditing. The Committee's views on internal audit were expressed in the 184th report:

"... the potential magnitude of waste and losses if internal controls are defective or deficient, makes effective internal auditing an indispensable requirement".¹

The Committee notes however that the National Library has its own audit section. The Memorial has become dependent on the Department of Home Affairs and Environment to provide an internal audit arrangement.

10.13 The Department of Home Affairs and Environment advised² the Committee that its resources were small (three auditors only) and stretched over a number of bodies with which it had agreements. This included the Memorial.

10.14 The Department believes that an experienced audit team is more effective than a specialist team. The specialist team could lose its objectivity and expertise. The Department argued that expert help could be seconded when needed.

Needs of Visitors

10.15 During the Inquiry, including a visit to the Memorial, the Committee noted the increasing demands made on the Memorial (in addition to those already canvassed) as a result of the large number of visitors, currently over 800,000 per year.

10.16 The building, now forty years old, was not built to cope with so many visitors. The Committee noted inadequacies in display techniques, the lack of a foyer for reception and facilities for education, the rudimentary theatre and cramped sales area. The superb facilities for visitors at other institutions inspected by the Committee were an indication as to what could be achieved.

10.17 The Committee observed that one display area, badly needing further facilities, was the display of historic aircraft. Many aircraft within the Memorial's collection, cannot be displayed publicly.

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- 1 Australia, Parliament, Joint Committee of Public Accounts, 184th Report, Internal Audit in the Australian Public Service - A Discussion Paper, Parliamentary Paper 1/1981, Canberra 1981, p. 1.
 - 2 Public Accounts Committee file 1981/4, Part B(2) - Supplementary submission from Department of Home Affairs and Environment.

10.18 The deficiencies were identified in some detail in a study by Mr R. Wade, an internationally recognised consultant in 1979, (Appendix 7).

Disaster Planning

10.19 This issue was drawn to the attention of the Committee by the National Library.¹ A major catastrophe could wreak untold damage to the irreplaceable items within the National Collection.

10.20 The Library is currently developing a disaster plan for its collection. An assessment of relative worth and appropriate storage requirements is being made by each specialist Librarian.

War Graves

10.21 During the Inquiry², the suggestion was made that VC winners and other national heroes be buried in the vicinity of the Memorial. This would enhance the image of the Institution as a "War Memorial".

Conclusions and Recommendations

. Finances

10.22 The Committee recommends a review of the finance allocation between all Institutions within the National Collection, by the Department of Finance, to ensure funds are equitably distributed.

10.23 The Committee concludes that a review of the revenue producing operations of the Memorial is warranted.

. Security

10.24 The Committee recommends an independent assessment of the security system at the Memorial and its Mitchell Annex by a consultant or specialist advisor.

10.25 The Committee concludes that a review of the number of attendants and security staff is warranted and recommends an adjustment in ceilings to allow for an increase.

. Internal Audit

10.26 The Committee endorses the internal audit provisions for the Memorial and recommends a regular programme be

1 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 189 - also Public Accounts Committee file 1981/4, op. cit., Visit to National Library of Australia by the Committee.
2 Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., pp. 100-102.

instituted as a matter of top priority. The Committee is disturbed at the delays to date in implementing such a system.

10.27 The Committee recommends that the Department of Home Affairs and Environment ensure that internal audit resources are equitably distributed and allocated throughout the National Collection.

. Needs of Visitors

10.28 The Committee concludes that modifications, extensions and alterations will be needed to the Memorial if it is to develop as a Museum and a Memorial, and service the needs of the many visitors for whom it is such an attraction. The Committee endorses the current proposals to improve the facilities and correct the deficiencies mentioned above.

. Disaster Planning

10.29 The Committee endorses disaster planning for the National Collection and recommends each institution examine their needs in this regard. The Committee further recommends that this matter would be suitable for the coordinating role of the Department of Home Affairs and Environment.

. War Graves

10.30 The Committee considers the suggestion of a national heroes cemetery as part of the Australian War Memorial worthy of further examination and recommends that a study be carried out jointly by the Australian War Memorial and the Department of Home Affairs and Environment.

Extract from the Auditor-General's Report
March 1981

**29. BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE AUSTRALIAN WAR
 MEMORIAL
 AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL FUND**

The Australian War Memorial Fund, constituted under the *Australian War Memorial Act 1925* and continued by the *Australian War Memorial Act 1962*, reflects transactions relating mainly to exhibits, publications and official war history. Administration of the Fund before 1 July 1980 was vested in the Board of Trustees of the Australian War Memorial. From 1 July 1980 the *Australian War Memorial Act 1980* came into operation and the Fund was continued and vested in the Memorial. The Fund does not reflect expenditure relating to salaries, administrative expenses and capital works and services which are paid from Parliamentary appropriations.

The accounts and records of the financial transactions of the Board of Trustees for the year ended 30 June 1980, maintained by the Board pursuant to section 20 of the *Australian War Memorial Act 1962*, have been audited and reports on the audit and financial statements have been furnished to the Minister as required by the *Australian War Memorial Act 1980* and pursuant to the *Audit Act 1901*.

The audit report on the financial statements referred to moneys being invested during the year in bank endorsed bills of exchange without the approval of the Treasurer required by the *Australian War Memorial Act 1962*.

The annual report of the Memorial, which includes copies of the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 1980 and the audit report thereon, was presented to the Parliament on 4 December 1980.

Curatorial and Conservation Functions

The audit report on the accounts and records of the financial transactions referred to a number of weaknesses and inadequacies disclosed during a comprehensive audit of the curatorial and conservation functions of the Memorial carried out by my Office during 1979-80.

Audit objective

The principal objective of the audit was to evaluate whether management objectives and policies relating to the curatorial and conservation functions were being achieved with due regard to legal compliance, financial regularity and cost effectiveness in the use of resources.

Curatorial—Artworks and relics

The following unsatisfactory aspects in the curatorial function were noted:

Accessioning

- The audit disclosed there were no formal written management objectives in respect of the curatorship of artworks and relics.
- There was inadequate control and security over materials awaiting accessioning.
- My Office expressed the opinion that, having regard to the nature of the collection, artworks and relics received for accessioning should be photographed and the photograph held as part of the catalogue information.
- A number of artworks collected in the past had not been accessioned and there were large gaps in the past series of relics accessioning registers.

In response to representations from my Office concerning these deficiencies and inadequacies the Memorial advised:

- It considers the specifically declared management objectives of the Australian War Memorial are as set out in the *Australian War Memorial Act 1980*, decisions of the former Board of Trustees and its committees constituted the statement of objectives of the Memorial and it is anticipated the Council of the Australian War Memorial will continue to carry out the functions of management and broad policy direction as was carried out by the former Board of Trustees.
- Arrangements are being made to improve control and security over materials awaiting accessioning.
- The Register of Unaccessioned Artworks was not being used as all newly acquired material had been accessioned immediately on arrival; a register of unaccessioned relics will be established as recommended but it is policy to accession material as soon as it is received; a review of the accommodation of the Relics Section being undertaken is expected to accept the need for a secure area for the storage of unaccessioned material and material in transit.
- The Art Section plans to photograph all artworks but staff numbers do not permit the backlog to be overtaken immediately. The volume of photography required for all the Relics Section incoming material to be photographed would be well beyond staff capacity.
- No direct remedial action concerning lost accession registers is possible but material is re-accessioned as it comes to light.

Inventory control

Location Registers for artworks were found to be inaccurate and out of date. The procedures for recording and monitoring the location of artworks and relics were considered to be inadequate and there were no formal procedures to regulate the movement of relics. No official stocktake of artworks or relics was evident. In addition there was no evidence of regular inspections for maintenance and conservation of collections in store.

In response to Audit representations concerning these unsatisfactory matters, the Memorial advised:

- Action had been taken recently to up-date the Locations Register for artworks.
- Location and stocktaking procedures for relics will be reviewed as part of an overall review of policy and procedures.
- When artworks and relics not on display are located in a permanent store, arrangements will be made to stocktake the collection on a representative basis as part of a rolling program.
- There is currently no regular program of condition assessment of artworks and relics in store although the collection is regularly surveyed for other purposes and deficiencies requiring conservation attention are noted.
- It is anticipated that condition assessment will form part of the proposed stocktaking program.

Loans

The Board of Trustees had promulgated a Loans Policy on the lending of artworks and relics whereby eligibility for and conditions applying to loans were clearly defined.

The following observations were made to the Memorial on the Loans Policy:

- There was no statement of objectives.
- There was no ceiling set on the number of items to be lent at any one time.

- There was no provision in the Loans Policy to prevent or restrict the lending of items susceptible to environmental damage or of high artistic value.

The audit also indicated that the provisions of the Loans Policy were not in all cases applied in practice.

In response to representations from my Office, the Memorial advised:

- At the time of the survey the workload in the Art Section on loan matters was unusually heavy.
- The development of procedures and policies for the control of the Art Section will be undertaken as part of an overall review of policies and procedures.
- A Loans Register is now in use in the Relics Section.
- Action is proceeding on the documentation of loans.
- All long term loans were approved by the former Board of Trustees.
- The question of eligibility for loans is currently decided by the Director under guidelines from the Council. General guidelines will be developed as part of the overall review of policy and procedures.
- Artworks and relics on loan will be subject in future to more frequent inspection to ensure that their environment and condition are appropriate.

Conservation - Artworks and relics

The following unsatisfactory aspects in the conservation function of the Memorial were noted during the audit:

- There were, no specifically declared management objectives nor had technical standards or procedures been developed or adopted.
- There were no maintenance or restoration programs for relics and artworks.
- There were no regular inspections of the collections in store or on display for purposes of maintenance and restoration.

In response to Audit representations the Memorial advised:

- The overall management objectives of the Conservation Section are enshrined in the *Australian War Memorial Act 1980*. Technical standards and procedures within the conservation area cannot be standardised in detail as each object has its own problems and the extent of conservation work depends on the object's destination. However, administrative procedures concerning requests for conservation services have been set up and minimum environment standards for material on loan will be developed as staff become available.
- It has not been possible for conservation work at the War Memorial to be programmed due to lack of staff.

School of Applied Science

Materials Conservation Courses

The Materials Conservation Courses at the CCAE are currently under review and it is hoped that new Courses will be available in 1982.

1. Associate Diploma in Materials Conservation

This is currently a 2 year Programme specialising in the conservation and restoration of library, archive and ethnographic collections. This will be retained but essentially as the first two years (four semesters) of the proposed Bachelor's Course (detailed below). It is intended that any student currently enrolled in the Associate Diploma or who already holds the Award will be able to transfer to the Bachelor's Degree Programme receiving status for the Associate Diploma units.

The entrance requirements are the same as the Bachelor's Degree see below.

2. Bachelor of Applied Science in Materials Conservation

The proposed Bachelor's Degree Course of 3 years' duration will be the main Materials Conservation Programme. The first half of the Course (three semesters) will offer an overview of the history, technology and properties of materials and conservation practice. The second half of the Course allows specialisation in one or a combination of the following fields:

- (i) Conservation Science - including physics, chemistry, materials science, analysis and basic conservation processes.
- (ii) Paintings - including those on canvas, wood, textiles metals and other media.
- (iii) Paper - including maps, prints, water-colours, books.
- (iv) Objects - includes the wide range of organic and inorganic materials (textiles, leather, wood, fur, feathers, bone ivory, ceramics, glass, stone, metal) comprising ethnographic, historical, technological, and natural science collections.

A programme of study in these four areas of specialisation has been developed from those units offered in Materials Conservation and other units available from the School of Applied Science and other Schools within the College.

For entrance to the Bachelor's Degree and Associate Diploma Courses, students should either:

- (i) Have a good secondary education, including an acceptable level of achievement in Chemistry and English at Year 12 level, or the equivalent. In addition, a reasonable level of secondary school mathematics is required, however, no student will be denied admission to the Courses solely on the grounds of inadequate mathematical attainment.

OR

- (ii) Have experience, status and standing in employment in conservation as might be deemed by the College to be equivalent to a sound secondary education.

Applications will be short listed and those successful will be invited for an interview at the College. Evidence of manual dexterity will be required and students unable to provide this evidence will be tested before being admitted into the Course.

There will be a student enrolment quota of 10 a year.

3. Master of Applied Science in Materials Conservation

This is currently a 2 year Programme by Course work plus a six month internship, offering all the major specialised fields of conservation. This will be changed to a 2 year Programme in which the student will carry out a major piece of original research or project work which may, but does not have to, contain some formal Course work (to a maximum of 4 units). A thesis will be required at the end of the Programme.

For entrance to the Master's Degree Programme, students should have either:

- (i) A first degree in Materials Conservation, or equivalent, plus at least two years experience in conservation.

OR

- (ii) A first degree in a relevant field such as fine arts, anthropology, archaeology or science, plus basic knowledge in Chemistry (equivalent to 6 credit points of tertiary Chemistry including a major component of Organic Chemistry), plus at least five years experience in conservation.

Applications will be short listed and those successful will be invited for an interview at the College. Evidence of experience and ability in conservation will be required.

There will be a student enrolment quota of 4 a year.

(sgd) Colin Pearson

Dr C. Pearson
Principal Lecturer
Materials Conservation

EXTRACT FROM THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL ACT 1980*Australian War Memorial No. 104, 1980***Functions of Memorial**

5. (1) The functions of the Memorial are—

- (a) to maintain and develop the national memorial referred to in sub-section 6 (1) of the *Australian War Memorial Act 1982* as a national memorial of Australians who have died—
 - (i) on or as a result of active service; or
 - (ii) as a result of any war or warlike operations in which Australians have been on active service;
- (b) to develop and maintain, as an integral part of the national memorial referred to in paragraph (a), a national collection of historical material;
- (c) to exhibit, or to make available for exhibition by others, historical material from the memorial collection or historical material that is otherwise in the possession of the Memorial;
- (d) to conduct, arrange for and assist in research into matters pertaining to Australian military history; and
- (e) to disseminate information relating to—
 - (i) Australian military history;
 - (ii) the national memorial referred to in paragraph (a);
 - (iii) the memorial collection; and
 - (iv) the Memorial and its functions.

(2) The Memorial shall use every endeavour to make the most advantageous use of the memorial collection in the national interest.

Powers of Memorial

6. (1) Subject to this Act, the Memorial has power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its functions.

(2) Without limiting the generality of sub-section (1), the powers of the Memorial include power—

- (a) to purchase or take on hire, or to accept as a gift or on deposit or loan, historical material;
- (b) to lend or hire out or otherwise deal with (otherwise than by way of disposal) historical material;
- (c) to accept gifts, devises, bequests or assignments made to the Memorial, whether on trust or otherwise, and whether unconditionally or subject to a condition and, if a gift, devise, bequest or assignment is accepted by the Memorial on trust or subject to a condition, to act as trustee or to comply with the condition, as the case may be;
- (d) to collect, and make available (whether in writing or in any other form and whether by sale or otherwise), information relating to Australian military history;
- (e) to make available (whether by sale or otherwise) reproductions, replicas or other representations (whether in writing or in any other form) of historical material;

Australian War Memorial No. 104, 1980

- (f) to make available (whether in writing or in any other form and whether by sale or otherwise) information relating to the Memorial and its functions;
- (g) to provide facilities to stimulate interest in Australian military history;
- (h) to assist educational institutions in matters relating to Australian military history;
- (j) to train members of the staff of the Memorial, and such other persons as the Council approves, in developing, caring for and undertaking research in relation to the memorial collection;
- (k) to assist, on request, in the creation and maintenance of military museums in Defence Force establishments;
- (m) to occupy, use and control any land or building owned or held under lease by the Commonwealth and made available to the Memorial under section 7;
- (n) to erect buildings;
- (o) to purchase or take on hire, or to accept as a gift or on deposit or loan, and to dispose of or otherwise deal with, furnishings, equipment and other goods;
- (p) to act as trustee of moneys or other property vested in the Memorial on trust; and
- (q) to act on behalf of the Commonwealth or of an authority of the Commonwealth in the administration of a trust relating to historical material or related matters.

(3) The Memorial shall not dispose of historical material except in accordance with section 8.

(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, any money or other property held by the Memorial upon trust or accepted by the Memorial subject to a condition shall not be dealt with except in accordance with the obligations of the Memorial as trustee of the trust or as the person who has accepted the money or other property subject to the condition, as the case may be.

Land and historical material for Memorial

7. (1) The Minister may make available to the Memorial for the purposes of the Memorial such land owned or held under lease by the Commonwealth as is specified by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette* and any building, structure or other improvements on that land.

(2) Subject to this Act, the Minister may, on behalf of the Commonwealth, make arrangements, in writing, with the Memorial for—

- (a) the transfer of the ownership of historical material from the Commonwealth to the Memorial for the purpose of the inclusion of the material in the memorial collection;
- (b) the deposit in the custody of the Memorial of historical material owned by the Commonwealth; and

Extract from Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collection; "Museums in Australia 1975", AGPS Canberra

Attachment to Chapter 8**Australian Government Collections****AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES**

Holdings total some 500 000 shelf feet of records, including 200 000 feet of files, manuscripts, registers, cards, books, maps, plans, models, films, paintings, photographs, recordings, microfilms and tapes.

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION

Approximately 750 items which include wireless receivers dating back to the early 1920's, a pedal transmitter/receiver, early gramophones (cylinder and disc); microphones; recorders; valves and other sundry items. Much of the collection of early equipment is linked with the development of the ABC.

AUSTRALIAN POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSIONS

Central Office: Material covers early plans and drawings, telegraph equipment, research laboratory equipment, documents, an extensive collection of Australian stamps, postal stationery and related material, foreign stamps and historical design material related to Australian stamps.

State Collections: Are comprehensive and contain documents and equipment relating to early communications developments such as the Overland Telegraph Line (1872), the Tasmania-Mainland telegraph cable (1859), the overland carriage of mail, the introduction of the telephone to Australia, and the general technological progress of the postal and telecommunications services to Australia.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

12 000 art works; 40 000 relics; 64 dioramas; 60 000 monographs; 10 000 maps; 240 000 photographs; 1 220 000 metres of line film and large collections of periodicals, newspapers, sheet music, sound recordings and press cuttings.

BUREAU OF MINERAL RESOURCES

Rock collections—200 000 specimens; fossil collections—200 000 specimens including a type collection of 13 000 specimens; collections of minerals, gems and other pieces of

mining, historical, research and educational significance—25 000 specimens; models, display diagrams, and other visual aids to geological education.

CSIRO

Division of Entomology—Australian National Insect Collection: 7000 primary types, almost all of Australian species; Coleoptera, 7000 species; Diptera, 100 000 specimens; Lepidoptera, 500 000 specimens, including 80% of the known species, and 3000 primary types.

Division of Building Research: 3000 cultures of wood inhabiting fungi and bacteria, 10 000 specimens in the fungal herbarium; and the wood anatomy collection.

Division of Wildlife Research: Collections of birds—19 000 specimens, including 8000 from Papua New Guinea; mammals—10 000 including 1000 from Papua New Guinea; 1000 dried plants; several hundred reptiles, amphibia and freshwater fish.

Division of Plant Industry: The Herbarium Australiense holds about 280 000 specimens including 700 type specimens.

Division of Mineralogy: 10 000 mineralogical samples of considerable research importance.

Division of Tropical Agronomy: A collection of botanical specimens from south-east Queensland is held for research purposes.

Division of Horticultural Research: Collections of permanent mounts of plant-and-soil-inhabiting nematodes.

Marine Biochemistry Unit: Collection of living unicellular marine algae.

Division of Animal Health: Collections of microbiological material; preserved ticks.

Division of Forest Research: An Herbarium containing extensive collections of Eucalyptus botanical material, together with herbarium material of other tree species.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forestry and Timber Bureau: Many examples of curly wooden objects; static displays of an old-time sawmill, a logging whim from Western Australia, and a wooden log carriage from the Murray River.

DEPARTMENT OF THE CAPITAL TERRITORY

Canberra Botanic Gardens: 80 000 plants including 5000 species of Australian plants; 65 000 herbarium specimens.

Horse Era Museum: 11 restored carriages, 7 restored commercial vehicles, 41 harness and saddlery items. In addition there are eight miscellaneous items suggested for outdoor display, 6 restored and 10 unrestored vehicles and hundreds of miscellaneous items.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

Air Office: 40 complete aircraft, 6 aircraft frames, 10 aircraft engines, 10 aircraft propellers; aircraft and flying log books, uniforms, flying clothing, badges and insignia, photographs, weapons and RAAF memorabilia.

Navy Office: Holdings in excess of 13 000 items, relics, and trophies. (No detailed inventory is available.)

Army Office: Approximately 30 armoured vehicles, 1400 small arms, 100 flags, as well as large collections of various militaria, badges, uniforms, photographs. (A complete inventory is not available.)

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Small collections of records and medical equipment are held at each of the Quarantine Stations in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, and in the Northern Territory Division of the Department.

Institute of Anatomy: Holds collections of anatomical and ethnographic material. The anatomical and osteological collection has seven component parts with a total of 4312 catalogued items and approximately 1000 uncatalogued items. This material includes the original MacKenzie collection. Ten major collections and many smaller ones containing in all over 20 000 items of Malesian and Aboriginal origin form the National Ethnographic Collection. A great deal of this material is uncatalogued.

School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Sydney:

An important collection of insects and related forms of medical importance.

DEPARTMENT OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Collections of small arms, swords, bayonets, a production line similar to that operated in 1912 plus original machine tools in working order, ammunition stores and books on ammunition are held at production establishments. (Most of the collections are not catalogued.)

DEPARTMENT OF THE MEDIA

Film Australia has a film library; the Australian Information Service has a photographic library.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE

Holds a piece of moon rock from the Apollo 17 Mission.

Antarctic Division: Small collections of books, logs of ANARE expeditions, field equipment, biological specimens, and films and photographs of expeditions.

Australian Government Analytical Laboratories: A collection of standards which are used solely for reference purposes during analysis of forensic drugs, chemicals, pesticides and water samples.

Patents Office: Samples of hardware currently on sale and illustrating inventions which were commercially successful; a sample of a pocket calculator for use by pilots of light aircraft, invented by Lord Casey and Professor D. H. Myers.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Collections of historic records and relics relating to marine navigation, marine archaeology, civil aviation, railways, and roads and road transport.

JOINT HOUSE DEPARTMENT

Forty-one portrait paintings of members of the Royal Family, the Governors-General, and Prime Ministers; 27 portraits of the Presidents of the Senate and the Speakers of the House of Representatives; 17 portraits of Australian explorers, poets, etc., 19 other portraits, 11 general paintings; 15 busts, 33 pottery items; and 49 miscellaneous articles including the table, inkstand and pen used by Queen Victoria when signing the Commonwealth Constitution Act.

NATIONAL GALLERY

Over 700 Australian paintings, prints, drawings, crafts and pieces of sculpture; 80 items of ethnic art; 110 international art works; a lending collection of 270 items, and 48 miscellaneous items.

NATIONAL LIBRARY

1 439 976 volumes; 72 662 periodicals, newspapers and serials; 1 550 running metres of manuscripts; 1008 oral history tapes; 17 887 music scores, 84 000 sound recordings;

Australian War Memorial -
Proposed Staffing Program 1982/83

The Forward Staff Estimates for June 1982 and June 1983 reflect the overall program of development being undertaken by the Council to enable it to have sufficient staff to fulfil its functions under the Australian War Memorial Act 1980.

Particular areas where it is essential that development occur within the next two years are:

Documentary and Audio-visual Records:

A recent review (see Appendix E) has recommended an entire restructuring of this area including the introduction of a Curator-based structure to replace the existing Librarian based structure.

Conservation:

Continuing efforts will be made to recruit Conservation staff to a total of 17, the figure approved by Public Service Board as justified for the operation of the seven laboratories. Emphasis on attracting the most highly qualified and experienced Conservators.

Education:

For the past four years the War Memorial has had only two Education Officers. In late 1980 two principals from Canberra schools recommended the immediate engagement of a third member and that a fourth should be provided during 1982. On the basis of the known demand five Education staff and one ancillary staff member will be required by June 1983.

Finance and Accounts:

Provision has been made for three additional staff in this area - to be recruited during 1982/83 to operate the bookshop.

Attendants:

The Public Service Board is currently undertaking a full review of the activities of Attendants in major Commonwealth institutions in Canberra. It is confidently expected that a figure closer to that assessed by the War Memorial (38) will be agreed by the Public Service Board by June 1983.

25 150 paintings, drawings and prints; 139 160 photographs; 5 300 000 metres of moving picture film; 60 000 motion picture stills; 283 172 maps; 500 000 aerial photographs; 91 411 reels of microfilm; 509 200 microfiche; 228 930 microprint pieces and cards; and 3 100 000 data records.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN MINT

The total collection includes a comprehensive collection of gold coins struck in Australia; Australian £ s d coins from 1910; examples of all Royal Australian Mint striking each year of Australian coins plus Australian decimal striking from the Mints in Melbourne, Perth and London; representative coins from other countries including U.K. and New Zealand.

	Current Establishment		Current Staff		Current Recruitment		Total B & C		Forward Staff Estimate (June 1982) Endorsed by Minister		Forward Staff Estimate for June 1983	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
<u>Executive (not including Director - Statutory position)</u>												
Secretary	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Assistant Directors	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Steno-secretaries	3	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
<u>Collections Branch</u>												
Military Heraldry and Technology	7	5	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Art	6	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Documentary and Audio Visual Records	22	18	3	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Conservation	17	8	6	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Documentation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>History and Publications Branch (and Office of Official Historian)</u>												
History and Publications	5	3	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Official History	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Public Programs Section</u>												
Exhibitions	5	3	1	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Public Relations	(2)*	(2)*	-	(2)*	(2)*	(2)*	(2)*	(2)*	(2)*	(2)*	(2)*	(2)*
<u>Education</u>												
Management Services Section	7	7	1	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Finance and Accounts	5	4	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Personnel, Recruitment and Training	3	3	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Registry	2	1	-	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Office and General Services	8	6	1	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Dyping	4	3	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Photography	7	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Printing, Pressing and Security	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Workshop	21	20	1	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Attendants	9	8	-	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Cleaners/Hightwachen												
	142 (+2)*	109	22	131	146	146	146	146	146	146	146	146

* Education Staff are currently not counted against AMM ceiling. It is anticipated they will be within the next few months.

Extract from a Submission from National Library of Australia (Travel Report of Mr Ian Cook, Principal Conservator)

Report No. 2364
Appendix 1

SURVEY TECHNIQUES/DEVELOPING WORK PRIORITIES

- 34 Survey techniques and methods for determining treatment priorities have not been adequately developed in the institutions visited.
- 35 The British Library has a small permanent survey team which carries out a continuous program for evaluating the condition of the collections. The British Library team uses a shelf to shelf approach for examining material, and there seems to be no attempt to develop priorities for treatment. If an item requires conservation then it is sent to the relevant conservation unit for attention. The HMSO Bindery which carries out the bulk of the British Library's Conservation work has a staff of 120. About two million pounds are spent each year by the British Library on HMSO Bindery conservation work. In addition to the HMSO Bindery, there is another bindery at Kew which carries out more routine work. There are also two specialist conservation departments working on oriental and medieval manuscripts. British Library operations are very far removed from the nature, type and extent of the preservation problems which face the National Library.
- 36 Survey work in Canada is not well advanced although a general survey of the Conservation of Special Collections in Canadian Libraries was produced by Joyce Banks in 1977. Each special collection within the National Library of Canada has a liaison officer who deals directly with the various conservation units. Treatment priorities are developed during consultations between liaison officers and conservation staff. In some respects this is a similar approach to that used by the British Library. In general the system works, however, there are some thirty five conservation staff available to support the approach.
- 37 The Library of Congress has recently developed a 'points scheme' for forward planning, allocation and assessment of conservation work priorities. The scheme is currently being applied to the organisation of the rare book conservation program. Special Collection heads are asked to identify material/projects requiring attention by conservation personnel. Work selection may be carried out with the aid of conservation specialists. Work estimates are then developed for each project by conservation staff. A points score is allocated to each project on the basis that each hour of estimated conservation processing is equivalent to one point. Senior Library Management then allocates the total points available to each specialist area for a 12 month period. Project selection for each collection can then be made in terms of job priorities and the total available work allocation. The scheme is a very interesting one because it offers a systematic means for distribution of conservation resources and a rational means for developing work priorities. This technique may prove useful for work flow control at the National Library. The approach is currently being examined for possible application in 1982 for the Library's Book Conservation Program. A report for Council on this program will be produced in 1982.

Extract from Submission
and Supplementary
information supplied by
the Australian War
Memorial

SUMMARY OF THE BASIC DEFICIENCIES OF THE PRESENT
INSTITUTION

The AWM falls well short of the minimum requirements set out in the previous section. For example the present museum has no provision at all for items 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 and the provisions under items 1, 2, 7 and 9 could hardly be called satisfactory.

1 The Exhibition Galleries

Most of the galleries are of a good size and proportion for the display of the various categories of exhibits. However, the aeroplane gallery is far too small for the present exhibits let alone the 3 or 4 further (and important) aircraft that should be shown.

Superficial Finishes are of no great importance - the galleries are capable of taking new and more appropriate surfaces.

The Ceilings are a mish-mash of various blocked-in roof lights, ceiling beams and the like but the ceilings are high enough to accept suspended ceilings and in certain areas even mezzanine floors.

Floors are a mixture of various finishes - from a maintenance point of view (and also quietness) a continuous soft surface would be better.

Lighting is outdated and ad hoc - it would eventually need a unified and adaptable track system with special attention paid to lighting levels (for reasons of conservation).

Environmental Controls - The Department of Construction Report Dec. 1978 page 74 shows that improvements are necessary for the sake of exhibits.

Summary: The galleries are, on the whole, suitable for their purpose with the proviso mentioned above.

The modernizing of the galleries is, in my opinion, less important (in priority terms) than finding solutions for the defects of the AWM listed below.

2 Circulation

There is no obvious or basic circulation pattern either outside or inside the museum -

- (a) Outside - Pedestrians approach the entrance from either side and are obliged to walk along the road (see diagram opposite)

(b) At the entrance - There is confusion (diagram on next page). The visitor is confronted with 4 different ways into the museum and once inside there is nothing to help him find his way through the galleries.

(c) For such a large museum the entrance is cramped and there is no assembly/concourse area (page 6 for requirements of a museum concourse).

(d) There is a lack of vertical circulation in the middle and north end of the building which accentuates the problems of (b) above.

(e) Evening functions It is, at present, inconvenient for the Memorial to be used for evening functions, e.g. exhibition openings, lectures, etc., because of the complicated circulation and the difficulty of providing a limited security ring. (diagram opposite page 7)

3 Temporary Exhibitions

At present these have to be mounted in the permanent exhibition galleries. This is highly unsatisfactory for the curators and the visitors and effectively obscures important permanent exhibits - apart from taking whole galleries out of commission during the installation of the exhibition.

4 Introductory Gallery

The AWM has no introductory gallery - a museum as complex as this needs some means to give the visitor information about the many themes and subjects in the museum and to enable him to plan what he can see in the time he has available.

5 Aircraft

Certain important aeroplanes cannot at present be displayed.

6 Other Exhibit Deficiencies

The 1975 amendment to the AWM Act requires the display of categories of material not yet on view - viz. merchant seamen, philanthropic organisations and war correspondents. Other important items cannot at present be shown, e.g. General Morshead's caravan.

7 Lecture Theatre

The present set up is simply space taken from the exhibition galleries. It has no proper projection arrangements, nor is it conveniently placed in the building (see 2(e) above).

8 Educational Facilities

The AWM is completely lacking in this provision - no classrooms, prep. rooms or adjoining offices for staff.

9 Library and Archives

Storage is antiquated and inadequate for the growth of material and the needs of efficient retrieval.

10 Administration Areas

These have developed in an ad hoc fashion in spaces that had been obviously envisaged as exhibition galleries. The present area, whilst it could benefit from replanning and rationalisation, appears (on the basis of my own preliminary observations) to be some 20% or 30% too small to accommodate the new staff arrivals.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts - Inquiry into the Curatorial and Conservation Functions of the Australian War Memorial (AWM)

SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS BY PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

This statement contains comments on the abovementioned matter additional to those contained in the submission to the Committee made by the Board on 18 November 1981. In particular, it incorporates responses to certain material placed before the Committee in its public hearing on 4 December 1981.

Strategic Plan for Automatic Data Processing (ADP)

2. It will be recalled that the management of the AWM indicated to the Committee the difficulty it was experiencing in undertaking the preparation of an ADP strategic plan for the AWM for submission to the Board, as required by procedures recently introduced by the Government. In the light of this difficulty, the Board's Office has been able to second an experienced Computer Systems Officer Grade 5 to the AWM for several months to assist in this work (Transcript pages 153, 155-156).

Salary Rates

3. In its earlier submission, the Board advised the Committee of the then current salary rates appropriate to relevant staff categories. Since then there has been a general movement in salaries for those categories, and a revised table is given at Attachment A. The salaries shown supersede those contained in the Board's memorandum of 25 January 1982.

Conservators

4. Much of the discussion at the public hearing centred on problems being encountered in the conservation field. Because of the prominence given to these problems, a brief paper titled 'The Conservation Function' has been prepared (see Attachment B). This paper addresses some of the more significant issues raised, particularly the classification structure for Conservators. It also touches on some general management questions such as the determination of corporate priorities and the deployment of limited staff resources. Recent press advertisements for Conservators in State museums are at Attachment C.

Registration

5. As a result of its consideration of a proposal submitted to it by the AWM, the Board has approved the provision of a position at the Class 8 level to perform the function of Registrar of Collections. It is expected that this position will head up a small section which will be responsible for the development and administration of a comprehensive registration system.

Permanency for Curators

6. At page 141 of the transcript reference is made to the fact that Curators in the AWM are engaged on contract. The Board's representative at the hearing indicated that the Board had issued documentation for the creation of permanent positions of Curator. This documentation was in fact sent to the AWM on 22 October 1981.

War Histories

7. In response to a proposal submitted by the AWM, the Board recently agreed to the advertisement of a senior position, the occupant of which will be responsible for writing the official history of the Vietnam War and the Malayan Emergency. Advertisements (see Attachment D) calling for applications appeared in the national press on 23 January 1982.

Staff Ceilings

8. Representatives of the AWM in their evidence before the Committee strongly asserted their belief that the AWM needs an expanded staff ceiling to undertake the totality of its operations.

9. The Board understands the aspirations of the AWM representatives in this matter. It has to be borne in mind, however, that staff ceilings are set by the Government, and that the Government does this in the context of sharing out the limited resources available across the Commonwealth sector as a whole, within the framework of the Government's expenditure restraint policies. The assessment which each organisation subject to staff ceiling makes of its own requirements for staff resources, and the Board's appreciation of such assessment, is considered by the Government against the competing demands of other public sector activities for the limited resources available.

10. Further to the establishment of provisional staff ceilings for 30 June 1982 pursuant to the Review of Commonwealth Functions, the Government established a Ministerial Appeals Committee which Ministers could approach to seek review of the provisional 30 June 1982 staff ceilings for organisations in their portfolios. The processes of the Committee included consideration of reports prepared by the Public Service Board in consultation with the organisations for which Ministers were seeking ceiling reviews, and including expressions of view by those organisations.

11. The AWM's 30 June 1982 provisional staff ceiling was reviewed through the Ministerial Appeals Committee process. As a result the Government decided to increase the AWM's 30 June 1982 full-time staff ceiling by 10 to 124, to enable the AWM to allocate additional staff to those areas where it considers the need is greatest.

12. In the course of the public hearing, reference was made by representatives of the AWM to the fact that the AWM had a significantly lower approved staff ceiling than the Australian National Gallery (ANG). The Board observes that a simple comparison of staffing levels between the two institutions at a particular time may not necessarily prove much. A proper assessment of relative needs for staff resources should

have regard to all relevant factors, including for example the particular functions and methods of operation of each as well as their different backgrounds, stages of development and immediate objectives. The AWM's case for resources vis-a-vis the ANG would also need to be assessed in the current context that the Gallery is committed to reaching full operational status by opening day later in 1982 and consequently requires an intensified build-up of staff.

13. That said, the Board appreciates that the question of the relative needs of the two institutions for staff resources is of relevance to the consideration of their staff ceilings, and will be giving attention to this aspect in developing its advice to the Government regarding establishment of provisional ceilings for 30 June 1983.

COMPARISON OF SALARY STRUCTURES

Curators

Present Staffing	8 full-time
Structure and Salary Rates	(effective 22.10.81)
Curatorial Assistant 1	\$14090-14840-15590-16340-17090
Curatorial Assistant 2 ¹	\$17870-18720-19570-20420
Curator 1	\$21600-22740-23880-25020-26160
Curator 2	\$28080-29350-30620-31890-33160
Curator 3 ²	\$38400

1. New level added December 1981
2. At present applies in ANG only

Conservators

Present Staffing	9 full-time and 4 part-time
Structure and Salary Rates	(effective 22.10.81) ¹
Assistant Conservator	\$13180-13550-13910-14280-14640-15010
Conservator 1	\$16740-17100-17460-17820-18180
Conservator 2	\$20380-21140-21910-22670-23430
Conservator 3	\$26400-27240-28080
Science 4 ²	\$29160-30110-31060

1. Not yet promulgated
2. At present applies in AWM only

Registration

Establishment:	
Registrar of Collections ¹	\$25150-26150
Curatorial Assistant (part-time)	
2 x Clerical Assistant Grade 4	

1. Not filled - new position January 1982

Note: Further staffing to be determined in conjunction with the ADP Strategic Plan

Salary Comparison

Clerical Administrative (effective 22.10.81)	
Clerk Class 1	\$11750-12160-12570-12980-13390-13800
Clerk Class 2/3	\$14250-14700-15150-15600-16050
Clerk Class 4	\$16600-17100-17600-18100
Clerk Class 5	\$18650-19150-19650-20150
Clerk Class 6	\$20750-21400-22050
Clerk Class 7	\$22750-23400-24050
Clerk Class 8	\$25150-26150
Clerk Class 9	\$27250-28250
Clerk Class 10	\$29350-30450
Clerk Class 11	\$31650-32950
Second Division	
Level 1	\$38000
Level 2	\$41700

THE CONSERVATION FUNCTION IN THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL (AWM)

In this brief paper several problems associated with the conservation function in the AWM are addressed from the perspective of the Public Service Board's Office.

Nature of Problems

2. It is clear that the basic conservation problem in the AWM is the large backlog of conservation work which has accumulated over the years, largely pre-dating the establishment of the AWM as a statutory authority with its own staff ceiling. The size of this backlog has been estimated by the AWM at 450 man years. The management of the AWM identifies as an associated problem the difficulty in augmenting its staff of qualified conservators, and has expressed the view that staff ceiling limitations and inadequate salaries are two major elements in this problem. It is also claimed that a more liberal salary structure is necessary to curb the loss or potential loss of experienced conservators to other museums or to non-conservation work (eg management).

Causes

3. So far as the backlog of conservation work is concerned, the evidence submitted to the Committee by the AWM suggests that it was brought about by factors such as:

- . the poor physical state of many items at the time of acquisition by the AWM;
- . unsuitable storage and inadequate conservation facilities, particularly before the Mitchell repository was built;
- . the neglect - compared with modern conservation standards - of the collection for many years (a factor being that the conservation profession is substantially a development of the last 10-15 years);
- . inadequate numbers of skilled conservators.

4. The problem of inadequacy of the existing conservator resources in the AWM needs to be viewed in the context of a world-wide shortage of skilled and experienced people in the conservator profession. The issue can then be seen in perspective as fundamentally a community-wide manpower problem; this in turn influences the direction in which appropriate solutions should be sought.

5. Against this backdrop, factors likely to influence the relative success of a particular museum in attracting competent conservators include:

- . the reputation of the institution and its collection (for the better professionals this aspect is likely to be crucial);

- the stage of development of the institution (a developing institution, or one in which application of modern conservation techniques is relatively undeveloped, may have little attraction for an experienced and established conservator);
- the location of the institution (in terms of its geography relative to the centres of population, the 'mainstream' of cultural activities and developments, its desirability as a working and living environment, etc);
- the type of work (conserving 'prestige' items for example may have a stronger general appeal than 'bread and butter' conservation work);
- the standard of laboratory facilities, etc;
- pay and conditions (including prospects for advancement within the profession);
- other factors (the Committee heard evidence suggesting that the title 'Memorial' could detract from the image of the AWM as a major museum).

This far from complete list cautions against the acceptance of simplistic 'cause-effect' explanations for the difficulties experienced by a museum in obtaining what it believes as is its proper 'share' of the conservator workforce. In particular, where common pay rates and conditions of employment apply in several museums, the greater difficulty one museum may experience in attracting or holding staff will almost certainly be caused by some non-pay factor or factors.

Priorities

6. At page 122 of the transcript the Director of the AWM clearly implies that it is the Memorial's present staff ceiling, rather than inadequate salaries, which constitutes the major limitation on the number of conservators employed.
7. Reference has been made in the submission to which this paper forms an attachment, to the subject of staff ceilings, and the application of the staff ceiling mechanism to the AWM. For the purpose of the present discussion, it is useful to note that, whilst the approved staff ceiling places a limitation on the aggregate personnel resources of an organisation, it leaves the management of the organisation substantially free to determine how that ceiling will be distributed across the various functions and activities undertaken by the organisation.
8. The freedom to distribute and redistribute ceiling units within an organisation is of course not an absolute freedom. This is because, at any time, the existing mix of staff will in some measure limit the changes that can in practical terms be made. Nevertheless, given the fact that staff wastage (eg resignations, retirements) is occurring continually, it is possible for management to ensure by judicious recruitment that over time the allocation of the staff ceiling among activities substantially accords with its priorities.

9. Against this background, it is noted that the AWM currently allocates eight (8) of its aggregate ceiling of 114 to conservators. (As indicated elsewhere, the ceiling has recently been increased to 124). In view of the clear statement by the AWM management that conservation is its first priority, the Committee might reasonably ask why some figure higher than eight could not have been allocated to this activity at the expense of lower priority activities.

Salary/Classification Issues

10. In the context of a recent salary review, action is in train to adjust the salary rates for Conservators as follows:

Assistant Conservator	13180-13550-13910-14280-14640-15010
Conservator 1	16740-17100-17460-17820-18180
Conservator 2	20380-21140-21910-22670-23430
Conservator 3	26400-27240-28080

The Chief of Conservation at the AWM is paid at the Science 4 rate, which is \$29160-31060.

11. The Board believes that these rates are competitive within the Australian market, and this view is supported by copies of recent press advertisements placed by State museums (see Attachment C in submission to which this paper forms Attachment B). The rates also appear to compare reasonably with salaries paid overseas, particularly in the United Kingdom and Canada.

12. During the Committee's public hearing a number of criticisms was voiced concerning the salary rates (and classification structure) for conservators. For the most part, however, these criticisms were not directed to the lower classifications (ie the rates paid to newly graduated conservators) so much as to the upper limit imposed by the Conservator 2 salary on conservators who do not have supervisory responsibilities (the Conservator 3 is an in-charge classification). The nature of the criticisms may be conveniently summarised as follows:

- in a situation of scarcity of conservators, the rates are too low to attract experienced conservators from abroad, and some experienced conservators are essential in any museum;
- the existing classifications are insufficiently high to retain the services of experienced conservator, (ie they will move to other museums);
- the existing classifications are inequitable when compared with Clerical/Administrative rates, and there is a danger that conservators will be attracted from their speciality to the management field in order to maintain satisfactory career progress; this will be a loss to conservation, and may be a dubious gain to management.

As a means of overcoming these perceived inadequacies, it was suggested that the upper limits of the conservator salary rates be substantially extended, and that a merit advancement system be introduced to ensure that a guaranteed career path would be kept open for all conservators.

13. By way of response, comment as follows is made on each of the issues raised above:

- the contention that conservators cannot be attracted from overseas at the present salaries is not supported by evidence given to the Committee that the AMM has been able to secure conservators from both the United Kingdom and the United States. (It is also relevant to note that, according to the Board's records, no placement of advertisements overseas by the AMM has occurred since July 1980);
- the movement of conservators from one museum to another within reason must surely be seen as good for their professional development, and hence good for the health of the profession and the institutions involved. Certainly proper career structures should exist among Commonwealth museums but any suggestion that the Commonwealth should develop a classification structure which would effectively discourage conservators from seeking career advancement in other institutions would be difficult to defend.
- comparisons drawn between the conservator and clerical/administrative fields need to be considered in a proper framework. The question of the equity of conservator's salary levels has to be considered in the context of the value which other employers, and indeed the community at large, place upon the skills required for the performance of the work. The primary test adopted by the Board and by industrial tribunals in determining salary levels is the comparison with rates paid in the community for comparable work. As indicated previously, salaries paid to conservators employed by the Commonwealth compare favourably with those paid by other employers for like work;
- the suggestion that a merit advancement system be introduced is interpreted as implying that there should be an arrangement under which the individual conservator could be classified at the level at which he or she is capable of working, rather than being tied to the classification of a particular position. As a matter of principle, there is no avoiding the continued use of a position-based establishment system within which positions are classified at various levels according to the work that is required to be performed. It is recognised, however, that by the nature of conservation work the experience and skills of the conservators concerned need to be considered in determining the mix of positions to be provided from time to time. In the case of the AMM, the Board has in the past endeavoured to be sensitive to the skill levels of the actual conservators employed in approving establishment, and will continue to do so in the future.

14. As previously indicated to the Committee, the Board already has the classification structure for conservators under review, and this review is paying particular attention to the top end of the scale. In considering the need for changes the Board will, in accordance with its normal practice, take into account such aspects as the structural requirements indicated by the work, the matter of work value and, in the final analysis, the maintenance of reasonable salary comparability with conservators employed in the community generally, and the need to secure a reasonable share of the numbers of conservators available in a situation of scarcity.

Manpower Aspects

15. Although the current revision of the classification structure for conservators can be expected to yield results which will make a contribution towards the improvement of recruitment and retention of staff in this category, it is important that acknowledgement be made of the limited solutions that classification and salary adjustments can provide for problems which are not fundamentally in the classification/salary arena. As has already been stated, the fundamental problem with regard to conservators is the absolute shortage of trained staff in this field. The problem therefore will be solved in any final sense only as more conservators are trained and enter the job market. The availability of adequate numbers of experienced conservators for senior positions must ultimately be a function of the time it takes conservators to gain adequate knowledge and skills.

16. The Committee heard evidence on the training of conservators at the Canberra College of Advanced Education. At present there are some 50 students at various stages of their studies, most of whom upon graduation will be available to satisfy the needs of Australian museums and kindred bodies (some are overseas students and will return to their homelands). The AMM is one of several Commonwealth bodies assisting the College by providing vacation training for students. It is therefore well placed to interest students in its work and to secure a reasonable share of new graduates.

RECENT PRESS ADVERTISEMENTS PLACED BY STATE BODIES FOR
CONSERVATORS

NOTE: All advertisements appeared in the Weekend Australian newspaper.

1. Date: 7-8 November 1981
 Body: Queensland Art Gallery
 Position: Conservator of Paintings
 Duties: 'Be responsible to the Director for the conservation and restoration of the Collection of Paintings. The Conservation Section currently includes a Conservator - Works on Paper. Also responsible for developing a program for the conservation and restoration of the Gallery's Collection, for maintenance of conservation records and for advice on purchase of equipment.'
 Salary Range: \$14,678 to \$24,209 per annum. Appointment to a particular level will depend upon qualifications and experience.

2. Date: 14-15 November 1981
 Body: State Library of Victoria
 Position: Conservator, Class NG-3 or NG-4
 Duties: Responsible to the Resources Development Librarian for the State Library's conservation, binding and microfilming programmes; other duties as directed.
 Salary Range: NG-3 \$19,652-\$21,543
 NG-4 \$22,756-\$23,765
 NOTE: A person with relevant experience and demonstrated ability and achievements related to conservation of library material may be eligible for appointment to the NG-4 level.

3. Date: 5-6 December 1981
 Body: Queensland Art Gallery
 Position: Conservator (Works on Paper)
 Duties: Restoration and conservation of all works on paper in the Collection of the Queensland Art Gallery. Research into organisation and methods and apparatus to overcome factors

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
OFFICIAL HISTORIAN

Australian Involvement in Malayan Emergency
and Vietnam War

An official historian is to be engaged to produce a series of books on Australian involvement in the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War. The project represents the largest and most prestigious official history since the publication of Australia in the War of 1939-45. It is expected that there will be at least 5 volumes produced covering operations, strategy and diplomacy, and the home front.

The official historian, under Council's general direction, will assume responsibility for:

- designing the most appropriate plan or scheme of books;
- liaising with the Government authorities and various archives concerning access to official and private records;
- engaging and supervising the work of a supporting research team;
- appointing writers for individual volumes and providing guidance and assistance to ensure a consistent high standard;
- administering the official history program;
- writing one or more volumes.

The person sought will be a senior historian with a strong research and publication record. He or she would have the vision and the maturity needed to deal with issues of emotional and political sensitivity. As the leader of the project the person would also be expected to demonstrate management skills of a high order.

The official historian will have an office provided by the Australian War Memorial and will be responsible through the Director to Council. An Editorial Advisory Committee will be established to offer guidance and support.

The Australian War Memorial is prepared to negotiate an attractive salary suitable for a person with the qualities and experience outlined above. It is expected that the project could not be completed in less than 7 years.

Persons wishing to apply for this position should write to the Director, Australian War Memorial, PO Box 245, CANBERRA CITY 2601, by 5 February 1982. Applicants should set out full details of qualifications, previous publications and relevant research experience.

contributing to the decline of works on paper. Advise on environmental control for storage or display of works on paper and conditions for transporting works. Compilation of and maintenance for future retrieval of case histories of restoration/conservation procedures for works on paper in the Gallery's Collection including photographic records (ie initial photographs, during process and on completion). Supervision and training of technical staff including practical work and record keeping. Supervision of preparation of frames and mounts for drawings, prints and reproduction and repair of frames. Development and preparation of media, solvents, in the conservation laboratory, recommending and ordering equipment and materials. Answer specialist and general enquiries and advise institutions and members of the public on the care and restoration of works on paper. Preparation of research papers and articles on conservation. Other duties as required.

Salary Range: \$14,678 to \$20,348 per annum

4. Date: 23-24 January 1982
- Body: National Gallery of Victoria, Ministry for the Arts
- Position: Art Conservation Officer - Class NG-3; NG-4
- Duties: Under a Deputy Director to be responsible for the conservation and restoration of all works on paper in the State Collection of works of art and such other works as may be the responsibility of the Council of Trustees of the National Gallery; other duties as directed.
- Salary Range: Class "NG-3" - \$19,652-\$21,543
Class "NG-4" - \$22,756-\$23,765
- NOTE: A person with relevant experience and demonstrated ability and achievements related to art or conservation may be eligible for appointment to Class "NG-4" level.