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Submission:

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To: Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts
Hon Peter Garrett, AM MP

Re: Minister's Cultural Policy Review
The Importance of Keepers of Culture

The Minister's review deals with the arts and the "creators of culture" and makes little reference to the "keepers of culture". Museums (keepers of culture) do have a small reference, almost as an afterthought.

We cannot emphasise too greatly the importance of museums, historical societies and family history societies as keepers of culture. Historical Societies collect information relating to the culture of local areas and use it to inform and educate the public. Small local museums are keepers of the physical evidence of the nation's cultural history.

Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society represents 180 members. Our organisation keeps documents and photographs, writes books, holds meetings and lectures, and works with local schools, Campbelltown City Council, and the Campbelltown community to collect and preserve items and information relevant to the history of the Campbelltown District.

We hold a collection of local artifacts, housed and displayed at Glenalvon, a 1840s Georgian Town House. Glenalvon is managed and operated entirely by volunteers, who play an invaluable role in collecting the cultural history of the Campbelltown District, and making it accessible to the public.

In 2009 Glenalvon Museum mounted a number of major exhibitions:

- The Gore Family: artifacts relating to the Bank Manager – 1876-1898. A lecture and book elaborated on this theme.
- Bottles: Historic bottles collected from heritage buildings, including local hotels and homesteads.
- Lazzarini: A large number of artefacts relating to the life and times of Hubert Peter (Bert) Lazzarini, Federal Member for Werriwa, 1919-1931, 1934-1952. A

book, launched by the current Member for Werriwa, Chris Hayes, accompanied this exhibition.

- Textiles: clothing (1838-1940), and hand-made curtains (1899) from a local homestead. The Campbelltown Quilters Association, the Embroiderers Guild of NSW Campbelltown Branch, and the Camden Spinners and Weavers presented guest exhibitions and practical demonstrations on this theme.
- Fisher's Ghost: a walking tour and discussion elaborated on the story of the murder of a local colonial character, and the legend of the "Ghost" that underpins Campbelltown's annual festival, held in November.
- Bursill: A photographic exhibition relating to the Bursill family, owners and residents of Glenalvon 1920 – 1967.
- In 2010, exhibitions will devolve around the 200th Anniversary of Governor Lachlan Macquarie, founder of Campbelltown.

Glenalvon's permanent displays present an insight into the district's cultural history and its agricultural basis.

In addition to regular museum openings, we host guided tours for social groups and school students, whose experience gives them a "feel" for our colonial past and life before electricity, telecommunications and running water.

Our main issues are in funding and staffing. We, as with most museums, have to live "hand-to-mouth". Small museums are keepers of cultural material for the community, but the majority are totally un-funded, and have to fund-raise to conserve, preserve and display these materials. Devolution of government funding to grass roots institutions with inbuilt means testing and accountability structures would encourage and support technical and practical excellence.

Museums housed in heritage or ageing buildings, or with gardens, incur additional maintenance costs to the management, to provide safe public access and to fulfill their legislated duty of care.

Volunteer run museums actively contribute to local economies by attracting tourists to add to community wealth at no cost to the community. Other indirect benefits include positive portrayal of the local area, its heritage, and people to first time visitors from other areas.

To enable the young to participate in culture, the school curriculum requires inclusion of both "Keepers" and "Creators" in the studies in art, literature, domestic sciences, history, science, textiles and design, and music. To keep our culture strong and to engage in the community, we need to have a sense of "place and identity". We need to have a cultural common ground for the shifting society we live in. We need to look both to our history (what we keep), and to our present and future (what we create), and strike the right balance between these in any policy formulation.

Jennifer Goodfellow
Secretary,
Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society Inc