

The Australian War Memorial Development Program: the ‘Mitchell Option’ reassessed

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Earlier papers relevant to Heritage Guardians campaign against the extensions

For earlier papers, see [the campaign diary of the Heritage Guardians campaign against the War Memorial extensions](#). In particular, see:

- [open letter \(March 2019\) signed by 83 distinguished Australians against the extensions](#);
- [petition \(April 2019\) signed by 1246 Australians against the extensions](#);
- [David Stephens in *The Riot Act* \(15 April\) summarises the arguments against the extensions](#);
- [Paul Daley in *Guardian Australia* \(22 April\) says major parties were conned into supporting the extensions](#);
- [Ben Brooker in *Overland* \(23 April\) opposes the extensions](#);
- [Dr Margaret Beavis, Medical Association for Prevention of War, counters arguments that the extensions offer a ‘therapeutic milieu’ for veterans \(24 April\)](#);
- [David Stephens in *The Strategist* \(2 May\) refutes Director Nelson’s arguments for the extensions](#);
- [Dr Charlotte Palmer in *Pearls and Irritations* demolishes the ‘therapeutic milieu’ argument \(23 May\)](#);
- [Peter Stanley in *Pearls and Irritations* argues that providing a ‘therapeutic milieu’ is outside the legislated charter of the War Memorial \(19 June\)](#);
- [Brendon Kelson letter to the Prime Minister, summarising arguments against the extensions and supporting the Mitchell alternative \(19 June\)](#).
- [Former War Memorial Director, Brendon Kelson, says it risks becoming a theme park \(24 June\)](#);
- [Former War Memorial senior officer, Richard Llewellyn, points to questionable process regarding the project, along with design flaws \(24 June\)](#);
- [Heritage Guardians media release \(24 June\)](#).

Executive summary

On 1 November 2018, the Australian government announced its support of the Australian War Memorial's proposal for major development work at the Memorial's Campbell site, with the approval of \$498m of forward funding.

The Australian War Memorial has been pushing this ambitious project for some time, on its own website and through announcements and information passed on to mainstream media sources.

While the project to redevelop the Memorial's Campbell site has been placed centre stage, the Memorial has also gone about acquiring the land resources and the funding to undertake extensive further development work at its Mitchell ACT site, where it has considerable (and very good) facilities for storage, conservation and display of its collection.

The Memorial completed in early 2019 a new \$16.1m, 5288 square metres purpose-built facility on the Mitchell site (Mitchell E building), yet this significant expansion of its facilities is downplayed in the Campbell development documentation and on the Memorial's [own website material on 'redevelopment'](#).

The 'Chinese Wall' between the preparation of the cases for the Mitchell and Campbell work has allowed the Memorial to present conflicting arguments to support the same objective – obtaining more space to house large technology objects.

Mitchell offers very significant benefits in terms of cost effectiveness, utility, preservation of the heritage integrity of the Memorial at Campbell, and other practical gains.

But developing Mitchell does not fit with the proposed expansion of the Campbell facility – and its benefits to its proponents in posterity – and thus has been sidelined in the Memorial's view of its desired future.

The Memorial has developed and put before government conflicting documentation, on the one hand to support the Mitchell development and, on the other, to support its grand design for the Campbell site – with the two exercises going ahead almost concurrently. It is impossible that both of these competing propositions can be correct and truthful.

This paper examines the conflict between the Mitchell and Campbell development submissions and concludes that the reasons for dismissing the Mitchell development option are spurious, subjective and in a number of cases, entirely mendacious.

Given the magnitude of government finance (in excess of \$500m, taking account of money already spent on project scoping and the Mitchell E building at \$16.1m) required or already expended to achieve the Memorial's current aspirations, it is inconceivable that a responsible government would readily acquiesce to those aspirations, were it in full possession of the facts.

This paper presents the facts as supplied by the Memorial itself.

It is highly questionable whether the Memorial Council and the government have been provided with reliable forward projection data on storage and exhibition requirements to support the Campbell Precinct proposal.

The publicly available documentation prepared for the Memorial Council and the government provides neither complete – nor in all cases accurate – statements of all pertinent facts upon which to base supporting decisions.

On the question of comparative costs and value for money, the Memorial proposes a \$498m project to deliver at Campbell 11 412 square metres of 'new gallery space'. Simple mathematics suggests that this addresses 'critical space shortages' at a cost of \$43 648 a square metre.

It should also be noted that, in order to *construct* that 'new gallery space', the Memorial proposes the *destruction* of the existing Anzac Hall of 4180 square metres. Thus, it can reasonably be argued that the current Memorial plan for the Campbell redevelopment, for \$498m, adds only 7232 (11 412 minus 4180) square metres overall to the existing gallery space at Campbell.

To provide reliable perspective, here is a comparison: remember that the Memorial has recently completed the new purpose-built storage facility (Mitchell E) for large technology objects at its Mitchell precinct site of 5288 square metres for a projected cost of \$16.1m, a cost of \$3045 a square metre.

In simple terms, comparing the 11 412 square metres at Campbell and the 5288 square metres at Mitchell for Mitchell E, new space at Campbell is to cost (at the estimate most favourable to the Memorial) *around 14 times as much per square metre* as new space at Mitchell. Yet the space in both places will hold much the same exhibits – large technology objects like planes and helicopters.

It is impossible to reconcile the fact that the Memorial would promote the Mitchell Precinct to government 'as an integral component of the Australian War Memorial and home to a significant national collection' while, virtually simultaneously in 2017, arguing when considering development options, that '[t]he dispersed Memorial [to Mitchell] would result in the Memorial at Campbell not being considered as Australia's "national" War Memorial, thereby lessening the importance of the Campbell site and commemorations told within'.

The Memorial could – as is shown by its own submissions to the Public Works Committee in 2017 – very adequately meet all of the potential demands for increased facility at its Mitchell Precinct for around \$100m, or around 20 per cent of the projected cost of the highly contentious Campbell site project.

The Memorial’s documentation in support of development at the Campbell site has been constructed so as to ignore or deny the potential of the Mitchell Precinct as offering a viable and cost-effective facility for the Memorial to achieve its mission in future. (The Memorial’s figures also seem to be inconsistent across its documentation, and this is a factor affecting analysis.)

Addressing another key point put by the proponents of the extensions, if providing a ‘therapeutic milieu’ for today’s veterans is to be a factor in determining future development options then it must be recognised that there are no surviving World War I veterans and that the population of World War II veterans is rapidly declining. The obvious way of providing a therapeutic milieu for veterans of say, Afghanistan, East Timor, and Iraq is to take floor space from older wars.

This paper’s conclusion is that the Mitchell Option is the best outcome for both the Memorial and the nation.

Introduction

1. In October 2017, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC) approved the Australian War Memorial's submission for funding for the construction of a 5288 square metres facility, called the Treloar E Large Technology Objects Store, on a site acquired by the Memorial some years previously at Mitchell ACT as a consequence of the Mitchell Precinct Development Plan, which had been approved by the Memorial's Council in 2012.
2. The Memorial's submission was dated June 2017 and [the PWC Report was No. 7 of 2017](#). At an approved cost of \$16.1m, the construction of the Treloar E (Mitchell) facility made good sense and good use of the Memorial's previous acquisition of land for the purpose.
3. The arguments the Memorial advanced to the Public Works Committee for the Treloar (Mitchell) project hold up well to scrutiny. This contrasts strongly with the arguments propounded for the proposed Campbell site redevelopment project, unless the other Memorial developments – both previous and in the pipeline – are ignored or denied. This is incontrovertibly proven by the Memorial's own documentation.
4. As well, it is important to recognise the findings of the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) published 13 June 2018 regarding the Memorial's collection development activities. That report references previous ANAO adverse determinations on the Memorial's collection management activities, dating back to before the turn of the millennium. This is not inconsequential, since ensuring the growth of the Memorial's collection is a foundation argument for both the Mitchell Precinct and the Campbell Precinct propositions.
5. Of further important note is the Memorial's Options Assessment Report (Rev A), dated 18 August 2017, a mere two months after submission of the Memorial's Treloar E (Mitchell) Project submission to the PWC. The Options Assessment Report is published on the Memorial's website; it summarily dismisses the 'Mitchell Option' for exhibition purposes on subjective – and when compared with other Memorial statements – evidently spurious grounds. (See [my earlier paper](#).)
6. When the Options Assessment Report, the Treloar E (Mitchell) Project submission to the Public Works Committee, the ANAO Report of 2018 and the Memorial's PWC Submission of 1992 (that resulted in the construction of the existing Treloar Resource Centre) are examined as a body of work, there emerge glaring inconsistencies, contradictions, and at the very least some highly questionable conclusions and what some might take as deliberate obfuscation of pertinent facts. The following paragraphs provide links to these key documents.

Source documentation

7. The analysis in this paper has been drawn entirely from publicly-available official sources. The conclusions can be argued, but if the underlying data and documentation is deemed invalid then using it for any purpose must be questioned – and this brings up cascading issues of veracity.
8. The source documentation cited throughout this paper is:

[Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works: Report relating to the Storage/Display Facility for Australian War Memorial, Mitchell, ACT: 17th Report 1992](#), hereafter cited as **Treloar Centre (Mitchell) PWC Report 1992**;

[Australian War Memorial: Treloar E Large Technology Objects Store Project – Statement of Evidence to the Parliamentary Committee on Public Works, June 2017](#), cited as **Treloar E Project (Mitchell) Statement 2017**;

[GHD \(Consultants\): Report for Australian War Memorial: Australian War Memorial Redevelopment Options Assessment Report, 18/08/2017 \(Options Assessment Report\)](#);

[Australian National Audit Office Report No. 46 of 2017-18: Management of the National Collections, June 2018 \(ANAO Report 46\)](#);

[Council of the Australian War Memorial, 161st Meeting, Tuesday, 3 July 2018: Australian War Memorial Redevelopment Project – Design Options \(Design Options\)](#).

9. With the exception of the **Treloar Centre (Mitchell) PWC Report 1992**, all of these documents were prepared within a short time period (approximately, between June 2017 and July 2018) and the preparation activity must have overlapped to a significant degree. The same authors appear in more than one of these documents. We have bolded the references to these documents in the following paragraphs, to emphasise that the arguments in the paper rely on these publicly available documents, three of them prepared by the Memorial or its consultants, and two of them commenting on the Memorial's plans.
10. It would beggar belief to suggest that the inconsistencies (or even downright contradictions) between these documents could be due to the authors being unaware of the previous or concurrent work. Equally, it is impossible that the exhibition purpose which was part of the Treloar Centre's original design brief – **Treloar Centre (Mitchell) PWC Report 1992** – could be mistaken or overlooked, as the fabric of the Treloar Centre (visitor foyer, visitor galleries down the sides of the Treloar Centre, facilities for use by the disabled) makes such use glaringly obvious.

The genesis of the Treloar Centre

11. The existence of the Treloar Centre (originally, the Mitchell C building) was the result of the confluence of three situations around 1990:
 - the Denton, Corker and Marshall (DCM) Campbell development master-plan;
 - the imminent development of facilities at Duntroon ACT for the Royal Military College Logistics Complex; and
 - the exhaustion of storage space at the Mitchell ACT conservation and storage site buildings (Mitchell Annex and Mitchell B building).
12. It should be noted that a significant number of large technology objects were at that time effectively outhoused undergoing restoration: the Me262 at CAC Melbourne, the Mosquito at de Havilland at Bankstown, the Zero at RAAF Wagga, the Me109 in storage at St. Marys in Sydney, two Sea Fury aircraft at Sydney and Nowra, the Gayundah Gun at Bendigo, and others.
13. The Duntroon connection is due to the fact that for many years the Memorial had been granted occupancy of an old shed in the Duntroon grounds, in which was housed a wide range of mostly large technology objects including a T34 tank, a Canberra Bomber, landing craft, vehicles, heavy ordnance and other items (including an elephant skull of strange provenance – unless Australia had troops serving with or against Hannibal – which is undocumented).
14. The DCM master plan was a result of Memorial management acting to address the fact that the existing exhibition space at the Campbell site was seriously inadequate for display of larger technology and to provide adequate access to and storage of the Research Centre collection. The current Memorial configuration is in large part the product of the DCM master plan.
15. However, the government of the time was not prepared to provide funding for the overall DCM master plan and Memorial management had to make hard decisions. Construction of the Administrative building freed up space in the Memorial building for access to research collections and expanded lower-floor galleries for the exhibition of both military technology and art deemed of high importance for interpretation of the Australian experience of war.
16. Memorial management was also simultaneously faced with the dual problem of having to find alternative accommodation for the technology stored at Duntroon and utilising what funding might be forthcoming to allow for storage, restoration work and public access to the Memorial collection of important large technology items.
17. In these circumstances, it would have been irresponsible of Memorial management to commence work on Anzac Hall that might not be completed in the foreseeable future, as that would not have guaranteed solution of the Memorial's dilemma and would indeed have exacerbated the problems it already faced.

18. A happy compromise was found, however: development of a facility contiguous to the existing Mitchell B building, adjacent to the Mitchell Annex conservation facility on land available for such development, within a budget achievable under the then current government constraints.
19. Hence, the rapid development of a proposal for New Policy Proposal funding via PWC approval, of construction of a facility that combined the functions of storage, support for conservation work on large technology objects, and public access to view the objects.
20. A chapter-and-verse examination of the Treloar Centre facility features is not necessary here. Suffice it to say that what was originally known as ‘Mitchell C’ (later to be dubbed ‘The Treloar Centre’), was approved, built within budget and time and subsequently operated as intended, as a storage, conservation *and public access* facility.
21. That a facility at Mitchell is integral to the delivery of the Memorial’s functions has not been questioned – until 2018. A check of [the Memorial’s Annual Reports since 2014](#) shows the Memorial has been happy to boost its overall visitor numbers by recording visitors to Mitchell in *combination with* visitors to Campbell. This demonstrates that the Mitchell Precinct has been seen as complementary to the Campbell Precinct, not antithetical to it as suggested in the **Options Assessment Report**, section 4.2.
22. Visitor access to the Memorial’s collection at Mitchell is implicitly repudiated in the **Options Assessment Report** as worthy of consideration. The Mitchell Option is dismissed. Among the arguments against the Mitchell Option is the statement that ‘this Option is inconsistent with the options outlined within the Mitchell storage facility IBC and Detailed Business Case (DBC), contradicting past government approvals’: **Options Assessment Report**, section 4.2.
23. However, use of facilities at Mitchell for display of Memorial collection items is *unequivocally* a part of the PWC 1992 approval for the development of the Treloar Centre: ‘The Committee recommends the construction of a storage-display facility for the Australian War Memorial at Mitchell, at a cost of \$6.5m’: **Treloar Centre (Mitchell) PWC Report 1992**, para 73.
24. The **Options Assessment Report** statement that ‘[the Mitchell Option] is inconsistent ...’ does not prove that the Mitchell Option contradicts ‘past government approvals’. It proves rather that the Memorial’s **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement** submitted to the PWC in 2017 was either negligent or duplicitous in not recognising that the existing Treloar Centre is and has been an integral part of Memorial exhibition activities since 1994.
25. The cascading result of that action is that the Mitchell Option has been discarded in the preparation of the **Design Options** document.
26. It is inconceivable that a prudent funding authority would approve sequential funding (Mitchell, Campbell) on the basis of entirely contrary submissions.

The Memorial's case for space

27. It is difficult for the Memorial to make reliable estimates of future requirements for storage or exhibition. This is because the Memorial's collection is so very disparate.
28. Numbering of items as a basis for estimating collection storage requirements is not useful. 'An item' is (or should be, in proper museum practice) one entity identified by an Accession record. However, 'an item' may be a sheet of a few stamps (e.g. AWM2018.20.54) or a Centurion Tank (REL36387).
29. It would seem that the Memorial has difficulty reliably reporting the number of items in its collection:

From the Memorial's **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017**:

1.1.3: Australian War Memorial Collections

Today, **over three million items** [author's emphasis] record the details of Australia's involvement in conflicts and operations, from colonial times to the present day.

30. The ANAO begs to differ, *while using the Memorial's own statistic*. Table 1.1 of **ANAO Report 46** quotes 'Entity Annual Reports, 2016-17' as the source for 'number of items' as 735 505. Not 'over three million'.
31. It is unlikely that the Memorial either acquired or disposed of some 2.26 million collection items between estimating the volume of the collection for the purposes of its submission to the Public Works Committee for the extension of storage at Mitchell and doing the same thing in its Annual Report for the same basic time period.
32. It is also worth noting that, 20 years ago, the ANAO, in its [Audit Report No. 8, 1998-1999](#) (as paraphrased in Table 1.3 of [ANAO Report 46 in 2017-18](#)) 'recommended that the Memorial improve monitoring processes relating to acquisitions and deal with its backlog of registrations'. It appears that little has been done in response, as **ANAO Report 46** (para 2.52) notes that, 'The Memorial's most recent Collection Development Plan, however, covering the period 2010-2013, is out of date and requires review'.
33. One might well question both the wisdom and the reliability of quoting collection numbers when different sources from almost identical periods show such a vast disparity and when the ANAO's work throws doubt on the accuracy of the Memorial's counting.
34. Rather than trying to count items, it is more accurate and useful to measure the actual space (both storage and exhibition) that houses collection items. Documents and other fundamentally two-dimensional objects such as photos, film and sound recordings and files etc., in both the Photo, Film and Sound Collection and the Research Centre collection are realistically outside the ambit

of ‘collection items’ for the purposes of looking at Mitchell Precinct storage and potential visitor utility development.

35. Compiling figures of the actual collection space in use by the Memorial requires some digging but these space figures are likely a more reliable basis for estimation of future requirements.
36. Reliability and veracity must be paramount here, given the importance of the Mitchell Precinct Development Plan:

The Australian War Memorial commissioned the development of the Mitchell Precinct Development Plan, which involved the mapping of the historical patterns of collections growth against the available storage capacity. The plan was based on two decades of research and monitoring, and established the design principles for future storage at Mitchell. By extrapolating the historical data and considering known and likely collections that will become available in the coming years, the Mitchell Precinct Development Plan estimates an increase of 4,000 square metres of storage per decade will be required to house the collections. Its analysis of collection growth, forecast the Memorial’s storage and access needs for the next century: **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017**, para. 1.5.

37. It needs to be remembered when utilising figures from the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017** (para 1.9) that ‘Storage Space’ incorporates a de facto 35 per cent area for ‘circulation’ beyond that actually taken up by the objects.

Treloar Collections Storage – Current Storage Capacity

The total storage space available for collections at the Treloar Resource Centre is 15,500 sqm. Generally, the collection’s capacity is approximately 65% of the total floor space, allowing for space around each collection and circulation areas. At the Treloar Resource Centre there are also functions supporting collection conservation in the workshops. The current total space available at each of the storage facilities and the year the land was purchased are:

- a. 1978 – Treloar A – 4,500 sqm;
- b. 1986 – Treloar B – 3,500 sqm;
- c. 1993 – Treloar C – 5,500 sqm; and
- d. 2011 – Treloar D – 2,000 sqm.

38. So, using the 65 per cent figure for actual storage footprint, the current Mitchell floor space actually occupied by collection items comes to $15\,500 \times 65 \text{ per cent} = 10\,100$ square metres (rounded). To this we need to add the reported desideratum at **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017**, para 1.12.1, of $1807 \text{ square metres} \times 65 \text{ per cent} = 1175$ square metres. So, we then arrive at a total of $10\,100 + 1175$ or about $11\,275$ square metres.

39. Then, we need to add the space taken up by exhibitions in the Campbell site, for which a circulation space ration of 25 per cent appears to be the standard accepted in the **Design Options** paper. This comes to an artefacts on display footprint of (as near as can be deduced) 12 320 square metres for the Main Building plus Anzac Hall (compare **Design Options** para 5.4, table 1B).
40. So the total of Treloar and Campbell is 11 275 + 12 320, or about 24 000 square metres, when rounded up. That figure does not include artefacts displayed outside the buildings but, despite the fact that the figure may not correspond exactly to the somewhat forensic quality of the figures extracted from various reports, it is probably reasonably useful for the purposes of analysis.
41. But, what does the space calculation really mean?
42. It is as good a basis for analysing the Memorial's future storage space needs as it may be possible to get, given the vagaries of projecting even the nature of relics collections for the next twenty, let alone one hundred, years as the Memorial has ventured to do.
43. The context of development of the Memorial's collection must be taken into account when attempting to justify any claim for future storage or exhibition space.
44. Development of the Memorial's collection began a very long time before there was a Memorial or even before there was a definite proposed existence of a Memorial. CEW Bean managed to 'acquire' a compound – he may well have made an excellent Quartermaster due to his force of personality exhibited by that action alone – to which he exhorted the sending of 'relics'. (Legend has it that he was so successful that at one time a platoon of captured German soldiers was sent with a note attached saying something on the lines of 'for the War Memorial'.)
45. Undeniably, a very large and wildly disparate collection of 'things' commenced, including, but in no way limited to, the Amiens Gun, the Shellal Mosaic, the Mephisto Tank, personal effects of dead and never-to-be-found soldiers, Gallipoli landing craft, depleted (and some undepleted) Mustard gas containers, huge naval shells and projectiles, diaries. A list of relics of vast proportions. And ration packs, some with biscuits and cheese that survived mostly intact to near the end of the century, remaining as inedible as on the day they were packed.
46. All these were sent to Australia and housed wherever space could be found. By the outbreak of World War II, there was about to be a Memorial, and the activity of collecting battlefield and associated relics had a focus and purpose that had not formally existed during World War I. That informality had in no way hindered the development of 'the Collection'.
47. Therefore, any assessment of future collection storage requirements needs to at least recognise that the existing space requirement has been created by at least ninety years of collecting, through two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan. It also needs to be recognised that a significant amount of that collecting was undertaken without curatorial direction of any kind.

48. We can use figures from the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017** (para 1.12.1), that 90 years of collecting has created a total storage footprint of around 24 000 square metres. That equates to a collection growth of 267 square metres a year on average, for the relics themselves. When the further space for ‘circulation’ (that is, visitor movement) of 35 per cent that the Memorial factors in to its space requirement calculations is added, the annual estimated requirement is for 359 square metres a year increase in collection ‘storage’ – which is reasonably close to the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017** (para 1.12.3) proposal of 4000 square metres over a decade, or 400 square metres a year.
49. Is extrapolation from history a reliable indicator for the future?
50. The short answer to this question has to be, ‘No’. And in the longer version, it has to be ‘No, but it’s the best guess we can make’.
51. Self-evidently, this does not support any arguments either for or against the development of new area(s) for the Memorial, be they for ‘storage’ or ‘exhibition’. There are at least four sound reasons for coming to this conclusion:
- The nature of, and the ‘artefacts’ associated with, military operations will very likely change substantially in a relatively short time-span.
 - The points of emphasis when interpreting military operational experience and the effects on the national psyche are also likely to change significantly.
 - The public requirement for remembrance, interpretation, research, and just general access for enthusiasts to examples of military equipment is almost certain to change significantly as Australian society evolves.
 - The methodology and media for delivery of remembrance and interpretation is already changing markedly (e.g. see the Monash Centre at Villers-Bretonneux) and it is inevitable that this will further evolve.
52. Engaging in deeper discussion of the above points is not going to resolve anything either way. The overarching conclusion has to be that the Memorial must be flexible in all aspects of its activities: remembrance, interpretation, research and the management of collections.
53. To suggest that space requirements can be reliably extrapolated from the Memorial’s existing situation out to a period of more than 75 years into the future, is plainly nonsense; to suggest that it could be reliable ‘for the next century’, as in **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017**, para 1.5, is an assertion that any knowledgeable audience would consider absolutely incredible.
54. It is highly questionable whether the Memorial Council and the government have been provided with reliable forward projection data on storage and exhibition requirements to support the Campbell Precinct proposal.

The potential for flexibility: Campbell vs Mitchell sites

55. In the evolution of the Memorial's recent planning for development of both the Mitchell site according to the Mitchell Precinct Development Plan – refer **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017**, para 1.6, and the Campbell site as described in the **Design Options** paper, flexibility to reflect changing circumstances does not feature.
56. It is evident, however, that, of the two streams of development, only one provides any real flexibility and that is the Mitchell Option in the **Options Assessment Report**, section 4.2: 'Utilise the Memorial's Mitchell Facility'.
57. This option for addressing what is expressed as a 'critical element' to allow the Memorial to be 'capable to continue to allow all three functions [Commemorative Area, Memorial Galleries and Research Centre – author] to continue within the same precinct', is *dismissed* in the **Options Assessment Report**, section 4.2. (Another option, 'Refurbishment of the Mitchell Site' is dismissed with almost identical arguments in **Options Assessment Report**, section 6.3.)
58. While that dismissal is essential to support the proposals for major development of the Campbell site, it is plainly contradicted by:
- the Memorial's 2017 submission to the Public Works Committee for development of capital infrastructure at Mitchell;
 - previous approval of funding for capital works at Mitchell: **Treloar Centre (Mitchell) PWC Report 1992**;
 - examination of the economics of the different possibilities;
 - the Memorial's long-standing practice of reporting visitation to Mitchell in combination with visitation to Campbell (see above para 21); and
 - common sense.
59. The consultants rate the Mitchell Option as being 'very high risk to the Commonwealth and the Memorial' (**Options Assessment Report**, section 4.2). In [my earlier paper](#) (especially paras 101-42) I argued in detail as to why this conclusion was 'highly suspect'.
60. Setting the 2017 arguments for Mitchell alongside the consultant's 2017 arguments for Campbell supports my argument. The Memorial's documentation for the Mitchell work and the Campbell project is glaringly inconsistent. *At virtually the same time in 2017*, Mitchell was being boosted before the Public Works Committee, but being damned by the Memorial's consultants. Neither the Memorial Council nor government appear to have recognised the conflicts that exist in this documentation. Yet, as I said in [the earlier paper](#) (especially paras 114-15), both the Mitchell and the Campbell cases sought the same objective – more space to house large technology objects.

The 'Campbell Redevelopment' plan: the objectives, claims and figures do not mesh

61. The **Design Options** paper provides four Options for consideration, but is strongly slanted to acceptance of only Option 1: the demolition of the existing Anzac Hall, replacement with a two-level structure and a slew of associated works to expand the current relatively simple structures and relationship of the existing buildings into a highly complex mix of below and above-ground functional areas.
62. The **Design Options** paper indicates that the favoured Option 1 exhausts the potential for further expansion of the Campbell site within its current boundaries, unless major disruption to the heritage fabric of the entire site is undertaken.
63. As a result of promoting Option 1, the Memorial has already made – but may not be pursuing – a claim for expansion beyond its current site boundary, for space to be re-allocated from public land now designated as a wildlife and recreational preserve (the Mount Ainslie Remembrance Park portion of the Mount Ainslie Nature Park) for the purposes of additional parking space.
64. In the **Options Assessment Report** (section 3.1), the Memorial's situation is described:

The War Memorial is 75 years old and has undergone a number of fit out and refurbishment projects over its recent history. These projects have seen the last of the available space, originally designed for storage, staff accommodation and other back of house (BOH) functions, converted into exhibition areas. Piecemeal additions to the Memorial's galleries to accommodate new subjects are no longer feasible or available.
65. The **Options Assessment Report**, having dismissed a range of options, embraces the Campbell Precinct rebuilding and redevelopment option (later Option 1):

This option requires the development of a Masterplan that identifies all future options for maximisation and saturation of the precinct, up to and including the acquisition of adjacent land. The works would be planned for delivery over the next 20 years; allowing greater certainty for the Memorial and its stakeholders, and allow for the development of the Memorial to continue to reduce the risk of future works incurring a premium associated with failure to appropriately plan (**Options Assessment Report**, section 7.2).
66. The works would address the Memorial's permanent needs through the creation of additional exhibition space and the relocation of some back-of-house functions out of the main building.
67. Option 1 is quoted as meeting the Design Principles (**Design Options**, section 4), including, from Design Principle 1 (para 4.2):

Expanding the museum through new additions and gallery refurbishments will ensure that the Memorial can continue to achieve world class museum practices whilst interpreting the

Australian experience in war and operations of those who have served, are currently serving and will serve in the future. The reorganisation of the precinct includes a number of new additions incorporated within the fabric of the main building. Supplementary purpose-built spaces will enable the precinct to reach its full potential, enhancing galleries and public areas. This will result in the Memorial responding to the needs of those who use it, whilst maintaining key areas and traditional functions.

68. In the **Design Options** paper (para 5.3), the Campbell Precinct Master Plan is addressed, as Option 1.

The allowance included in the planning for additional gallery space is: (i) 2,000 square metres for circulation for the Main Building in its current form and layout, (ii) **8,000 square metres of new gallery space** [author emphasis] and (iii) 2,000 square metres for circulation for the new gallery space. Therefore, an additional 12,000 square metres of space is used to test the **Design Options**, noting this may vary as the gallery master plan work progresses.

69. It might reasonably be expected from Design Principle 1 – cited above – that for the level of expenditure proposed and in view of the fact that a delivery program extending for possibly twenty years is envisaged, the Campbell Precinct Master Plan would provide for foreseeable future needs. However, it appears that this is not the case (**Design Options**, para 5.3):

Preliminary analysis of underrepresented conflicts and peace-keeping activities has resulted in a calculation that the additional gallery space required to tell the stories is in the order of 8,000 square metres.

70. Perhaps the authors of the **Design Options** paper have prescience not afforded to the rest of us, but if the area needed for ‘underrepresented conflicts and peace-keeping activities’ has been *calculated* then that refers to past and current operations, i.e. there can be no ‘future’ area included.

71. Alternatively, the future area requirement has been *estimated*, in which case the basis for ‘calculation’ is speculative.

72. Since it is impossible that the presentation of figures for future space requirements can be anything but a hopeful estimate, basing funding requirements on slippery ground *does not provide the Memorial Council and government with the reliability both should require to support funding allocation*.

Does the 'Campbell Redevelopment' option provide flexibility?

73. Obviously, if normal Museum practice of developing new exhibitions to meet new circumstances and retiring older exhibitions (described pejoratively in the **Options Assessment Report**, section 3.1 as cannibalizing current displays) is continued, then there is flexibility. Since (demonstrated by the analysis of future space requirements and availability at the Campbell site) the extra exhibition space to be delivered by the massive construction project only meets current area requirements, it is obvious that, even with this development, such rotation of exhibitions would be needed.
74. However – and to illustrate that a great deal of analytical latitude would be necessary if the Memorial's contentions were to be taken seriously – the passage of time shifts the goalposts.
75. The Memorial has appropriated (with neither justification nor legislative approval) a role of providing space for the solace and rehabilitation of Veterans. This is possibly a laudable aim, though it must be recognised that it is medically and practically spurious, as has been pointed out by medical practitioners [Margaret Beavis](#) and [Charlotte Palmer](#). ([Professor Peter Stanley](#) has pointed to the lack of justification in the Memorial's Act for it taking on such a role.)
76. If the so-called 'therapeutic milieu' is to be seriously included as a factor in determining future development options then it must also be recognised that there are no surviving World War I veterans and that the population of World War II veterans is rapidly declining. When applied to arguments for maintaining the current exhibition space at Campbell for World War I and World War II exhibitions, the therapeutic milieu argument is self-refuting. The obvious way of providing a therapeutic milieu for veterans of say, Afghanistan, East Timor, and Iraq is to 'cannibalize' floor space from older wars.
77. Australian service in World War I – generically, 'the Anzac tradition', and the very different circumstances of defence of the country from genuine attack in World War II, are obviously core elements of the Memorial's commemoration and interpretation activities. However, the outcomes of both wars is well documented and it is not unreasonable to examine the degree to which in 2019 and beyond exhibition space needs to be allocated to them at the Campbell site.
78. There will always be competing demands for exhibition space at Campbell, to tie in interpretation, commemoration and research functions. The **Options Assessment Report** proposition that reducing space previously allocated to military actions is 'cannibalizing' them is a pejorative and self-serving justification for the expansion plans of the Campbell Development option.

79. The degree to which the Campbell Development option provides flexibility is a function of management decision-making, not empirical fact. Management decides the allocation of existing space; it need not ask for more space to accommodate new wars – let alone to accommodate bright ideas.
80. There is no evidence in any of the Memorial’s current documentation that any consideration has been given to justifying currently expressed exhibition requirements. Propositions feature implicitly in the **Options Assessment Report**, when they need to be stated and critically examined. The Memorial’s paperwork is underpinned by the notion that a reduction in exhibition space at Campbell for old military actions (especially the two World Wars) is not acceptable.
81. The arguments in the **Options Assessment Report** offer the Memorial Council and the government justification for supporting the allocation of funding, but the Memorial stakes its claim on unproven grounds.
82. The Memorial indicated in the **Options Assessment Report** (section 3.1):
- As the Memorial cannot address critical space shortages, the Do Nothing option would not allow the Memorial to continue to operate as a shrine, world-class museum, and an extensive achieve [sic].
83. In response, the Memorial proposes a \$498m project to deliver at Campbell 11 412 square metres of ‘new gallery space’ (**Design Options**, para 5.4, table 1A). Simple mathematics suggests that this addresses ‘critical space shortages’ at a cost of \$43 638 a square metre. (It should be noted here that to actually achieve the ‘new’ gallery space, the Memorial proposes to demolish the existing 4180 square metres of Anzac Hall – therefore actual *additional* gallery space may only be 7232 square metres – 11 412 minus 4180 – at the stratospheric cost of \$68 861 a square metre. The Option 1 documentation does not provide clarity on this point.)
84. To provide reliable perspective, here is a comparison: the Memorial has recently completed the new purpose-built storage facility for large technology objects at its Mitchell precinct site – see **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017** – of 5288 square metres for a projected cost of \$16.1m: a cost of \$3045 a square metre, when rounded.

Does the Campbell site option deliver core needs for the Memorial?

85. Given that the ‘hook’ argument for the Campbell Precinct Development Plan is the ‘critical space shortage’, the Australian public would be justified in expecting a *spectacular* improvement in a facility at Campbell costing *at least* 14 times as much per square metre to deliver new gallery space, when compared with a fairly industrial (but very functional for the purpose) building at Mitchell. It is difficult to envisage how vastly more expensive infrastructure could contribute to telling ‘the story’ of the harsh, dirty and dangerous business of military operations.

86. One thing that Option 1 does *not* deliver is increased high-quality display space for large technology objects (LTOs). As a result of the proposed demolition of the existing Anzac Hall of a reported 4180 square metres (**Design Options** paper, para 5.4, table 1B) of LTO-capable display space, is replaced with an underground floor (presumably capable of LTO display) of 3282 square metres (**Design Options**, Level 0 Area Key Plan).
87. While that loss of around 900 square metres of LTO-capable display space may be remediated by use of space in the Atrium of 2005 square metres (**Design Options**, Level 1 Area Key Plan), it should be noted that this feature is by no means an assured part of Option 1, as the following paragraphs show.

Key Risks of Option 1

- Option 1 has a risk that the atrium will not be approved by the planning authorities. This would potentially require that the link gallery from the Concept Master Plan be reinstated, with additional cost and reduced gallery space (**Design Options**, para 8.4).
88. It would be a very poor bargain indeed, should the Memorial spend at a rate per square metre *more than 14 times* the amount actually needed to provide quality LTO exhibition space, to get less area in return.
89. Memorial visitors might feel cheated out of the better experience which is currently available to them in the existing Anzac Hall.
90. It is not possible to say with certainty that the Option 1 proposal fails to provide flexibility in future exhibition presentation, but it is inconceivable that more limited space for the exhibition of LTOs at Campbell in future could do otherwise than constrain flexibility.
91. The **Design Options** paper notes the necessity for flexibility in exhibition development:

Design Principle 4 – Enhanced Circulation and Increasing Visitation

- Integral to the success of any Memorial redevelopment is a flexible gallery master plan (GMP) that anticipates continued growth as part of a fifty year plan. A GMP is being developed in tandem to the precinct master plan (PMP). The architectural team has worked with the GMP to ensure that each discipline's central principles align in all of the **Design Options**. Although not responding to a finished GMP, the four **Design Options** are sensitive to creating an environment that can accommodate myriad flexible design methodologies for galleries well into the future (**Design Options**, para 4.5).
92. There is an apparent significant discrepancy (not to mention a serious admission of temporal anomaly) in stating that '[t]he architectural team has worked with the GMP ...', when the immediately preceding sentence states that '[a] GMP is being developed in tandem to the precinct

master plan’ – given that Option 1 is (apparently) the Concept Masterplan (**Design Options**, para 2.2). Although Design Principle 4 stresses that a ‘flexible gallery master plan’ is ‘[i]ntegral to the success of any Memorial redevelopment’, para 4.5 states that the four **Design Options** discussed are ‘not responding to a finished GMP’. So, the stated importance of any proposal being underpinned by a GMP is explicitly bypassed in the development of the **Design Options**.

93. This seems to be a case of having to ‘open the box with the crowbar you will find inside’. A prudent government would require a more thorough delivery of the key planning elements for ‘success of any Memorial redevelopment’ before approving expenditure of \$498m.
94. As for ‘creating an environment that can accommodate myriad flexible design methodologies for galleries well into the future’, the reduction of quality space for the display of LTOs in Option 1 from that currently available in Anzac Hall is obviously antipathetic to that objective.

The ‘Mitchell Option’

95. The summary and assessment of the reasons why the ‘Mitchell Option’ was dismissed in the **Options Assessment Report** from further consideration at a very early stage of development of the Campbell Precinct Development Plan appear in [my earlier paper](#) and do not need repetition.
96. The assessment provided in the **Options Assessment Report** reduces to a batch of arguments as to why the Mitchell Option does not suit the purposes of the proponents of the Campbell Option. What the assessment does *not* present is an examination of whether the potential for development of storage and visitor facilities at Mitchell meets *the Memorial’s needs* rather than meeting the objective of supporting what many commentators have argued is primarily a vanity project, beloved by those promoting it and whose names will appear on foundation stones.
97. In terms of meeting the Memorial’s needs, the answers are contained in the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017**. It must be remembered that this submission to the Public Works Committee for funding to proceed with the Treloar E building was prepared in the same general time period that the Campbell Precinct Development Plan started to gather a head of steam: the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement** is dated June 2017, while the **Options Assessment Report** is dated 18 August 2017.
98. The Treloar E building plans were prepared by the same consultants who undertook the **Options Assessment Report** assessment and who have been the lead consultants for the **Design Options** development (GHD/GHD Woodhead). It is possible that a Chinese Wall strategy maintained compete disjunction between the two bodies of work – though to accept that possibility requires a vast leap of faith.
99. However, if considered in isolation from the material developed subsequently to support the overblown Campbell Precinct project, the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement** offers a

persuasive case for inclusion as an integral, indeed, ‘an essential asset of the Australian War Memorial’: **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017**, para 1.4. The only element notable by its omission in the Treloar statement is references to both development and use since 1994 of the visitor facilities already existing at the Mitchell Precinct.

100. That omission conveniently excises the inescapable fact of such facilities at the Treloar Centre site. It is a clear denial of the approval by the Public Works Committee in 1992 of its construction as a ‘storage-display facility’: **Treloar Centre (Mitchell) PWC Report 1992**, para 73.
101. In fact, the **Options Assessment Report** states that the Mitchell Option contradicts ‘past government approvals’ (**Options Assessment Report**, section 4.2) contained in the Memorial’s Initial Business Case and Detailed Business Case for the Treloar E project, and which are therefore themselves false statements. The **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017**, para 1.4, does include a passing reference to visitor use of the Treloar Research Centre.
102. The publicly available documentation prepared for the Memorial Council and the government provides neither complete – nor in all cases accurate – statements of all pertinent facts upon which to base supporting decisions.

The potential of the Mitchell Precinct for increased visitor access to the National Collection

103. A land acquisition programme (the Mitchell Precinct Development Plan or MPDP) approved by the Memorial Council in 2012 has enabled the Memorial to acquire four land lots contiguous to the Treloar Research Centre (Mitchell C building), thus comprising with the Mitchell B and Treloar Research Centre site in total 33 690 square metres (3.37 hectares).
104. Examination of the Mitchell Precinct Development Plan Principles – as contained in the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017** – explicitly shows the potential of the Mitchell site to provide visitor experience of a large part of the National Collection. In the following paragraphs, the excerpts from the MPDP are in italics.

Principle 1 – Whole of Institution Consideration

105. *The Treloar Resource Centre integrates with the functions at the main Memorial building. Any redevelopment affecting conservation and other exhibition support activities will have an impact on broader Memorial operations.*

Comment: The fact that Memorial operation at Mitchell is ‘part of the whole institution’ has been unquestioned since the 1978 acquisition of land for the development of the Conservation Annex (Mitchell A building) up until the existence of Mitchell operations as apparently a ‘competitor’ to the Campbell Precinct Development Plan:

The dispersed Memorial would result in the Memorial at Campbell not being considered as

Australia's "national" War Memorial, thereby lessening the importance of the Campbell site and commemorations told within (Options Assessment Report, section 4.2)

This staggering reversal of sentiment in the **Options Assessment Report** is also repudiated by Design Principle 9 – below.

Principle 2 – Maximise Site Usage

106. *The existing Treloar Resource Centre has sufficient land to accommodate another 75 years of storage growth through progressive development of higher density two level buildings.*

Comment: '75 years of storage growth' is, by the Memorial's method of calculation, 30 000 square metres of space, comprising 19 500 square metres of actual storage footprint and 10 500 square metres of 'circulation' space. The lack of heritage restrictions at the Mitchell Precinct allows design to be derived from function, which inherently allows for more flexibility than is available at Campbell. It is obvious that a capability of developing 30 000 square metres of purpose-driven area is a vast improvement on the 11 412 square metres of new gallery proposed in the Memorial's Design Option 1 proposal and at a cost which, on present evidence, is at least 14 times cheaper per square metre.

Principle 3 – Design Flexible Building Storage Form

107. *The Treloar Resource Centre must have spatial and structural flexibility to accommodate the diverse storage requirements including size and load impact, handling and movement, environmental control and security. It must be capable of responding to changes in collection type and acquisition rates over time.*

Comment: This is an entirely basic and fundamentally *critically important* element of planning a museum facility into the relatively distant future. It is also not something capable of being properly achieved at the Campbell site because of the myriad considerations for the Campbell site to continue to deliver its tripartite roles (memorial, museum, research centre) within the heritage considerations.

Principle 4 – Design Flexible Building Storage Form [sic]

108. *There is flexibility in sizing the area of each stage of development to meet funding and operational demands. The buildings should have an optimal module of 50 metres width, which relates to structural, services, crane and efficiencies of use.*

Comment: The author does not know why Principle 3 and Principle 4 have identical titles; this appears to be a mistake. This Principle appears to be an amplification on Principle 3, but is agreed as important, and equally can be related to the **Design Options** to demonstrate the constrictions upon utility of Design Option 1.

Principle 5 – Organise around shared infrastructure and support facilities

109. *Staged developments should be configured around a central spine to benefit from operational efficiencies of shared vehicular movement and handling yard, loading areas, plant and equipment, security staff and amenities.*

Comment: This is fundamental to the efficiency of delivery of an optimal solution to the Memorial's future storage and display needs. What is missing in the expression is that the existence of properly developed visitor facilities at the Treloar Centre (a visitor entrance from Vicars Street, a visitor foyer, handicapped visitor facilities, including a stretcher-capable evacuation lift from the visitor foyer and gallery area, car and bus parking within the Mitchell B and Treloar Centre site) provides the core of visitor infrastructure.

Principle 6 – Standardise Ground Floor and Future Connections

110. *Future buildings should share common ground level for easy connections between stages. The different ground levels to existing Treloar B and Treloar C have highlighted operational inefficiencies when moving collection items and accessing support facilities between the two.*

Comment: An important point. At the time of development of the Treloar Research Centre, funding was restricted so this objective was not attainable. It is obvious that the proposed bi-level and submerged redevelopment of Anzac Hall in the Campbell Precinct proposal is absolutely and completely contrary to this objective – yet those problems go totally unremarked in the **Design Options** paper. A (relatively) common ground level throughout the Mitchell Precinct would also support visitor circulation, particularly in regard to disabled access to all areas.

Principle 7 – Environmentally Sustainable and Responsible Design

111. *Develop holistic design solutions that consider sound planning, economy of materials, efficient use of resources and reduced maintenance and running cost. Consider building lifecycle planning where structure can last over 100 years whilst building fabric and services have shorter lifecycle of 25 years.*

Comment: Again, a highly desirable objective, attainable within the co-ordinated MPDP and not attainable at the Campbell site, for obvious reasons (heritage considerations and existing building and site fabric, for a start).

Principle 8 – Develop Precinct Wide Services Strategy

112. *Consider a modular and extendable central plant and precinct wide services strategy that will offer energy efficiency, shared redundancy, ease of maintenance and replacement access.*

Comment: As for para 105 above.

Principle 9 – Strengthen Public Presence

113. *Strengthen the public recognition of Mitchell Precinct as an integral component of the Australian War Memorial and home to a significant national collection. **This can include unified corporate identity and the potential for public access and display of collection items** [author’s emphasis].*

Comment: It is impossible to reconcile the fact that the Memorial would advance to government this contention in a submission for funding to the Public Works Committee dated July 2017, while virtually simultaneously stating in the **Options Assessment Report** being prepared for release in August 2017:

The dispersed Memorial would result in the Memorial at Campbell not being considered as Australia’s “national” War Memorial, thereby lessening the importance of the Campbell site and commemorations told within (**Options Assessment Report**, section 4.2).

These statements are blatant contradictions. It needs to be shown how the Memorial Council and government can accept both as reliable and in good faith.

The issues of transport

114. A further example of questionable selectivity in the **Options Assessment Report** comes with the assertion that ‘[t]he Mitchell site is not located in close proximity to a significant transport hub, which will impact attendance’ (**Options Assessment Report**, section 4.2).

115. The use of the term ‘a significant transport *hub*’ (author’s emphasis) makes this statement effectively true, though potentially misleading.

116. By happy circumstance, in the **Options Assessment Report** a distance of two kilometres has been nominated (with no ‘industry standard’ qualification reference, just the judgement of the **Options Assessment Report** assessment team) as a ‘reasonable assisted travel distance’ (**Options Assessment Report**, section 2.5, figure 1). The ACT Light Rail civic centre hub lies just within that two kilometre figure – provided you use an ‘as the crow flies’ distance, not actual achievable on-ground distance. That is the closest point of the ACT Light Rail mass transport system to the Memorial site at Campbell.

117. The nearest ACT Light Rail route *hub* to the Mitchell Precinct (Gungahlin Centre) is more than three kilometres away. However, the nearest ACT Light Rail *station* is only about 700 metres away – and the ACT Light Rail route runs about 30 metres beyond the eastern boundary of the Mitchell Precinct.

118. In the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017** (para 1.15), it is stated:

1.15 Inter-Relations with the Light Rail Project

The main interface with other projects is the interface with the development of the Canberra Light Rail Project. **This project includes the development of the light rail and duplication of Flemington Road immediately adjacent to the Treloar E site.** The key interface is that the Light Rail will be constructed with overhead wires for power supply and **this will create a barrier to the movement of new collections into the Treloar Resource Centre and with the movement of collections between the Treloar Resource Centre and main Memorial building in Campbell.** Discussions with the Light Rail Project management team have commenced to ensure that disruption to the movement of collections is minimised due to the Light Rail Project [author emphasis].

119. There are two effects of the ACT Light Rail development that strongly favour the utility of the Mitchell Precinct versus the Campbell precinct proposed development. These effects do not appear for consideration in the **Design Options** paper.

120. The *first* of these effects is improving visitor access to the Mitchell Precinct as a factor in positioning it as a major contributor to the Memorial's exhibition activities. From the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017**, para. 1.15 above, while 'discussions with the Light Rail Project management team have commenced', there is no suggestion that the potential for a dedicated Light Rail stop outside the Mitchell Precinct site was raised.

121. Common sense suggests that a potential passenger load of many thousands of visitors a year, travelling at times outside the peak-hour times for Light Rail usage, would be attractive to ACT Transport to provide a stop suited to that market. It is accepted that this is speculative.

122. What is not speculative, however, is the *second* effect: that of the Light Rail power transmission wires being a major impediment to large technology object movement for the 'rotation' of LTOs between the Campbell and the Mitchell site. The transport of LTOs frequently involves over-height and over-width considerations, and in the case of aircraft in particular, both of these at the same time.

123. It is obvious that LTO rotation within the Mitchell Precinct sites, in and out of conservation needs and also possibly between buildings if only some buildings have visitor access (e.g. the Treloar Centre), will be exponentially easier than having to penetrate the Light Rail 'barrier' identified in the **Treloar E (Mitchell) Project Statement 2017** – twice at least for 'rotation' between the sites.

124. The **Design Options** report does not address the serious issues of increased difficulty and cost of LTO movement that will be essential to operation of the Campbell site in future. This reduces the quality of information presented to the Memorial Council and government.

Conclusion

125. The Memorial embarked in 1992 on a practical line of development of facilities for both storage of and access to the National Collection at its Mitchell ACT site.

126. Those objectives were significantly strengthened by the approval by the Memorial's Council in 2012 of the Mitchell Precinct Development Plan, which has resulted in the acquisition of a valuable land holding of over three hectares and the completion in early 2019 of the first of a series of planned buildings. This plan is touted as meeting the Memorial's future National Collection storage and 'Circulation' needs for 75 and more years.

127. However, the Memorial has – at the same time – proposed a major development project at the Campbell site on a basis of 'needs' that are widely contested. In view of the numerous contradictions and omissions within essential documentation, the Campbell development may well be considered to be unsafe by the Public Works Committee or in Senate Estimates.

128. The anticipated – and apparently approved by Cabinet, circumventing the normal and prudent procurement requirements for major government building projects – funding for this aspirational project, one that is unsupported by fact, legislation or demonstrated need, is a staggering \$498m.

129. The Memorial could – as is shown by its own submissions to the Public Works Committee in 2017 – very adequately meet all of the potential demands for increased facility at its Mitchell Precinct for around \$100m, or around 20 per cent of the projected cost of the highly contentious Campbell site project. However, the Memorial's documentation in support of development at the Campbell site has been constructed so as to ignore or deny the potential of the Mitchell Precinct as offering a viable and cost-effective facility for the Memorial to achieve its mission in future.

130. It is highly questionable as to whether the Memorial Council and government has been provided with sufficiently complete, comprehensive and reliable information on which to make decisions regarding the viability and efficiency of pursuing the Campbell Precinct development project, or of taking other paths.

131. Cultural institutions are always capable of developing in multiple directions – and on multiple campuses, like the Imperial War Museum's five, including [Duxford, devoted to large technology objects](#) – and alternative plans should be properly explored.

132. It is highly obvious, on the other hand, that the Mitchell Precinct Option offers a multitude of advantages, advantages that have not been adequately addressed. It remains for the Memorial – and government – to honestly address and admit these.

Appendix: Significant factors in Large Technology Object (LTO) exhibition and storage

Military LTOs have a number of important (some unique to the genre) factors that need to be taken into account in exhibiting and storing them, and therefore in planning for such.

By definition, these objects are large. They occupy significant floor space. Armoured LTOs are often very significantly heavier than a 'civilian' object of equivalent volume or footprint – though increasingly, with the use of extremely high-technology armour, that is not always such a factor.

However, both size and weight, while a critical factor in design of floors, access points, ceiling heights and loading areas, are by no means the only factors a museum facility architect, engineer, exhibition designer or storage manager needs to take into account.

Military equipment is, more often than not, manufactured to meet a military specification – not a civilian standard. Civilian standards generally focus on public safety because of legal liability. Your motor vehicle has to meet a large number of 'safety' standards, including both the safety of occupants and the safety of other users of the same space.

You can park your car anywhere (if legal) and 'the public' is not put at any greater risk of harm from the object itself than is inherent in the risk allowed by standards; the standards become the measure of 'fit for purpose' in terms of public safety.

Military equipment is intended to be contained in a military environment and those around it are expected to be trained in (or at least familiar with) its characteristics, including risks involved from proximity. Fittings and features mandated by the military requirement are sometimes (by necessity) fundamentally dangerous to a casual bystander wandering around the item, let alone (for example) children running, etc.

Apart from the fairly obvious risks, sharp edges, major projections such as barrels at head height, heavy hatches that are by design unsecured, can also be hazardous. Asbestos sheathing of hot areas is fairly obvious, but damaged modern high-tech armour may not be so obvious but may release dangerous material – and that may be unknowable to Museum staff due to the actual material being classified. Just-burned carbon fibre releases highly carcinogenic small particle residue, but few people know of this – and carbon fibre is becoming fairly ubiquitous in high-tech structures.

In short: military materiel that can be displayed in cases or using other means to create a physical barrier between the observer and the object, is 'normal'; LTOs are too big for display cases and can really only be kept (reasonably) secure by maintaining sufficient space around them as a barrier, thus artificially enlarging their exhibition footprint.

And, finally, museums need to take into account the fact that human beings have an almost unlimited ability to act stupidly or thoughtlessly, often nowadays for the sake of 'selfie' photographs. The Memorial once received, anonymously in the mail, a photo of three children all under the age of about 12 sitting astride the barrel of the Centurion Tank on display outside the Memorial with the sign saying 'DO NOT CLIMB ON THE EXHIBITS' squarely in the frame. Attached to the photo was a hand-written note, 'At least you tried – sorry'.