

# The Australian War Memorial extensions: a critique of the design choice

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### Executive summary

#### Introduction: two puzzling documents lacking context. A ‘snow job’? (pages 7-9)

1. The *Options Assessment Report* (August 2017) and the *Design Options* paper (June 2018) have been lodged on the Australian War Memorial’s website and provide background to the Memorial’s redevelopment project. The papers raise as many questions as they answer.
2. It could be argued that the papers have been made available just as much to ‘snow’ the public as to support the case for the project. Meanwhile, the future of the Memorial – an institution belonging to the whole nation – is being settled in the shadows by a small group.
3. For example, it is unclear how far the Memorial’s plans have changed since its Council considered the *Design Options* paper in July 2018, and how much extra display space the

proposed redevelopment will deliver. (The Director of the War Memorial, Dr Brendan Nelson, seems unsure of this second, basic point.) The *Detailed Business Case* went to the then Government in December 2018. Why not make this document available to the public?

#### **Wasting Anzac Hall: how did this happen? (page 9)**

4. Nor do the documents tell us why – and precisely how – the demolition of the award-winning Anzac Hall came to be part of the preferred option. It is important to know this, given the vehemence of opposition – especially from architects – to this part of the project.
5. Did individual members of the Memorial Council, perhaps the Chairman, have strong views on deleting Anzac Hall? What did other Council members say? Transparency requires, as a minimum, the release of all relevant Council Minutes.
6. We do not even know at what level of government the project was approved: Cabinet? exchange of letters? Captain's Call? Did the expenditure go through the normal testing of the Budget process, New Policy Proposals and so on, or did it get an inside track? If the funding went through the Budget process, why was it announced in November 2018 rather than in the Budget five months later? If it is the case that Labor supports the project, which version of it did it support? We are not told any of these things.
7. Despite the release of these two documents, the decision-making process on the extensions has been characterised by discussion behind closed doors, a carefully managed consultation process (eliciting 'feedback' from just 134 people), and long (but unpublicised) monologues from Director Nelson in Senate Estimates.

#### **Approval processes and the gathering of evidence (pages 10-11)**

8. It appears that government approval for funding was given based upon documentation developed only to a cost confidence level of 50 per cent (P50), rather than 80 per cent (P80), as required by Department of Finance rules. It is somewhat cavalier to approve a budget of \$498 million on the basis of only a 50 per cent chance of the project being completed within budget.
9. Examination of the *Options Assessment Report* suggests that remarkably little reliable evidence was gathered during the *Report's* preparation. In fact, the *Report* can be read as nothing more than a detailed (though loosely accurate) statement of a predetermined position requiring 'validation' through a consultant's report.
10. In other words, the answer was written before the questions were asked.

11. It is axiomatic that an organisation does not engage consultants to prepare reports of this nature unless it has a clear vision both of what it requires the consultant to come up with *and* the mechanism to ensure this conclusion is reached. The *Options Assessment Report* appears *prima facie* to be an example of that truism.

**Use of the terminology ‘business case’ and ‘metric’ (pages 11-13)**

12. The *Options Assessment Report* refers to ‘metrics’ used for assessing options but only includes one metric (apart from some references to distances). Other so-called metrics are actually objectives or goals or aims.

13. The metric of a ‘nominal’ area of 10,000 square metres appears as a target for what is nebulously stated as ‘adequate space, for current requirements’. That formulation seems to mean ‘the space we guess we will need in the foreseeable future’.

14. In assessing the degree to which options meet objectives the Memorial’s consultants used a subjective measure to determine success against another subjective measure.

**Exhibition, visitor and storage space requirements (pages 13-15)**

15. Assessment against technical standards is largely missing from the *Options Assessment Report*, but emotive, evidence-free putdowns of non-preferred options are common.

16. Expenditure of the magnitude suggested *should* be supported by a robust and reliable presentation of the reasons for it, not just simple statements of belief.

17. The *Options Assessment Report*’s ‘nominal’ space requirement of 10,000 square metres for the expansion of exhibitions is entirely unsupported by reasons, or information about the use that would be made of this space, beyond the generality of telling ‘the story’ or stories.

18. The Memorial’s promotional video shows a number of aircraft located in generous space. How many of the stories are about these space-gobbling machines? Given that the Memorial has acquired many aircraft and helicopters and has to find space for them, was the space requirement decided on the basis of the size and number of machines needing accommodation?

19. Without a supporting case, the nominal figure for space requirements can be considered an ambit claim at best. And the subsidiary claims for increased visitor access space, and so on, are only meaningful if the basic exhibition space claim is supportable.

20. Then, how does the financing of the project connect with the assessment of space requirements? The fact that funding of around \$500 million was being talked about many months before the *Detailed Business Case* had been completed might suggest that the space claim was developed as a ‘What can we do with this budget?’ exercise. In other words that the dollar figure came first.

21. It seems clear from the evidence that space requirements were still being considered, and options being weighed, in early to mid-2018 at a time when the \$500 million estimate was in the public domain and being discussed. There was certainly scope to adjust the plans in the light of information about how much money was likely to be available.
22. The fact that the Forward Estimates now (May 2019) contain parts of the \$498 million under 'Capital measures' (rounded: 2019-20: \$26.2m; 2020-21: \$36.7m; 2021-22: \$31.6m; 2022-23: \$65.6m), does not of itself mean that the figures are soundly based or set in stone.
23. In any case, the Appropriations Bills linked to those estimates lapsed at the dissolution of the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament. If the Coalition is returned at the election, the Bills will be reintroduced; if there is a new government, there will be a revised Budget.

**Practical considerations for multi-level and subterranean exhibition space development (pages 15-16)**

24. The preferred option (Option 1) of replacing Anzac Hall with a two-level structure (of which one level would be substantially if not completely underground) is an extremely poor idea. It is costly, cumbersome and fraught with unnecessary risk factors to do with the heaviness of Large Technology Objects, difficulties in manoeuvring them, the need for multiple access points, drainage, and other factors.
25. If these factors are ignored and the attendant risk not recognised within the evaluation matrix, then any such option is not being presented honestly or accurately.

**Examination of the available documentation for reliability, veracity and objectivity (pages 16-23)**

26. The *Detailed Business Case* was delivered to the Government on 21 December 2018, prior to the provision of construction funding in the 2019 Budget, but after the Prime Minister had announced that the Government had agreed on a funding figure of \$498 million.
27. To evaluate the reliability, veracity and objectivity of the *Detailed Business Case*, it is reasonable to sample the documentation supplied. If that sample indicates deficiencies, then it follows that the *Detailed Business Case* is flawed, because not all options have been presented fairly for consideration. Department of Finance rules say: 'All options considered' in the *Initial Business Case* and *Detailed Business Case* 'must be comparable and assessed objectively and consistently'.
28. This paper examines the option in section 4.2 of the *Options Assessment Report*, namely 'Utilise the Memorial's Mitchell Facility'. The *Report* dismissed this option, but the reasons for excluding it from further consideration are highly suspect.
29. The *Report's* dismissing of the Mitchell option is contradicted by the Memorial's current practice of reporting visits to the Mitchell premises along with visits to the Campbell site.

30. Use and development of the Mitchell site would have no impact on the Memorial's commemorative and research functions. The extent to which the Mitchell site is used is a Memorial management decision, not driven by deficiencies at Mitchell. Mitchell is well located for transport.
31. Arguments against the dispersal of commemorative objects across sites apply also to local war memorials and to the Sir John Monash Centre, more than 15,000 kilometres away in France.
32. Technology objects (large or otherwise) that are merely illustrative examples do not necessarily need to be located near the main 'stories' if they are not essential to or referenced in those stories.
33. Development of already acquired land adjacent to the Mitchell centre deserves close consideration. Moreover, the lack of recognition of the original role of the Mitchell centre, as approved for construction by the Public Works Committee (1992) for combined storage and exhibition use, contradicts past government approvals in relation to Mitchell.

**The *Design Options* paper and scoring the final four options (page 23)**

34. Option 1, including the demolition of Anzac Hall, comes out ahead of the other three options in the final contest. What is notable, however, is the meagre scores tallied in the scoring undertaken by consultants and Memorial staff. Option 1, the preferred way forward to spend \$498 million, scored only 57.67 'Total Weighted Score (out of 100)'. That is hardly a ringing endorsement.

**Conclusions (pages 23-24)**

35. The Australian War Memorial belongs to the whole nation, but its future is being settled in the shadows by a small group. The deletion of Anzac Hall, late in the process and for obscure reasons, is symptomatic of a flawed process.
36. The Memorial's future space requirements are vaguely expressed – essentially an ambit claim – and seem to be driven mainly by the need to find space to 'park' superannuated military equipment taken on from the Department of Defence. The need to provide recent veterans with a 'therapeutic milieu', sometimes stressed by the Director of the Memorial, appears nowhere in either of the documents released.
37. The treatment of the options lacks assessment against metrics, but is subjective (including a subjective assessment against subjective criteria) and often emotive and evidence-free. The *Options Assessment Report* is a good example of a consultant's report prepared to fit a predetermined conclusion.

38. The space requirement estimate may have been influenced by knowledge of how much funding was likely to be available for the project. Subsidiary space estimates are flawed because they flow from a flawed estimate for exhibition space.
39. The 'new' two level Anzac Hall is an extremely poor idea, fraught with difficulties regarding point loadings, access and drainage.
40. A case study of the *Options Assessment Report's* treatment of options (looking at the option to use the Memorial's Mitchell facility) shows the *Report's* work is highly suspect and fails to meet Department of Finance criteria that options 'must be comparable and assessed objectively and consistently'.
41. It is not surprising that, scored against a matrix of criteria, the ultimately preferred option (including deletion of Anzac Hall) scored only 57.67 points out of 100.

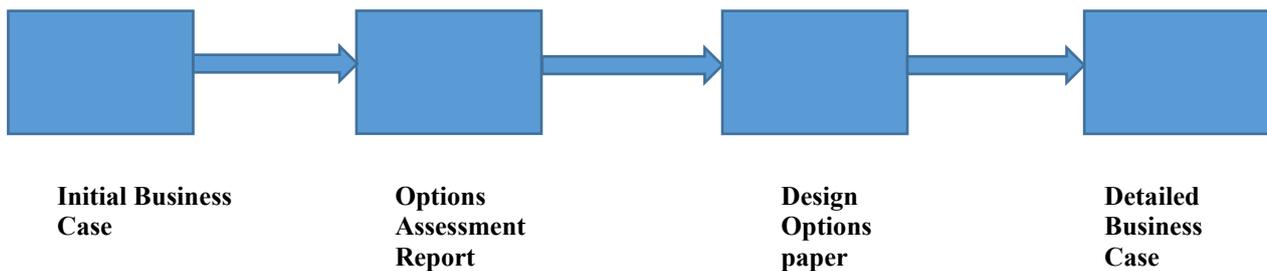
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## Introduction: two puzzling documents lacking context. A ‘snow job’?

42. The Australian War Memorial has posted [two documents on its website](#) as background to the proposal to spend \$498 million on extensive redevelopment and expansion of the Memorial (hereafter called ‘the project’).
43. The first document is the *Options Assessment Report* (hereafter the *Report*), ‘a high level assessment of the options, either viable or not’, considered during the development of the project’s *Initial Business Case* (section 1.2). This document is marked © GHD 2019, but appears to have been produced in 2017 (see the annotation ‘Rev A, Approved for issue 18.08.17’ on page 37). The actual *Initial Business Case* documentation seems not to be available to the general public.
44. The second document is the *Detailed Business Case Design Options Development and Assessment* briefing paper (hereafter the *Design Options* paper) submitted to the Memorial Council for consideration at its meeting of Tuesday, 3 July 2018. According to the covering note, the paper presented ‘four five per cent design options for the Redevelopment Project for Council discussion and agreement on a preferred option for further development’. The Memorial’s consultants, GHDWoodhead, were to ‘develop the [Council’s] preferred option to a 30 per cent design completion, and develop the [*Detailed Business Case*] with a full cost benefit analysis’.
45. The cover note to the *Design Options* paper includes a succinct description of the proposed project, as it stood in June 2018 when the paper was signed off by Memorial senior officers to present to the Memorial Council.

If approved by Government, the proposed redevelopment will substantially increase exhibition and public program space in the Memorial building to tell stories of current and recent conflicts, operations and peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. It will also include new temporary or travelling exhibition space; improved visitor orientation, wayfinding and amenities; veteran support facilities, new education facilities, theatre and functions space. There will be an extension to the Bean Building to integrate research collections and reader services, and to optimise the space in the Memorial building for exhibitions by relocating collections stores in the Memorial Building to the Bean Building.

46. It is difficult to describe these two documents – the *Options Assessment Report* and the *Design Options* paper – as a justification for or explanation of the project. They raise as many questions as they answer. The diagram shows simply the relationship between key elements:



47. It could be argued, indeed, that the *Report* and the *Design Options* paper have been made available just as much to ‘snow’ the public as to support the case for the project. [Director Nelson \(page 154 of the Official Hansard\)](#), said in February 2019 that the *Detailed Business Case* went to the Government on 21 December 2018. Why not make that document available?
48. How far have the Memorial’s plans changed since these two documents were produced? There is, for example, a lack of clarity about how much additional floor space the proposed extensions will deliver. On ABC Local Radio Canberra on 10 April 2019, War Memorial Director Nelson referred to ‘the extra 6000 square metres of exhibition space’ (audio expired but [transcript page 6](#)). [In the Canberra Times on 20 April 2019](#), though, Dr Nelson wrote of ‘taking the exhibition space in [Anzac Hall] from 4700 square metres to 12,800 square metres [that is, an increase of 8100 square metres in that space alone]’.
49. Then, in the plans in the *Design Options* paper for Option 1, the ultimately preferred option, there are two figures against the ‘functional zone’ of ‘Gallery’ of 24,280 square metres ‘Area’ and 24,524 square metres ‘Required Area’. Yet, there is in the *Options Assessment Report* a mention of a nominal 10,000 square metres as ‘adequate space, for current requirements’ (see below Table 1 ‘Compulsory Criteria’). How do these figures reconcile?
50. Further, in a flurry of figures on pages 9 and 10 of the *Design Options* paper, for Option 1 we see 18,788 [square metres] for ‘Total New Space’, 19,956 for ‘Total Refurbished Space’, and 12,000 for ‘Total’ in a table labelled ‘Location of Additional Gallery Space and Circulation’. Could that 12,000 be the same as Dr Nelson’s 12,800? Presumably, someone in the Memorial has a proper handle on these figures; the lay reader is left puzzled and perplexed. What did the Memorial Council make of them?
51. Looking at design features, the *Design Options* paper contains no mention in any of the four options of a car park on the northern side of Treloar Avenue, [now proposed by the Memorial](#). On the other hand, the options have a multi-level carpark on the current site.

## Wasting Anzac Hall: how did this happen?

52. Nor do the documents tell us why – and precisely how – the demolition of Anzac Hall came to be part of the preferred option. It is important to know this, given the vehemence of opposition – [especially from architects](#) – to this part of the project.
53. We are told at pages 5, 8 and 11 of the *Design Options* paper that Option 1, the option recommended, was ‘amended’ to include the demolition of Anzac Hall. At page 11 there is this about Option 1:
- This option was based on the Building Concept Masterplan, developed by the Sydney-based design firm Johnson Pilton Walker Pty Ltd, endorsed by the Memorial in 2017 and amended through discussion and consultation with the GHDWoodhead architecture team in the development of the option.
54. Given how long the retention of Anzac Hall remained a ‘live’ element in the process – Anzac Hall was retained in *each* of the last four options until those ‘amendments’ occurred – it is important to know how this element was deleted. Amended when? Did individual members of the Memorial Council, perhaps the Chairman, Kerry Stokes, have strong views on deleting Anzac Hall? (The Chairman, a generous benefactor of the Memorial, [donated \\$740,000 towards the cost of the project launch](#) – minus Anzac Hall – on 1 November 2018.) What did other Council members say?
55. Transparency requires, as a minimum, the release of all relevant Council Minutes. If it is true, as Director Nelson claims, that in the Memorial resides ‘the soul of the nation’, then maximum transparency is only right and proper. Leaving aside metaphysical considerations, the Memorial is not the property of its Director, its Council, or even of veterans, but of the whole nation.
56. Despite the release of these two documents, the decision-making process on the extensions has been characterised by discussion behind closed doors, [a carefully managed consultation process](#) (eliciting ‘feedback’ from just 134 people), and long (but unpublicised) monologues from Dr Nelson [in Senate Estimates \(for example, pages 113-14 of the Official Hansard\)](#). The future of the Memorial is being settled in the shadows by a small group.
57. That having been said, the documents so far released still deserve close analysis. That is what this paper does.

## Approval processes and the gathering of evidence

58. The *Design Options* paper says:

### **2.1 IBC [*Initial Business Case*] Submission and Approved Options**

The IBC was submitted to Government for consideration in October 2017. Government approved two design options from the IBC to be further developed as part of the DBC [*Detailed Business Case*]. Both designs have been modified to improve value for money.

59. There is no indication of what ‘submitted to Government’ actually means in this case. Normally, for a project such as this, it could mean either Cabinet or the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC). The Memorial needs to provide more information to enable the public to determine what real government imprimatur for the project has actually been received. At the launch of the project on 1 November 2018, [the then Prime Minister said this](#):

The Memorial has been exploring, with support from our Government, with [sic] options for redevelopment ... [O]ur Government is supportive of these plans ... So today I am pleased to announce the Government is backing these plans, providing \$498 million over the next nine years to see these plans fulfilled.

60. At what level of the Government was the proposal approved: Cabinet? exchange of letters? Captain’s Call? Did the expenditure go through the normal testing of the Budget process, New Policy Proposals and so on, or did it get an inside track? If the funding went through the Budget process, why was it announced in November 2018 rather than in the Budget five months later? If it is the case that [Labor supports the project](#), which version of it did it support? (In May 2018, [Director Nelson told Senate Estimates](#) that officials had ‘spoken to the Leader of the Opposition about it, but not in full detail, shall I say’: page 114 of the Official Hansard.) We are not told any of these things.

61. [Department of Finance rules \(para 77\)](#) require a cost confidence level of 80 per cent (P80) for the project costing estimates in the *Detailed Business Case* to be acceptable for submission to Government after Stage Two of project development. This is clearly acknowledged in the covering note to the *Design Options* paper under the heading ‘Background’.

62. For *Stage One* (which provides funding to allow the development of Stage Two for the selected option or options), however, only a P50 Confidence level is required. That means confidence of 50 per cent that the cost estimates will not be exceeded in the final work.

63. Since there is [no record of Stage Two approval having been submitted to the Public Works Committee](#) for consideration by the time the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament was dissolved on 11 April 2019, it appears that government approval for funding was given based upon documentation developed only to the P50 level.
64. It is somewhat cavalier to approve a budget of \$498 million on the basis of only a 50 per cent chance of the project being completed within budget.
65. Examination of the *Options Assessment Report* suggests that remarkably little reliable evidence was gathered during the *Report's* preparation. In fact, the *Report* can be read as nothing more than a detailed (though loosely accurate) statement of a predetermined position requiring 'validation' through a consultant's report.
66. In other words, the answer was written before the questions were asked.
67. It is axiomatic that an organisation does not engage consultants to prepare reports of this nature unless it has a clear vision both of what it requires the consultant to come up with *and* the mechanism to ensure this conclusion is reached. The *Options Assessment Report* appears *prima facie* to be an example of that truism. This is further discussed below.
68. However, before further examination of the *Report*, some general comments are in order.

#### [Use of the terminology 'business case' and 'metric'](#)

69. The [Australian War Memorial Act 1980](#) makes no reference to 'business' as a function of the Memorial. Indeed, many people would consider it inappropriate and disrespectful to even use the term 'business' to refer to the functions of the Memorial.
70. Since the Memorial is using the terminology 'business case' in its explanation of the supposed need for this major project, however, it is important for it to provide the metric or metrics used in the business case and by which the project is justified. If the metrics cannot be unambiguously defined, the apparent level of assurance (derived from basing the development on a 'business case') collapses.
71. The term 'metric' in its business use means a set of figures or statistics that measure results. As with the use of 'business case', the use of 'metric(s)' would ordinarily lend rigour to a report, because it indicates the adoption of objective and measurable values.
72. The *Options Assessment Report*, section 2.3, 'Criteria', states, 'The criteria and assessing metrics used to evaluate each option considered are outlined in Table 1'. Table 1 then follows.

**Table 1 Compulsory Criteria**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Metrics</b>
Business Need	Operate as the National Memorial	Support the Memorial to function as the National Memorial commemorating the sacrifice of Australians
Business Need	Access to the Memorial	The proposed solution provides for appropriate levels of access to the Memorial's exhibitions and services
Business Need	Safe and secure	The proposed solution enables the Memorial to provide the necessary levels of safety and security appropriate to both the Collection and to the national significance of the Memorial itself
Business Need	Capacity and Capability	The proposed solution provides adequate space, for current requirements (nom. 10,000 m <sup>2</sup> ), for the Memorial to provide suitable [sic] which speaks to the Australian experience of past, present and future conflict, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations

73. An examination of Table 1 shows clearly that only one of the alleged 'metrics' used for assessment of the options is in fact a metric. The others are not metrics at all but objectives (or goals or targets or aims) for the Memorial. There are, in fact, no actual metrics in Table 1, other than against 'Capacity and Capability', where the 'nominal' area of 10,000 square metres appears as a target for what is nebulously stated as 'adequate space, for current requirements'. That formulation seems to mean 'the space we guess we will need in the foreseeable future'.

74. The assessment of the degree to which various listed options meet these objectives (or goals or targets or aims) is obviously subjective, in the absence of any measure for quantifying the degree to which the objectives have in fact been reached. It should be strongly noted, also, that the development of a scoring system for tabulation and comparison of options does *not*

represent a metric: a subjective assessment cannot be mathematically evaluated against a statement of requirements that itself relies on subjective values.

75. In this case, the Memorial's consultants used a subjective measure to determine success against another subjective measure. The striking use of colour in the *Report* (red for Very High Risk, orange for High Risk, green for Medium [Risk, presumably], blue (though, apparently carelessly by the authors, green at one point) for Low Risk, cannot disguise this basic flaw.
76. In fact, the only actual metrics identified in the *Report* other than for the nominal space requirement of 10,000 square metres are those for 'reasonable distances' (section 2.5). These are given as: 'reasonable walking distance: 400m' which is described as 'the industry benchmark', though what industry is not stated. 'Reasonable assisted travel distance: 2 km' has been selected by the consultants and described as 'considered reasonable. This distance would not deter visitors from travelling on to a second location for more exhibitions.'
77. The selected metric for 'reasonable assisted travel distance', while not supported by any 'industry benchmark', places the Memorial conveniently just within the limit for proximity to the Civic Centre bus and light rail hub.

#### Exhibition, visitor and storage space requirements

78. There are many standards which impact on the design, construction and use of any public institution such as the Memorial. These standards provide a wide range of technical metrics, for example, the number of visitors allowable within a space, the capacity and availability of fire exits, disabled visitor access and mobility, floor loadings, ventilation standards, and so on.
79. These technical standards are largely missing from the *Options Assessment Report*, though they start to appear in the *Design Options* paper. The *Report* in particular contains many references, both obliquely and overtly, to space requirements, but at times in highly emotive terms, for example:

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, presumably 'archive'] (section 3.1).

80. There seems to be no justification provided at any point to support this assessment; it is presented to the reader as an article of faith, not to be questioned or tested.
81. It is not the role of the current paper to examine, let alone either contest or support, this most basic of assumptions, one that is presented as the overarching reason for embarking on the project. Yet, there remains the crucial point that expenditure of the magnitude suggested

*should* be supported by a robust and reliable presentation of the reasons for it, not just a simple statement of belief.

82. Equally, the ‘nominal’ space requirement of 10,000 square metres for the expansion of exhibitions is entirely unsupported by reasons why this is an appropriate figure, or with information about the use that would be made of this space, beyond the generality of telling ‘the story’ (section 3.1 and elsewhere). That, in turn, opens a number of issues, including what story or stories should be told and how.

83. [The Memorial’s promotional video](#) depicts a number of aircraft located in generous space. How many of the stories are about these space-gobbling machines? [In Senate Estimates in February 2018](#), Dr Nelson listed some of these machines (page 114 of the Proof Hansard):

We've got a CH-47 that's come in; we've got a Sea Hawk; we've got a Squirrel; we've got a Black Hawk; we've salvaged big things off Sydney (IV) and from Tobruk; we've got a P3 Orion; we've got an F/A-18; we've just corrected an historical anomaly and acquired an F-111.

84. Given that the Memorial has all these large machines and has to find space for them, does the space *come before* the stories? In other words, was the space requirement decided on the basis of the size and number of machines needing accommodation, before attention turned to the stories that might be told?

85. Without a supporting case, the nominal figure for space requirements can be considered an ambit claim at best. And the subsidiary claims for increased visitor access space, and so on, are obviously related to the basic claim for exhibition space. These claims are only meaningful if the basic exhibition space claim is supportable.

86. Then, how does the financial aspect of the project connect with the assessment of space requirements? This is a crucial point. The fact that a budget of around \$500 million was being discussed publicly in April and May 2018, and had been announced by the Prime Minister on 1 November 2018 (see above para 59), still before the ‘80 per cent’ *Detailed Business Case* had been completed – it was 21 December 2018 before the *Detailed Business Case* went to the Government (above para 47) – suggests that the space claim was developed as a ‘What can we do with this budget?’ exercise. In other words, that the dollar figure came first.

87. What is the evidence for this? [Senate Estimates from 30 May 2018](#) shows that a \$500 million or so figure was very much in the public domain then (page 113 of the Official Hansard):

Senator GALLACHER: Dr Nelson, you've been advocating an ambitious business case for the Australian War Memorial, and a \$500 million figure has been reported. Is that correct? Is that accurate? ...

Dr Nelson: Until the process is completed, Senator Gallacher, we don't know precisely what it will cost. We saw reports in the media, as you suggest, of \$500 million over seven years ...

88. The [earliest media reports](#) of the \$500 million estimate date from early April 2018, three months before the Memorial Council agreed on Option 1 after considering the *Decision Options* paper. [An ABC report dated 7 April 2018](#) refers to '[d]raft architectural plans', presumably shown to Andrew Greene, the journalist who wrote the story. It seems clear, then, that space requirements were still being considered, and options being weighed, in early to mid-2018 at a time when the \$500 million estimate was in the public domain, perhaps because of a leak from [the Interdepartmental Committee chaired by Dr Nelson](#) (page 114). There was certainly scope to adjust the plans in the light of information about how much money was likely to be available.
89. What is the position now, in May 2019? The fact that [the Forward Estimates now contain parts of that eventual \\$498 million](#) under 'Capital measures' (rounded: 2019-20: \$26.2m; 2020-21: \$36.7m; 2021-22: \$31.6m; 2022-23: \$65.6m) (page 92), does not of itself mean that the figures are soundly based or set in stone.
90. In any case, [the Appropriations Bills linked to those estimates lapsed at the dissolution of the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament](#). If the Coalition is returned at the election, the Bills will be reintroduced; if there is a new government, there will be a revised Budget.

#### [Practical considerations for multi-level and subterranean exhibition space development](#)

91. The preferred option (Option 1) of replacing Anzac Hall with a two-level structure (of which one level would be substantially if not completely underground) is an extremely poor idea. It is costly, cumbersome and fraught with unnecessary risk factors.
92. Large Technology Objects, particularly large weapons, armoured vehicles and the like, are almost without exception heavy or extremely heavy, with very high point loadings. Even aircraft often have considerable point loadings, are extremely awkward to manoeuvre in tight spaces, and are highly susceptible to damage while moving.
93. The people tasked with the movement of Large Technology Objects into enclosed spaces have to be aware of not only the load and movement peculiarities of the objects themselves, but also the additional loads and space requirements for the equipment that is needed to move the objects. For example, a tank weighing perhaps 30 tonnes (as a stripped-out exhibit item) cannot be manhandled into place on its tracks.
94. A two-storey version of Anzac Hall, with the lower floor underground, is perhaps the worst configuration possible for flexible exhibition space development.

95. Any exhibition space intended for objects of much larger size and weight than around that of a conventional passenger car will need multiple access points of large dimension. Furthermore, the need to rotate the placement of those objects requiring removal for off-site maintenance or restoration means that a single access point is, in the longer term, entirely impractical. Without multiple access points it becomes very difficult to move Large Technology Objects around.
96. Then, if the space is underground, such access will require either extremely large lifts or large and gently sloped access ramps, which will impact on the surrounding Memorial space.
97. On the positive side, however, a lower-floor space for Large Technology Objects will allow for a clear span, high strength slab floor suitable for the loadings imparted by these objects, provided the upper floor (the one at ground level) is restricted to displaying low-weight exhibition objects. If more flexibility is required for the display of Large Technology Objects on the upper floor, it is extremely likely that the lower floor will have to be intersected with load-bearing columns, severely restricting that floor's utility for the display of Large Technology Objects.
98. As a further consideration, it is accepted wisdom among museum professionals that any museum space which does not have decent *natural* drainage will, at some time, experience flooding, whether from natural causes, mechanical failure of infrastructure, or human error. This is obviously a bigger problem if a floor is underground.
99. Any underground exhibition facility is inevitably a compromise – or collection of compromises – that introduces a potential future situation requiring remediation that is almost always highly expensive, often hazardous and sometimes impossible.
100. If these factors are ignored and the attendant risk not recognised within the evaluation matrix, then any such option is not being presented honestly or accurately.

#### [Examination of the available documentation for reliability, veracity and objectivity](#)

101. The documents released derived from the work of professional consultants and Memorial staff over a number of years. In February 2018, [Director Nelson said in Senate Estimates \(page 114 of the Proof Hansard\)](#) that ‘three years ago, we asked our architects to have a look at this and do some design work for an expansion of the memorial's footprint’. That would make it early 2015 when ideas began to take shape.

102. According to [Director Nelson at Senate Estimates in February this year \(page 154 of the Official Hansard\)](#), the *Detailed Business Case* was delivered to the Government on 21 December 2018, prior to the provision of construction funding in the 2019 Budget, though after the project launch in November 2018. (Dr Nelson also said ‘that is a part of the cabinet-in-confidence process. That’s a government document. It’s a matter for the government to make a decision about it.’ What decision could he have been referring to, when the Prime Minister had announced funding in the previous November?)
103. To evaluate the reliability, veracity and objectivity of the *Detailed Business Case*, it is reasonable to sample the documentation supplied. If that sample indicates deficiencies, then it follows that the *Detailed Business Case* is flawed, because not all options have been presented fairly for consideration.
104. The following is an examination of the option in section 4.2 of the *Options Assessment Report*, namely ‘Utilise the Memorial's Mitchell Facility’, commencing on page 9 of the *Report*. The *Report* dismissed this option.
105. The reasons for excluding this option from further consideration are highly suspect. Indeed, the work does not comply with the [Department of Finance rules for the Initial Business Case \(para. 71\)](#): ‘All options considered in the IBC must be comparable and assessed objectively and consistently’.
106. In the following paragraphs a quote from section 4.2 of the *Report* (page 10) is followed by a comment. (The quotes are in italics and paragraph numbers have been added to them for ease of reference.)

#### From section 4.2

107. *This options [sic] fails to meet the user requirements, as the collection is disbursed [sic] across multiple sites, outside of the reasonable distances however still within the ACT, resulting in a diminishing effect on the existing site and the existing collection. The reduction in objects and stories at the Memorial in Campbell would adversely affect annual attendance.*

#### Comment

108. The dispersal of the publicly accessible Memorial collection between the Campbell site and the Mitchell Treloar site has been a fact since around 1994, following the opening of the Mitchell Treloar facility.
109. Memorial Annual Reports include visitation to the Treloar Centre within the performance metric as a positive factor in terms of access to the Memorial’s collection. The negative expression in the *Options Assessment Report* has only emerged to support the

proposition that incorporation of the Mitchell site facilities as an exhibition space detracts from the Memorial's current preference for centralisation at the Campbell site.

110. *Thus*, the *Options Assessment Report* conclusion is contradicted by the Memorial's previous reporting practice.

From section 4.2

111. *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 [sic].*

Comment

112. Display of the Memorial's National Collection artefacts is only one of the three roles of the Memorial as defined in the introduction to the *Options Assessment Report* (section 1.1):

The Memorial is unique in that it is a shrine, a world-class museum and an extensive archive covering Australia's involvement in conflicts. This is achieved in three parts:

- A Commemorative Area (shrine) including the Hall of Memory with the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; [Sic: The correct title is the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier and the difference is not in any way immaterial. A conscientious consultant would have avoided this error; an alert client would have corrected it.]
- The Memorial's galleries (museum); and
- A Research Centre (archive).

A critical element of the function of the Memorial is that it is capable of continuing to allow all three functions to continue within the same precinct.

113. *Thus*, the *Options Assessment Report* conclusion is inconsistent with its description of the Memorial's unique character. Development of the Mitchell site would have no impact on the first and third of these three parts.

114. As for the stated 'critical element' of co-location, as noted above (para 109), the Memorial has been including visitation to its Treloar Centre (Mitchell) to view Large Technology Objects as an integral part of its annual operations (recently, [the 'Big Things in Store' open days](#)) for more than two decades. See, for example, [the Memorial's Annual Report for 2017-18](#) (page x): '1.089 million visitors to the Memorial's Campbell site or Mitchell storage facility'. The role of the Mitchell facility is set out in the same report (page 3):

When complete the redeveloped storage will not only safeguard our National Collection and preserve the stories of serving personnel and veterans, but will enable the Memorial to collect significant land, sea, and air artefacts currently being retired by the Australian Defence Force.

115. The preceding paragraph sounds rather like the argument for the extension to the Campbell site (see above para 83). [The 2017 Public Works Committee report \(sections 2.10-12\)](#) on the now completed works at Mitchell reinforces this impression. The report notes that the Memorial had to find space for an FA18 fighter-bomber, two helicopters, an Orion aircraft, and two large land vehicles. The Mitchell project was for ‘approximately 5,288 square metres of total floorspace for the storage of ... primarily military aircraft and large military equipment such as infantry mobility vehicles handed over from the Department of Defence as the equipment is retired from service’. There would also be ‘residual storage capacity of 3,433 square metres, which would give the Memorial ‘a forward storage capacity of around 8.6 years’.
116. Again, the Memorial’s commitment to take on retired military machinery forces it to seek ever more space to store and display it. Another approach would be *not* to take the machines – or not to take so many of them – or to invest in digitisation.

#### From section 4.2

117. *The Mitchell storage facility is not common knowledge and is not currently open on a regular basis. Utilising this facility will require additional operational costs to the Commonwealth to support dual facilities, given their location separation.*

#### Comment

118. The Treloar Centre at Mitchell was *specifically* developed as a world-leading quality storage and visitor-accessible facility, as is evidenced by the visitor galleries being separated from the actual storage area. It has all the required features – visitor access, visitor safety, etc. – for use as a daily visitation area.
119. Not using this space is a management decision, not driven by a restriction on the capability of the facility resulting from its physical characteristics. It may be the result of a Memorial decision to centralise all visitation on the Campbell site. Moreover, if the Mitchell precinct is not well known after more than 20 years, then that is to the discredit of Memorial management and, in fact, contravenes the terms of [the Public Works Committee’s 1992 approval of funding for the construction of the Treloar Centre](#).

120. Additional exhibition and visitor movement space at any facility for the Memorial will entail additional operational costs to the Commonwealth, simply on a ratio of visitor safety and monitoring of security, etc. to the area. It is accepted that a discrete facility at Mitchell would incur additional cost over the ‘economies of scale’ of extension of the central Memorial facilities, but this cost should be considered within the ambit of the overall operational costings of all the options, not taken as a unique cost imposition that disqualifies the Mitchell option.

121. *Thus*, the *Options Assessment Report* analysis of this option is at best selective and not considered within the context of the total costings of any option.

#### From section 4.2

122. *The Mitchell site is not located within close proximity to a significant transportation hub, which will impact attendance.*

#### Comment

123. The Memorial’s Campbell site is located approximately 1.8km line-of-sight from the nearest ‘significant transportation hub’ (Civic Centre). A foot or vehicle path between the Memorial and that centre would likely exceed 2km. In the *Options Assessment Report*’s terms, 2km is a ‘reasonable assisted transport distance’.

124. The Mitchell site, on the other hand, is located within 50 metres of the Canberra Metro (Light Rail) line, and approximately 700 metres from the Flemington Road-Well Station stop. With the commencement of the light rail service, Mitchell will be better served for transport from the City Centre transport hub than is the Memorial itself.

#### From section 4.2

125. *By dispersing the objects, the stories and messages are lost and do not appropriately commemorate Veteran services [sic].*

#### Comment

126. This is an utterly subjective and unsupportable assertion. If it is accepted as true, however, it means that every local memorial across the nation and worldwide is of no value. In particular, it makes the Sir John Monash Centre in France, more than 15,000 km away in France and costing \$100 million, worthless as a commemoration of Australian service.

From section 4.2

127. *This option is inconsistent with Charles Bean's vision for the Memorial, failing to enable it to appropriately tell the stories of Australia's involvement in conflict.*

Comment

128. With a few exceptions, the physical location of an artefact neither enhances nor diminishes the understanding of the experience of war. Exceptions would obviously include personal effects of individuals whose stories are used for deeper understanding. Technology objects (large or otherwise) that are merely illustrative examples do not necessarily need to be placed near the main 'stories' if they are not essential to or referenced in those stories.

129. **Thus**, this is not relevant as a reason to reject the option

From section 4.2

130. *This option does not support the Memorial to function [sic] as the National Memorial commemorating the sacrifice of Australians.*

Comment

131. This is an entirely vacuous, meaningless and valueless assessment without explanation of why the assessment is made. It is indicative of a predisposition to express pejorative opinions towards options that do not support the desired conclusion.

From section 4.2

132. *This option is not considered a viable long term solution.*

Comment

133. No supporting reasons are provided. This is simply an expression of opinion without any evidence.

From section 4.2

134. *This option is inconsistent with the options outlined within the Mitchell storage facility IBC and Detailed Business Case (DBC), contradicting past government approvals.*

Comment

135. [The Treloar Centre building was approved by the Public Works Committee in 1992](#) as a combined, very highly environmentally-enabled storage and conservation facility with

integrated visitor access capability, as witnessed by the observation gallery, visitor foyer, visitor safety, and disabled access capability.

136. The Memorial has acquired a number of areas adjacent to the existing Mitchell Treloar Centre and Large Object storage facility (now called ‘Treloar A, B and C’) as detailed in the Memorial’s [Treloar E Large Technology Objects Store Project: Statement of Evidence to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works](#), Submission 1 to the Public Works Committee inquiry in 2017.

137. The availability of such a large adjacent area that has already been partially developed to serve a major part of the Memorial’s activities offers exhibition development options that deserve close consideration. Moreover, the lack of recognition of the original role of the Treloar Centre, as approved for construction by the Public Works Committee for combined storage and exhibition use, is a clear example of ‘contradicting past government approvals’ (see para 134 above).

#### From section 4.2

138. *The travelling exhibition requires the Commonwealth to provide additional operational costs (movement of memorial items), funding for leases, increase [sic] insurances, increased maintenance and the like.*

#### Comment

139. This is entirely irrelevant to the consideration of the Mitchell facility option and is most likely an example of invalid composition or editing by the author or authors of the *Report*.

140. The *Report* is riddled with literals (see the number of ‘sic’ references above) and shows signs of hasty composition by its authors and slipshod checking by its clients at the Memorial. Even at this level it was not a good investment.

#### From section 4.2

141. *By dispersing the objects across Australia, the stories and messages are lost and do not appropriately commemorate Veteran services [sic].*

#### Comment

142. As for the previous comment: irrelevant and invalid for the option under consideration.

## The *Design Options* paper and scoring the final four options

143. This paper has already covered (see above paras 52-57) the crucial question of how Anzac Hall came to be deleted from the preferred option (Option 1). There remain some comments to be made about the scoring method by which Option 1 emerged on top.
144. Pages 11 to 18 and Attachment F of the *Design Options* paper discuss four options: Option 1, Replacement of Anzac Hall; Option 2, Northern Above Ground Expansion; Option 3, Eastern Below Ground Expansion; Option 4, Western Above Ground Expansion. The options were assessed against three categories of criteria: Technical; Financial; Project Objectives. Scoring was weighted between categories and within categories. Consultants and senior Memorial staff did the scoring. Discussion of the risk, operational impact, and land value aspects of Option 1 occupied barely half a page of the paper.
145. It would be possible to analyse the analysis in detail, to quibble over the weightings, and question the allocation of scoring tasks between consultants and Memorial officers. It is sufficient, however, to focus on the table on page 16 of the *Design Options* paper labelled ‘Assessment Criteria Summary’. Option 1 comes out ahead of the other three options. There is no surprise in this; the process would have been tailored to produce this outcome, given what those designing and implementing the process knew of views on the Memorial’s Council.
146. What is notable, however, is the meagre scores tallied. Option 1, the preferred way forward to spend \$498 million, scored only 57.67 ‘Total Weighted Score (out of 100)’. That is hardly a ringing endorsement.

## Conclusions

147. The Australian War Memorial belongs to the whole nation, but its future is being settled in the shadows by a small group. The deletion of Anzac Hall, late in the process and for obscure reasons, is symptomatic of a flawed process.
148. The Memorial’s future space requirements are vaguely expressed – essentially an ambit claim – and seem to be driven mainly by the need to find space to ‘park’ superannuated military equipment taken on from the Department of Defence. (The need to provide recent veterans with a ‘therapeutic milieu’, [sometimes stressed by the Director of the Memorial](#), appears nowhere in either of the documents released.)
149. The treatment of the options lacks assessment against metrics, but is subjective (including a subjective assessment against subjective criteria) and often emotive and evidence-free. The *Options Assessment Report* is a good example of a consultant’s report prepared to fit a predetermined conclusion.

150. The space requirement estimate may have been influenced by knowledge of how much funding was likely to be available for the project. Subsidiary space estimates are flawed because they flow from a flawed estimate for exhibition space.
151. The ‘new’ two level Anzac Hall is an extremely poor idea, fraught with difficulties regarding point loadings, access and drainage.
152. A case study of the *Options Assessment Report*’s treatment of options (looking at the option to use the Memorial’s Mitchell facility) shows the *Report*’s work is highly suspect and fails to meet Department of Finance criteria that options ‘must be comparable and assessed objectively and consistently’.
153. It is not surprising that, scored against a matrix of criteria, the ultimately preferred option (including deletion of Anzac Hall) scored only 57.67 points out of 100.

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Heritage Guardians  
14 May 2019

***Heritage Guardians: coordinating community action on the War Memorial extensions***

‘[It should] ... not be colossal in scale but rather a gem of its kind’ (Charles Bean and the Australian War Museum Committee, 11 October 1923, on the proposed building and collection)

[The campaign diary of the Heritage Guardians campaign against the War Memorial extensions.](#)