

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE**

*Third Report — “Inquiry into the Inside Australia Project at Lake Ballard (Menzies)” — Tabling*

**MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armadale)** [10.29 am]: I present for tabling the third report and related submissions of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee’s “Inquiry into the Inside Australia Project at Lake Ballard (Menzies)”.

[See paper 1680.]

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Two of the areas of responsibility of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee are the arts and regional development. This quite extraordinary project, *Inside Australia*, falls within both those areas. When the matter was brought to our attention by Hon Tom Stephens, we were very keen to ensure that we covered the full gamut of our responsibilities. After our very worthy report into education and early childhood development, we felt that this was very much a change of direction. We felt also that it was important that the arts not be neglected.

Fundamentally, this inquiry was into one of the most extraordinary works of art in Western Australia, if not Australia. The idea of installing some 50 metal sculptures modelled on the body shapes of residents of the small goldfields community, Menzies, over a vast salt lake was audacious. Originally, the project was instigated by the Perth International Arts Festival. It was designed to be a temporary exhibition as part of the festival and part of the desire by the then director of the arts festival, Sean Doran, to take the Perth International Arts Festival into the regions, including the outer metropolitan area. It was a very worthy project. They brought on board world-renowned sculptor Antony Gormley, who flew around Western Australia and looked over the landscapes. He determined that this vast and very beautiful, in a surreal way, landscape at Lake Ballard would be the site for his work. He then went about engaging in quite a profound way with the local Menzies Indigenous and wider community to get them involved in this project. Their bodies were scanned, and as a result of some sort of quite complex algorithm, produced a shape that was then cast in metal before being taken out and placed on the salt lake. It is an extraordinary concept and, indeed, it is listed as one of the great landscape art projects in the world—and we have it here in Western Australia.

It would be fair to say that the committee’s conclusion was that, fundamentally, the extraordinary nature of this piece of work has been somewhat undervalued. We felt that we needed to make a very clear decision that this work is maintained and conserved over the long term, and that we must recognise therefore that a certain range of things must be done to make that possible. We also believe that the great capacity that this project has to add to the economic diversity of the northern goldfields region is not being properly developed. We have something here that is truly extraordinary. Governance and funding arrangements must be established to give it a long-term future, and we need to do more to ensure that the full benefit of such an extraordinary artwork being in the regions is leveraged off for the creation of more economic diversity in that goldfields area.

Around 2006 it was determined that, so successful was this temporary exhibition, and so had it captured the imagination of not just the local Menzies community but indeed the broader arts community, it would become a permanent exhibition. I think it is the committee’s view that that was an understandable decision—one that it could support. However, it meant that in that conversion from a temporary to a permanent exhibition, a range of things needed to be done. Some provision was made for those things but two to three years on, we can see that they have not been sufficient to really bring home the bacon, shall we say, for this project. Under the terms of the agreement entered into by the state of Western Australia, the asset itself became the property of the Art Gallery of Western Australia. It is important to understand that this internationally renowned artist Antony Gormley actually allowed the ownership of these figures to be transferred to the Art Gallery of Western Australia for the sum of £1. I think the estimate of the value of these sculptures is in the order of at least \$100 000 per sculpture. Gifting the 51 of those sculptures to Western Australia for £1 was, indeed, a very generous act on the part of Mr Gormley, and I think we need to be appreciative of that.

We were very surprised to find that, notwithstanding the very high level of international significance of these figures, they are not part of the Art Gallery of Western Australia’s art collection; they are on the asset register, just as are the gallery’s brooms, mops and computers. The committee found that it was really an unacceptable state of affairs for this extraordinary piece of art to not be accepted as part of the art collection. When this matter was raised with Mr Gormley, he felt this was a breach, at least in spirit, of the contract and the arrangement he had entered into with the state of Western Australia. He had not envisaged that this would be treated as a functional asset rather than as an artwork. I think that is one of the first things we need to determine. We need also to understand that a funding arrangement was put in place of around \$80 000 a year for five years for the maintenance and conservation of these statues. Given they were devised as a temporary installation, a fair amount of work needs to be done simply to maintain their conservation. As I say, commensurate with a decision

to place the figures as part of our art collection, there needs to be a long-term stream of funding for the basic task of conserving those objects.

It is also the committee's view that the governance arrangement set up in good faith to manage the site at Lake Ballard where the figures are placed simply has not worked. In the committee's view, the membership of the Lake Ballard Association Inc is not broad enough. In particular, its membership should go beyond the members of the local authority and the traditional owners of the area. It needs to incorporate the Art Gallery of Western Australia and Tourism WA also so that a far broader set of skills can come to bear in the management of this site. We must get the Art Gallery of Western Australia, which is very much involved in the conservation of the asset, and Tourism WA, which is involved in promoting the project, critically involved in the governance structure. We understand there are very good reasons why this developed, but there are particular quorum requirements et cetera within the rules of Lake Ballard Association Incorporated that basically make it very difficult to get a decision made by this group. There are long delays between meetings and long delays in matters being considered. We need to accept that this is a very significant piece of work on the international landscape and that it needs to be managed in a more robust way.

We are also of the view that the site needs to be more intensively managed. We are very conscious that there is not a bottomless pit of money from government to be able to support these things. We have advocated that we look at some creative ways in which we bring people on-site to manage this area—to have an on-site presence for as long as we can. We looked at some of the Department of Environment and Conservation models that incorporate camp hosts, and we have made some recommendations based on those models. We also believe that it would not be inappropriate to levy a charge for entry to the site. We do that in many of our national parks. That money should be dedicated to ensuring more intensive management of the site.

Again, there are clearly problems at Lake Ballard. A couple of the statues have been nicked. There seems to have been another incident in which one or two were used as some sort of an anchor in an attempt to tow vehicles out of the sand. More resource needs to be put into on-site management. Although some facilities have been developed there, we feel that there is more opportunity for tourists to engage in this. We are very conscious of the concerns of the artist and that we do not have an exploitation of the site in such a way that undermines the aesthetic experience. One of the key features of the aesthetic experience is that these statues draw people into that landscape. It takes people out onto the salt lake and gets them to engage with the landscape in a way that most people would not do were it not for the fact that these extraordinary statues are stretched out across this vast lake.

We are also of the view that there has to be some stricter laws to prohibit vehicular access, but without more intensive management that would not be of very much use. We all know that there is a certain anarchistic streak in Australians travelling around in the outback, but we need more intensive management of that to get those matters dealt with.

It is an extraordinary piece of work that we are very lucky to have in Western Australia. It is a piece of work that is absolutely designed to make us appreciate and experience the truly exceptional landscapes that we have in Western Australia. This is a very exciting report.

I compliment Tourism Western Australia. The committee was very impressed with the submissions from and discussions we had with officers from Tourism WA. They are doing an excellent job, in trying circumstances, to try to incorporate this into Tourism WA's Golden West Trails and ensuring that it gets the exposure it needs. However, Tourism WA needs to be more intensively involved in the management to deliver that.

We are also very keen for the town of Menzies to have a real place in the development of this. The shire has been a great supporter of the project and has really embraced it. I recognise Councillors Dwyer, Tucker and Kelly, whom we met with and had an interesting time with discussing this project. We believe that an interpretive centre in Menzies should be funded through the regional investment fund for that purpose. It is better to have that in Menzies rather than on-site. It would encourage people to use Menzies as a stopover. We stayed at the very excellent Menzies Hotel and I compliment the publican, Dave McKenna, on running a great establishment. It is a beautiful old pub that Mr McKenna is doing up to restore to its former glory. It is the type of experience that people want when they go to the outback. We have some fantastic old Australian pubs and we need to enhance and weave them into that tourism experience.

I thank all my fellow committee members, particularly those who made the trek out to Menzies and Lake Ballard. I think we all found that it was an extraordinary experience, even though it was freezing. It was a great opportunity to get to understand what this piece of work was about. Without going out there, one could never understand the essence of it or the way in which the language of the artist actually works. It does indeed draw people into that landscape. I thank, too, Brian Gordon and Jovita Hogan, our staff members, who have worked

assiduously on this report and who accompanied us on the great trek out to Menzies and Lake Ballard. It has been a very interesting experience.

I will sum up by saying that we should never trivialise the role of arts in our community. It is a part of what we need to do to strengthen the glue of our community and to enhance life for our citizens.

**MR A.P. JACOB (Ocean Reef)** [10.38 am]: The member for Pilbara tentatively raised with me the prospect of this inquiry earlier this year. I did not give it a lot of thought at the time. It was not until about five months ago that I took a break during the winter recess and went to Melbourne with my wife. While in Melbourne we visited the National Gallery of Victoria. It is a beautiful building in the heart of Melbourne. In the main foyer we were confronted with a magnificent water wall, but the exhibit that had pride of place in that foyer comprises six of these Lake Ballard sculptures. Melbourne's art gallery has given these sculptures pride of place. It really instilled in me a desire to go ahead and do this inquiry, particularly as that gallery had captured this artwork from Western Australia and had given it front-and-centre pride of place. In many ways the gallery was claiming ownership, because there was no acknowledgment that it was actually Western Australian artwork and that it had bought a little piece of it. In fact, the gallery, in purchasing that artwork, paid for much of the Western Australian project, yet we have the jewel in the crown—the original project in the landscape for which it was designed.

I had been aware of this artwork for a number of years. It was not until I saw those statues in Melbourne and read Geoffrey Bolton's book, which I quickly grabbed from the library so that I could hold it up now for members to know what I am talking about—it has a fantastic picture of the sculptures on the cover—that I wanted to see these sculptures and look at them in more detail. By the way, it is an excellent book.

The experience of visiting and exploring this artwork was a somewhat surreal yet profound experience. I have travelled a lot of the Australian interior. I have driven past and through numerous desert and salt lake landscapes, never giving any thought to the beauty of their isolation and desolation or the little gems of life that exist around the fringes of these landscapes. Before visiting Lake Ballard, I could not imagine a time or a scenario in which I would just pop out of the car and explore a salt lake for a few hours just for the fun of it. These statues and this artwork invite one out into this landscape, they encourage one to experience it, and they help the observer reinterpret the experience of this ancient landscape. Being out there gives one a very strong sensation of isolation, but the sheer scale of this project means that many people can explore this artwork at the same time, yet still be in their own bubble of isolation and contemplation as they walk around the landscape. One is constantly being pulled deeper and deeper into the landscape and into the lake, with each visitor creating his or her own path of exploration. The statues or sculptures draw one out further and invite one to experience the isolation. This is a fantastic interpretive art form that displays remote Western Australia in a simple yet subtly brilliant way. I really must congratulate the artist, Mr Antony Gormley.

As the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's report outlines, *Inside Australia* was originally intended to be a temporary exhibition for the fiftieth anniversary of the Perth International Arts Festival, which was in 2003. Iconic yet temporary arts installations have for many years become one of the most defining landmarks for the localities in which they end up being placed, with many of these works becoming so intrinsic to those locations' identity that they become permanent fixtures. Perhaps the most high profile of these internationally is the Eiffel Tower in Paris. It is now the single most visited paid-entry monument in the world. Originally built for the World's Fair in 1889, Eiffel had a permit for the tower to stand for only 20 years, meaning that it would have to be dismantled in 1909 when its ownership reverted to the city of Paris. Indeed, part of the original contest rules for designing a tower was that it was required to be easily demolished or dismantled. Over the border, in Brussels, there is the Atomium. That was built only for Expo 1958, and, once again, it was built as a temporary artistic or expressive structure for a single event. Both structures were intended to be dismantled, yet both have gone on to become the most iconic features of those capital cities and those two nations. It would be unthinkable today to imagine removing them or no longer maintaining them because they were not originally intended to be permanent. Similarly, the *Inside Australia* project captures something of the identity of Western Australia in a truly unique and expressive way. I believe it to be vitally important that we start to value this artistic treasure that we have been gifted in our own backyard.

The committee's report makes a number of recommendations in line with this. I strongly endorse those recommendations. The recommendations stress the urgent need for a stronger governance model to oversee the installation of such valuable work and also the urgent need for this valuable work to be officially included in the state's art collection, as the member for Armadale touched on. Ongoing funding for maintenance and enhancement of this project is also strongly recommended in the report. The site itself is vulnerable to further degradation, particularly by human activity. The committee also recommended greater on-site management, as well as greater protection for the lake and its surroundings.

This project may well be one of the best-kept secrets in Western Australia. I ask: why are we keeping it a secret? There are several findings and recommendations in the report that also touch on the need to better promote this

project with a view to attracting increased visitor numbers to Lake Ballard. I believe that we should be raising as much awareness of this project as possible and celebrating this truly unique exhibition of destination art. Although the committee's report provides a range of findings and recommendations, in implementing any of them it is really important that we get the balance right. It does us no good to promote the site and attract more visitors without ensuring that we better protect this open and isolated site from wilful or accidental damage.

There is one area that I am particularly interested in that the report did not go into. It is a little off topic as it sits just outside the scope of the inquiry, but the committee discussed it at many points during its discussions. I refer to the potential for Western Australia to hold future landscape art projects. Western Australia's potential to accommodate this is limitless. We already have some of the most fantastic landscape scenes of natural beauty mixed with isolation in the world. It was suggested by Sean Doran—who was the original proponent of this project as the head of the Perth International Arts Festival in 2003—when he was before our committee that Western Australia could quite easily leverage off this project and seek to be the landscape art mecca of the world, should it wish to be.

The Cossack Art Awards, the most isolated art show in the world, is another good example of the strong and unique art sector we have in Western Australia. It could be fostered to achieve even more. Over its time, the Cossack art show has attracted the works of acclaimed Australian artists such as Ken Done, Pro Hart and Robert Juniper. It is held in the old Bond Store, which was built in 1894, in the town of Cossack. We have more landscape art coming into our backyard very soon. The world's most famous public art event, the CowParade, will be held in Margaret River in 2010. As part of that event, around 100 talented artists will have the opportunity to transform a life-sized fibreglass cow into pieces of art. These will be on display throughout the Margaret River region from March through to June 2010. I acknowledge that these are a bit kitsch, but art is a subjective field. What I believe is important is that there is a diversity. The Antony Gormley *Inside Australia* project is truly spectacular. It deserves every bit of its international acclaim. However, replicating the project somewhere else, or trying to do something similar again, would take away the project's originality and would not replicate its uniqueness. The plastic cows, as they are colloquially known in this place, are a fantastic step in advancing the cause of landscape art in Western Australia. I hope that we see many more original destination art installations throughout our state, celebrating our beautiful diversity of landscapes that we are blessed with here in Western Australia.

In closing, I thank the Shire of Menzies for its hospitality and assistance in pursuing this inquiry. I also pass on thanks to my fellow committee members, as well as committee officers Dr Brian Gordon and Ms Jovita Hogan. I would particularly like to congratulate the artist, Mr Antony Gormley, on his brilliant and expressive artwork. I thank him for gifting it to the state. I hope that as a state we can really begin to celebrate one of the world's most iconic pieces of landscape art and implement measures to preserve Lake Ballard's *Inside Australia* into the future.

**MR T.G. STEPHENS (Pilbara)** [10.57 am]: I think it was Lord Nelson who once said to the nation, "A gift!" It was the gift of his mistress, Lady Emma Hamilton. The nation declined the gift, so the film story goes, on the basis that it was considered to be too expensive a gift for the nation to withstand. In our case, another Englishman has come along and gifted to Western Australia a gift that has basically been fully funded, in terms of original capital infrastructure costs, as was partly described by the previous speaker, the member for Ocean Reef. I learnt quite a lot from the member's contribution to this debate. What we did not learn from that contribution was this point: the sale of the six pieces in Melbourne effectively funded the entire cost of these items and their installation at Lake Ballard, Western Australia. It has come at no capital cost to us through the Perth International Arts Festival, but the challenge for us now is to determine how we secure change and promote this wonderful gift. We have an opportunity to promote something of profound significance to ourselves as Western Australians and as citizens of a globe in which the artist, Antony Gormley, has a very significant place indeed.

There will be people who puzzle about a focus on the arts. The contribution by the member for Ocean Reef verifies my own experience. I have to confess to the house that I was born on the other side of this continent. I came from Sydney to the Kimberley. I fell instantly in love with that landscape and with that part of the world. After I eventually got elected to Parliament and came down to Perth for the first time as a representative, I found it hard to understand, appreciate or value the rest of the landscape of Western Australia. The Kimberley and the Pilbara were places where, for me, it was very easy to fall in love with the landscape and to find ways into it. However, I found the south west to be a difficult landscape. When I think of the south west, I include places like Menzies. It is all south to me! It is all quite close and intimate. I eventually found that the way into the landscape for me was through the arts. When I looked at the paintings of the south west, of Rottnest Island and of the landscape around Perth and up and down the coast from here, I found that I could gradually get a way in, and I started to enjoy the landscape more. The writings of Tim Winton helped me even further, as he wrote about the

climate, the wind, the ocean and the beaches. Slowly, I was getting sucked into an appreciation of this part of the world as well and was able to see its value.

I am thinking now of a part of the speech of the member for Ocean Reef. There are parts of Western Australia that are very difficult for people to find their way into. People look at them and drive past quickly. In fact, I represent some places like that. I discovered in that gift that came from Gormley and the vision that came from him and his collaboration with the Perth International Arts Festival ways of assisting people into the landscape inside Australia to understand what is there in an otherwise very challenging salt lake. Many parts of the landscape of the south need to be understood for their history, their geology and the environmental impacts on that landscape. How do people find their way into that landscape to be able to spend time in it? I think the arts is a great way of doing exactly that.

It was in this chamber about nine years ago, I think, that the Perth International Arts Festival launched the first of Sean Doran's festivals, when he spelt out the opportunities that lay ahead of us upon his arrival as the director of that festival. This *Inside Australia* project is a great testimony to the skill that he delivered to Western Australia. The successive directors of the festival in Sean Doran, Lindy Hume and now Shelagh Magadza have all had a role in keeping this project alive for us. In that extraordinary institution, the Perth International Arts Festival, we have something that is delivering work of value, and not only in metropolitan Perth. In this case it has also delivered a project in the regions, which reflects the festival's wider interests and responsibilities.

I was delighted when my colleagues on this committee were prepared to look at this project, recognise its challenges and opportunities and conduct an inquiry that was, if one likes, a bit different from the normal inquiries that are conducted by committees of this house. One that I think is comparable is the monumental work that was done by the late Hon Phil Pendar. He did some work on a parliamentary committee inquiring into the shipwrecks along the coast, and had the opportunity to bring forward reports that formed the basis of the government's response to the challenges of the wrecks. That sort of work, particularly when it is bipartisan, makes a great contribution. I believe that this report is an example of that. I think the exchange across the chamber in this debate displays an opportunity to learn from one another that is, in a way, beyond politics.

When I wanted to check on what could be seen around metropolitan Perth, I spoke with my colleague the former Deputy Speaker, Di Guise. I said, "Di, how many pieces of street art would you have out there in your city now?" She is now a councillor in the City of Wanneroo. She told me that she has 70 pieces of art around the streets of Wanneroo. I guess it is a wonderful thing for metropolitan Perth to have that. I do not know what it is like and whether it is any good. I might go up there and see whether it is worth wandering around Wanneroo to find out what those pieces are like. However, it is wonderful that the metropolitan area gets that sort of gift of art through the rate base that is available to it.

People in the town of Menzies and in regional Western Australia have minimal prospects of finding art of great quality within the regions, other than through a real focus on delivering opportunities such as this. It has happened on this occasion and deserves to be celebrated and given respect. It also deserves to be given good prospects. I can see the results of the collaboration between the local Aboriginal people. Lorraine Williams—I think I have the name right—was particularly identified by the artist Antony Gormley, as well as the associated Williams family. We met up with Ian Tucker, and clearly got from the Aboriginal people their sense of ownership of these works. I know from Kath Finlayson, who was formerly the Menzies shire president, how strongly and closely connected to this piece the families feel. We met up with Jill Dwyer and Aileen Kelly, the locals who were wonderfully connected to, although originally apprehensive about, this work. They were thinking that it was all a bit too much to have to take their clothes off, to be scanned and to then become artworks on the lake. It was all a bit much for girls from Menzies. However, they managed to do exactly that, and their form is now there on display. People can walk amongst these pieces that make a wonderful contribution to the landscape of Western Australia—land art that is celebrated.

Antony Gormley is not an artist of low standing in the international community. I mentioned earlier Lord Nelson. This year the column in Trafalgar Square has been the basis upon which the fourth plinth has become a living art project, choreographed by Antony Gormley. It has been a centrepiece in London this year. There has been huge international focus upon his work there in Trafalgar Square this year. Of course, he is the man of the *Angel of the North* and a variety of other landscape art and land art projects around the globe, and we also have been lucky enough to have that collaboration here in Western Australia.

In my view, there is the prospect of more collaborations like this. We should take the opportunity to celebrate the landscape of parts of the Pilbara, but we should bring into it artistic, sculptural and land art forms which are beyond kitsch but which create the opportunity for people in a harsh environment to find their way into that landscape, to appreciate the environment and to connect with its history, its geology, its prehistory and its prospects. To do that, the arts is part of the way forward. I believe that this report brings before the community

recommendations on ways of exploring the landscape. It is not only in the recommendations, but also in the narrative outlined in this report.

I look forward to catching up with Sean Doran, who will arrive at Parliament House in a moment to pick up a copy of this report. I congratulate him on what he has done in Western Australia, and I look forward to the report being built upon with additional work from government.

**MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley)** [11.07 am]: I rise to make some brief comments on this report, because I think I represent, unfortunately, the majority of people in Western Australia, and maybe even some in this house, who had no idea what *Inside Australia* was. I had not heard anything about it. Therefore, to hear the thoughts of the member for Pilbara and the other committee members about this was a new experience for me. Arriving in Menzies —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker)**: Excuse me, member.

**Mr T.G. Stephens**: He is a member of the committee.

**The ACTING SPEAKER**: I thank the member. Please continue.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA**: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker, for your indulgence.

Several members interjected.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA**: I know. I am enjoying my time.

**Mr R.F. Johnson**: I always like to listen to my very good friend.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA**: I thank the minister. The trip to Menzies was quite wonderful. I enjoyed the hospitality of the Shire of Menzies. It was just wonderful. The people were excellent. I did not know what to expect to see on that lake. Of course, people were talking about having to undress and be lasered naked. I thought, “This is going to be interesting.” They all told me that they could recognise themselves on the lake. When we finally arrived at Lake Ballard, I was taken aback, because I was genuinely impressed. People do not arrive at this place and want to make a big noise. People do not arrive at this place and say, “Oh, we’re here to have a party.” There is a spirit about this area that makes people settle down and realise that they need to have a look and find out what the whole place is about. It was a moving experience as I began to walk around the lake. As the member for Ocean Reef and others have said, to experience the isolation and serenity of this place was rather surreal. The further we went into it, the more it drew us out. I came back a little surprised and sat down, along with the rest of the other people who were with us, and began to look over the lake as the sun began to set. It was absolutely wonderful. I now have come back believing that everyone needs to visit this site at least once. It is a world-renowned area now. The sculptor Antony Gormley is world renowned. The area has a lot of prestige. It has the great capacity to bring tourists to this state, which we need.

I do not want to repeat everything others have said, but I want to affirm three recommendations of the committee that I feel are important. First, this work should become a part of the state’s art collection, which should carry with it genuine pride in the responsibility of its upkeep and promotion. I do believe that. It is something that we have encouraged. Secondly, I strongly support the recommendation of the committee that the government take responsibility for continuing base funding indefinitely for the conservation of the Gormley creation. I think it is worth doing that, as we have been told already. Thirdly, I also commend the recommendation that the Shire of Menzies be given the funding to develop an interpretive centre based within the town itself. This would definitely complement the gold tourist trail.

I just want to say what a wonderful experience it was. I enjoyed being with the committee on this particular inquiry. I would like to acknowledge our principal researcher, Dr Brian Gordon, and our research officer, Jovita Hogan. I would also like to acknowledge, along with the chair and member for Ocean Reef, the member for Pilbara, who brought this matter to our attention in the first place, for which I am grateful, because it has expanded my knowledge and experience. I am absolutely thrilled that this report is here. I trust that it is acted upon urgently and with pride.

**MR J.J.M. BOWLER (Kalgoorlie)** [11.13 am] — by leave: I want first of all to congratulate the committee for this investigation and its recommendations. In particular, I want to congratulate the member for Pilbara. I understand it was at his behest that this investigation took place. I have some knowledge that it was the member for Pilbara, who was then a minister, who really caused the fund and support for this project to happen in the first place. Obviously, he has carried through that commitment to it. In fact, it was only days after the statues had been put in place that the then minister and I, and a few others from the Perth International Arts Festival, visited the statues for the first time. I am no great art lover. As a Kalgoorlie boy, I know there are not too many art lovers in our neck of the woods. I was going there just to be a part of it and to help the member for Pilbara and his entourage get there and get back again. But I was most impressed. If anyone who goes there is not impressed,

I do not know why. The statues and the location go together. If the same statues were in Kings Park, they would be meaningless. If any other statues were put on Lake Ballard, they would be meaningless. The two go together like pepper and salt. It is just a unique experience and a wonderful attraction for our part of the world.

The day we visited was, as I say, only days after the statues had been unveiled and the location made public. I do not know whether the member for Pilbara recalls, but seven French students were walking around the lake. We asked how they found out about it. They said that as soon as they knew that Antony Gormley had his latest work there, they went there. They were visiting Perth. They drove all the way from Perth to Menzies. They were on the lake at sun-up. We got off the lake and a four-wheel drive pulled up with two women in it. We found out later that they were from Adelaide. I reckon they were in their mid to late 70s—very young, as we get older! They had driven all the way from Adelaide. We asked whether they were just passing through and travelling around Western Australia. They said that they had hired the four-wheel drive they had driven from Adelaide to go to Lake Ballard. They said that they would be there that day and night and were then going back to Adelaide. That sort of story now happens every week. People from all over the world travel to Menzies.

I will relate very quickly a little story about the type of location and the type of international visitors we get. David Kennedy, who is still the manager of the ABC in the goldfields, recalls how two Coolgardie women met two American servicemen during the Second World War and moved to America. The four of them kept up their links with the goldfields. They all became very interested in the arts. When they found out that Antony Gormley had a statue in their home region, three of them came back. One of the husbands had passed away. They were staying at David Kennedy's on their way to Menzies. David told them that they would be a bit late getting into Menzies and so they had better phone Menzies Hotel to see whether the dining room would still be open when they got there. The dining room at the Menzies Hotel is not too salubrious; I do not know whether one could call it a dining room. David told them to phone Menzies Hotel and tell the staff they would be a bit late, because they might have to pre-order the food. One of them phoned and spoke to the barman, who was probably also the chef and the maître d'hotel, and he said that there was a pretty simple menu—either fish and chips or mixed grill. The American put his hand over the mouthpiece of the phone and asked what was a mixed grill. David explained what a mixed grill was. The American said that it sounded good to him, so they ordered three mixed grills. They went to Menzies for the weekend and loved it. They were most enthusiastic about the whole thing and thought that it was Antony Gormley's best work. When they got back to David Kennedy's place, he asked them, by the way, what they thought of the mixed grill. The American said that the hotel had run out of the mixed grill and that they had to have fish and chips. That is the sort of treatment international guests get, but I think it adds to the allure of that region!

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Treat them mean; keep them keen!

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** They have added chicken kiev to the menu as a note of sophistication.

**Mr J.J.M. BOWLER:** Chicken kiev has been added to the menu, has it?

**Mr P.B. Watson:** Is it true that you were a model for one of the statues?

**Mr J.J.M. BOWLER:** No, I was not. The wonderful thing is that Ian Tucker, who is an Aboriginal leader in Menzies, knows which statue is his. Half the statues that were modelled for were built. He knows which of the statues represent his family members, and he knows which ones were not built. It would be wonderful if the other 51 statues were built one day.

I commend the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee for the investigation. One of the problems that the committee, and all of us, will have is that the artwork's isolation makes it what it is, but it also will cause the most problems down the track. The trick will be to get the balance between maintaining that special sense of space that the statues and location give and not jeopardising and protecting the statues while providing some amenities and facilities for visitors. From what I have heard of the recommendations, I think they are right on the mark. I hope that the government carries them through.