

**Submission
No 139**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Name: Ms Jane Burns
Date received: 26 August 2016

Inquiry into Museums and Galleries – General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4

My background is as a senior arts administrator with particular knowledge and interest in contemporary studio craft and design in Australia and internationally.

I wish to address three items of the Terms of Reference, namely **(d), (e), and (f)**.

(d) Access

I would like answers to three pertinent questions in regard to access and the Powerhouse Collection

1. Has thought been given seriously to the reason for the coincidence of build up over time of so many art and design schools, and including the University of Technology, convenient to the Ultimo site Collections of The Powerhouse. Obviously there is a connection.
2. The proposed move to Parramatta leaves obvious short term and long term disruption to audience access to the Powerhouse Collections. The so-called Discovery Centre at Castle Hill is inappropriate as any kind of substitute.
3. Has sufficient consideration been given to the severing of the build up – local, national, international, in the proposed dislocation of The Powerhouse Museum from its Ultimo site. A current example is the current showing at the National Museum in Canberra of the British Museum Exhibition “The History of the World in 100 Objects” and the comparison with the 2006 Powerhouse Exhibition *Inspired! Design Across Time* which was summarily closed. Perfect for exchange but now not possible because of Powerhouse disruptions. How can ‘over 100 years of making in Australia and internationally’ which this dynamic exhibition provided not be given the same access as The British Museum exhibition?

(e) Sale of The Powerhouse Site

Detailed chronology from May 2014 to April 2016 prepared by Museum specialist Kylie Winkworth and giving all pertinent links shows the illogicality of the trajectory the government seems determined to follow in its decision re Parramatta. How can the questions raised in this Chronology not be heeded and answered. Can the government be so unaware of the opprobrium building against it on the Powerhouse decision? Why?

(f) Transparency

The NSW and Federal government politicians I have sought answers from concerning background to decisions on the Powerhouse and Parramatta have been The Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, Member for Wentworth and Bruce Notley Smith, Member for Coogee. The latter has been most helpful in referring me on to the Premiers Department. The answers I have had from Andrew Gee, Parliamentary Secretary, and the Hon. Catherine Cusack, have been frankly useless in that they repeat the government mantra that Western Sydney needs a Museum. Referral of my presentations to Mr. Troy Grant, Minister for The Arts in NSW, have been unsuccessful to date.

This leaves me with the distinct impression that the answers to the four questions I have posed are not available. These are:

1. What is the ‘expert’ advice on the proposed move
2. How much is required to cover all costs
3. What actually is the site – other than the flood prone abandoned David Jones car park
4. Why can Parramatta not have a Museum which reflects its needs rather than having the Powerhouse needs imposed on it

I look forward eagerly to clarification by the General Purpose Standing Committee No.4 to all of the above questions in its report on 24th November 2016-08-08

Jane Burns AM