

**Supplementary
Submission
No 142c**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Name: Ms Jennifer Sanders

Date received: 19 August 2016

The Hon Robert Borsak MLC
Committee Chair,
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4,
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Sydney NSW 2000

Upper House Inquiry into museums and galleries No. 4

Submission no 4 from Jennifer Sanders, August 2016

Terms of reference: 1c), 1d), 1e) and 1f).

Summary

The proposal to move the Powerhouse Museum from its historic site in Ultimo where it has been since 1893 to a flood prone riverside site in Parramatta will lead to the unprecedented and unwarranted destruction of one of Australia's, indeed the world's leading museums. Billed as 'a once in a generation opportunity' to create a 'fit for purpose museum for the 21st century' – a 'cultural beacon' for Parramatta, the move seems to be little more than a real estate opportunity arising out of the Powerhouse's prime location adjacent to Darling Harbour.

Referencing the rhetoric, the Powerhouse Museum is the acclaimed result of the 'once in 3 generations' renaissance of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences which had been in its 'built for purpose' home, the Technological Museum (as it was in 1893) for nigh on 92 years. The Museum moved a mere 200 metres or so to the magnificent, inspiring vaulted spaces of the Ultimo Power House and the extensive Ultimo Tram Shed. Both buildings had been significant to our transport history and both were transformed over 10 years into a 'perfect for purpose' contemporary museum, perfectly located for visitors to Sydney and one of Darling Harbour's leading tourist attractions.

Now, 28 years on, the Powerhouse is an acknowledged leader in the creative and education precinct, benefiting from the Goods Line walkway and light rail with burgeoning visitor numbers and poised to consolidate as a major attraction for a renewed Darling Harbour with its projection of 40million visitors pa.

As the **Discussion paper** below outlines, there is a well-tested and successful model for a city's major cultural institutions to extend their reach and engagement geographically while maintaining and enhancing their place in the centre of the city as a major cultural element.

This model of leading cultural institutions opening satellites in collaboration with the new location's communities is one that can readily be explored and implemented to achieve the Premier's desire for 'a cultural beacon'. Not only does the Powerhouse Museum have the collections, scholarship and history to expand in this way, so too do the Australian Museum and the Art Gallery of New South Wales. And Parramatta is not the only locale that is deserving of new cultural development. A number of other locations across New South Wales deserve consideration – regions which would benefit from collaboration with a city-based institution to present their stories and collections to a wider audience. Such models are a boost to cultural tourism - the depth of experience which major institutions bring to such projects helps to develop local capabilities and expertise and, brings skills in presentation and interpretation to enhance the partner museum.

Discussion Paper: MOVING MUSEUMS: A BRIEF SURVEY

Jennifer Sanders April 2016
updated August 2016

When you research 'museums that have been relocated' and 'museums that are being moved' the results are:

- Almost all references to a large museum being relocated are for the Powerhouse Museum and the Premier's plan to move it to Parramatta. Lots of media about arguments for and against, and Government announcements about their plan.
- Until recently, the only other museum that turned up, large or small, was the Worldwide Arms Museum, a private museum in Vung Tao that is being moved by its owner to a more central site, close to the 'major' museums in Vung Tao. It has several favourable reviews on tripadvisor.
- Then in May, articles appeared about the move of the Museum of London to the historic Smithfield General Market. The move from its landlocked home within the Barbican is to improve visitor access and give the museum the room to expand in the historic market buildings. Unlike the Powerhouse to Parramatta proposal, the Museum of London move keeps it within its historic precinct as its new home will be only a couple of blocks away – just as the Powerhouse moved in 1988 to its new expanded and fit for purpose home

When you research 'art galleries that have been relocated', the examples found are projects where the institution has moved to larger, more centrally located sites/buildings such as:

- National Gallery of Art Toronto moved from smaller, unsuitable buildings to a central larger site and new building in 1988.
- The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York moved in May 2015 to a new Renzo Piano designed building on the High Line which 'vastly increases the Museum's exhibition and programming space' in Downtown NY. The Whitney is still in Manhattan and its former Marcel Breuer designed building in the Upper East Side has become a branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for their program of contemporary art exhibitions.
- Still in NY, the Museum of Arts and Design evolved from the American Crafts Museum and in 2008 moved a short distance from opposite MoMA to 2 Columbus Circle to a building with larger, more flexible spaces and a much higher visibility fronting a significant public space.
- And in LA, the Getty moved into Los Angeles, so it could build a much larger, more easily accessible museum and cultural centre. It has of course kept its original building, the Getty Villa in Malibu, where it exhibits its antiquities collection.

The Cite des Sciences et L'Industrie in Paris wasn't a relocation but a new initiative to build a dedicated science experience centre for Paris. The Musee des Arts et des Metiers, which has one of the world's best science and technology collections, remains in the former priory building in which it was founded in 1794. The Cite des Sciences was part of a larger scheme to renew the former abattoir building and surrounds at La Villette . The music museum, La Cite de la Musique, was also a key element in this project. It is now renamed as part of the new Philharmonie de Paris concert hall which opened in 2015. The Cite des Sciences has been a success - not sure about the music museum though the new concert hall is a draw.

Satellites and branches

The accepted and proven successful model for energising urban areas/smaller cities by involving key cultural institutions is to have satellites of the main institution strategically developed in locations where there is a recognised 'fit' - a reason to be there - ie the community/ location and the museum's purpose/collection can work together.

Classic examples are the Tate in the UK with its satellite galleries in Margate – Turner Contemporary next to the historic harbour), Tate Liverpool, Tate St Ives, (including the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, and Bankside, the former Bankside Power Station now the Tate Modern – its halls 'fit for purpose' for the display of massive sculpture and other contemporary artworks.

Also in in the UK, the Science Museum has a series of campuses: the National Railway Museum, York; National Media Museum, Bradford; and Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester.

And underway is the initiative by Boris Johnson, when Mayor of London, to energise and develop the London Olympics site - Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park - as a new cultural and education quarter by involving the Victoria and Albert Museum, Sadler's Wells ballet company, the University of Arts, London and University College London.

The V&A vision for its Olympics satellite, V&A East, will complement the 'parent' V&A at South Kensington with more collection on show in exhibitions, more collection and archives accessible in visible storage; dedicated space to display and document digital design, major temporary exhibition spaces and studios for practitioners. The Smithsonian Institution has announced that it will collaborate with the V&A to present a changing program of exhibitions at the V&A East.

The British Museum has also expressed interest in opening a satellite at the East London Heritage and Cultural Quarter as it is now known so as to be part of the regeneration project and, display more of its collection to wider audiences. London's new mayor, Sadiq Khan has announced that he is determined to press ahead with developing a cultural hub on the Olympic site in Stratford and that he welcomed recent news of the involvement of the Smithsonian and the V&A. (The Art Newspaper 18 August 2016)

In Scotland, the V&A is opening the V&A Museum of Design Dundee – an international centre for design for Scotland being built as part of a wider initiative to revitalise Dundee and its waterfront through design led programming and initiatives fostering tourism and business growth. The V&A London remains the core institution as these locally supported satellites broaden the museum's influence and audiences.

Closer to home, Museum Victoria encompasses Melbourne Museum centrally located in Carlton Gardens next to the Royal Exhibition Building; Scienceworks at Spotswood incorporating the historic Pumping Station and Melbourne Planetarium; and the Immigration Museum in the former Customs House.

In Western Australia, the West Australian Museum has an extensive network of branch museums – two in Fremantle, and one each in Albany, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie-Boulder. Located since its founding in the heart of Perth Cultural Centre, the museum is about to embark on a significant redevelopment of its historic home. The new design links contemporary architecture with the museum's historic and heritage listed buildings as part of landmark project to revitalise both the museum and the precinct.

Home grown

The second, time honoured way to build culture is to work from the ground up so to speak, involving the local community in the founding and development of the gallery/museum so that it best reflects their history and contemporary culture and, their aspirations.

There are many examples of successful community cultural development such as Bendigo City Art Gallery - a thriving, locally enriched institution but with an interstate and international reach. Closer to home are Campbelltown City Art Gallery, the Penrith Regional Gallery and the Lewers Bequest at Emu Plains, Casula Powerhouse and Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre at Sutherland - a brilliant regional gallery that reaches a wider than local audience through exciting programming, excellent partnerships and wonderful surrounds.

One of the outstanding examples of a locally grown and nurtured cultural institution is Brooklyn Museum founded in 1823. Throughout its history it has aspired to be one of the leading museums in America and it now has one of the best collections in USA with art and artefacts from across the world. Housed in an imposing 1897 building by McKim Mead and White, which was revitalised in the late 20thc, it was conceived to be the focal point of Brooklyn's main cultural, recreational and educational districts. Today it is a major drawcard bringing visitors across from Manhattan and beyond.

The Premier's desire to build a 'cultural beacon' in Parramatta is laudable. However, as all these and many other examples demonstrate, this can be achieved without the relocation and demolition of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo. A museum is strengthened by the depth and breadth of its audiences and its benefactors and is sustained by the permanency of its presence in the community.

Recommendations

There are proven international and national models of museums and galleries successfully reaching wider audiences and flourishing in new locations by opening satellites in collaboration with local communities to enhance and promote the cultural dimensions and aspirations of the locale and its people.

The model of major museums developing satellites in collaboration with regions should be adopted as the model for building a 'cultural beacon' in Parramatta if the imperative is to involve a major state cultural institution(s) in the cultural development in Parramatta/Western Sydney.

The second proven model for cultural development, the locally founded, grown and nurtured institution, developed in collaboration with local communities so that it reflects their history, experiences and aspirations should be investigated if the intent is to build a 'cultural beacon' that is wholly distinctive to Parramatta and Western Sydney.

Jennifer Sanders

I am happy for my submission to be published with my name.

I am happy to appear as a witness at the Inquiry.

Brief Resume: Jennifer Sanders BA Hons Anthropology, USyd

Jennifer Sanders had a long and distinguished career at the Powerhouse Museum where she was Deputy Director, Collections, Content Development and Outreach from 2001 to February 2009. Appointed to the Powerhouse in 1978, Jennifer was a curator then senior curator, decorative arts and design for a decade.

A key member of the team for the Powerhouse redevelopment, in 1988 Ms Sanders was appointed Assistant Director Collections responsible for the Museum's curatorial, registration, preservation and regional NSW outreach programs and, for several years, exhibitions, education, publications and library services as well. In 2001 Ms Sanders was given responsibility for the NSW Migration Heritage Centre and later also Sydney Observatory and the Powerhouse Discovery Centre. Ms Sanders regularly deputised for the Museum's Director.

From 1999 to 2008 Ms Sanders was a member of the National Cultural Heritage Committee and, in 2001 she was a member of the NSW Centenary of Federation Committee (archiving, cataloguing, and preservation of historical materials). From 2007 to 2012, Ms Sanders was a member of the External Advisory Panel, Design Research Institute, RMIT University, Melbourne and Chair, Design Archives Advisory Panel, RMIT University.

From 2009, Ms Sanders has undertaken range of heritage, museum and curatorial consultancies.

1981 Churchill Fellowship: public access to museum collections, North America and Europe

1987 Museum Management Institute, Berkeley, CA, USA. Getty Leadership Institute.

In 2003 Jennifer was awarded a Centenary of Federation Medal.

August 2016