

**Supplementary
Submission
No 103a**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Name: Ms Anne Schofield

Date received: 19 September 2016

Submission to the Upper House Enquiry into Museums and Galleries

Summary

- 1 - My historical relationship with the Powerhouse Museum
- 2 - My contribution as donor, pro bono valuer and consultant
- 3 - Responses from other donors and benefactors
- 4 - Criticism of funding cuts
- 5 - Criticism of consultation and decision making process
- 6 - My personal approval of cultural centre and museum in Parramatta

General Purpose Standing Committee

N.B. item e) should read the *proposed* sale of the Powerhouse Museum

I strongly object to the NSW State Govt's proposal to demolish the Powerhouse Museum for 'urban renewal' and to relocate it to Parramatta

1 - I have been involved in the Powerhouse Museum since it's opening in 1980. My then husband was a key lobbyist in helping to persuade the NSW Government to recycle the old Powerhouse Building and create a new Museum to house the collections of the old Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Having lived in London in the 1960's for four years and having made many visits to the V&A and British Museum in London and the Musee des Arts Decoratifs in Paris and Museums in Vienna and Italy, I had gained an international perspective on what I expected of a Museum in Sydney.

2 - I understand that Museums rely on the generosity of collectors to build world class collections and over thirty six years I have been an enthusiastic supporter, pro bono consultant and valuer, and donor of antique jewellery, costume, dolls and toys under the Cultural Gifts Program. I did this to help improve the museum's holdings in these areas of the decorative arts for the ultimate benefit of the Sydney community. I was appointed an Honorary Associate of the Powerhouse Museum in 1983 and a Life Fellow in 2001. In 1990 I collaborated with another Powerhouse Life Fellow, Kevin Fahy, to publish the first reference book on the subject of Australian Jewellery – *Australian Jewellery 19th and early 20th century*, published by David Ell Press Pty.Ltd.

In 2003 I was awarded an A.M. for my volunteer work with the Powerhouse Museum and also the repurposing of another heritage building, the Hickson Road Wharf 4-5, home of the Sydney Theatre Company, both of which have been resounding success stories.

3 - Many items in the Powerhouse's collections have been donated by generous individuals who, like me, are outraged at the prospect of moving those items to Parramatta. The announcement of the proposed relocation was met with disquiet among antique dealers and collectors – amongst potential donors who are saying they will redirect their benefaction to other interstate cultural institutions. Had they known their gifts would be relocated, they would not have made them, as the sheer distance from the CBD would severely limit access to these culturally significant items, especially for our city's visitors.

Many interstate and international tourists with limited time to spend in Sydney would not be prepared to travel to Parramatta to visit a major exhibition of Design and Decorative Arts.

4 - I am aware of severe funding cuts in curatorial staff and the education department at MAAS and find this extremely short-sighted. A museum is only as good as its Director, its expert Curators and its Collections.

5 - I am appalled by the lack of transparency and depth in the consultation and decision making process. That the Director of one Arts Institution, the MCA, was appointed to provide advice and make decisions on the sale of another cultural institution is an example of a serious conflict of interest. The recent appointment of Mr Barney Glover as Chairman of the Board of the MAAS is another !

6 - I agree there should be a cultural centre and museum in Parramatta – however such a museum should grow out of the Western Sydney Community itself to reflect the great historical significance of the area and the cultural diversity of its peoples today.

I urge you to leave the Powerhouse in Sydney. Its collection is large enough to be shared with other 'satellite' museums and this should be the preferred model.

Anne Schofield A.M.

Honorary Associate and Life Fellow of the Powerhouse Museum

Attached - C.V. publications etc