

**Submission
No 68**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

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Date received: 1 August 2016

Future of the Powerhouse Museum The following points are not made in any order of importance:

1) Sharing museum holdings and exhibitions:.. Most museums hold more material than can be exhibited. The best solution, adopted by major museums around the world, is to establish branches so that resources and exhibitions can travel around the city and state,,country and even travel internationally. .

2) Location of the main museum and its branches. There is no doubt that Parramatta and the western suburbs are under resourced culturally and that this needs to be addressed. Whether the main branch of the Powerhouse museums should be in the west or in the city needs to be carefully thought through. There is however at the very least a continuing need for a branch of the museum in the city, There are excellent reasons for retaining the Powerhouse as the site for such a branch.

a) Access: There is better access via Central station from many parts of the city and state to the current location than to Parramatta..

b) Tourists and international business visitors are attracted to the current site because of its location within the main business and tourism area, and will be attracted in greater numbers when the Darling Harbour renovation is complete. They would only visit a Parramatta site if an exhibition there held particular interest.

c) Sydney's industrial heritage: The current building is of considerable historical and architectural interest and value. It would be worse than ironic if the current magnificent example of Victorian brickwork and industrial design should be pulled down when it is within metres of a very different but equally magnificent example of 21st Century brickwork and institutional design. Both are accessible from the recently constructed 'high line' walk way from Central. The destruction of the Powerhouse building should be seen as cultural vandalism.

3) Cost to the tax payer: I understand a thorough review of the financial implications of moving the Museum is underway. It is essential that this review includes the relatively recent cost of adapting the building to its current function as a museum. If the building is destroyed these costs, at current values, need to be added to the calculations.

4) The alienation/sale of public land and facilities: There is no question that the residential and working populations of the city have increased and are planned to continue to increase exponentially. The need is for more social infrastructure not less. If the current use of the powerhouse is considered inappropriate, the first consideration should be given to alternative uses for the community. The sale of this public asset to developers for short term gain should be the last and surely desperate option. But were is the need for such desperation?

5) The need in the city for the development of more blocks of flats, which i understand is the purpose of the sale: The need for residential and commercial property in the city is clear, given projections for the population, However, given the current rate of such development and the potential for future expansion throughout the Bays Precinct and along the Central to Eveleigh corridor, there is surely no justification for the NSW Govt to subsidise a developer's construction of one block of flats on this particular site through the alienation of public land, the destruction of industrial heritage, and the loss to the public purse that the financial review seems likely to reveal.

6) Western Sydney's cultural deficit needs to be addressed. seriously. The value and purposes of publicly owned land and facilities in the city also need to be addressed seriously. The current proposal for the Powerhouse Museum does neither.