

**Submission
No 97**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Name: Ms Marina Garlick

Date received: 12 August 2016

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Submission by Marina Garlick re Terms of reference 1d) and e).

The Baird government has demonstrated a significant disregard for the express wishes of the residents of NSW on a range of issues. This is particularly evident in its stubborn insistence on moving the Powerhouse Museum (PHM) from Ultimo to Parramatta against all factual evidence, expert opinion and massive protests. The rationale given for this of providing cultural facilities in Western Sydney is spurious and the real motive appears to be financial gain from the sale of the Ultimo site.

The Powerhouse Museum has been in Ultimo under various names since 1893 and comprises a complex of heritage buildings viz. the Harwood Building, the Ultimo Post Office and the award winning conversion of the Ultimo Powerhouse for which it is named. Any demolition of these would be well nigh criminal.

The PHM holds an incredible variety of collections and only some 5% is actually on display in Ultimo. The remaining 95% is in the Discovery Centre at Castle Hill which is accessible to the public. Significant among the items on display at Ultimo are the steam trains, aeroplanes the rare Boulton and Watts engine and the exquisite Strasburg Clock. The PHM also holds a priceless decorative arts collection from Australia and other countries, both contemporary and historic. In the recent splendid jewellery exhibition, "A Fine Possession", of the ca 700 items on show, some 50% came from the PHM collections. There are many other significant areas of the collections. In addition, the newly opened "Goods Line" provides easy access to the PHM from Central Station for local, interstate and overseas visitors. It would be totally inappropriate for this to end in a developer's apartment block.

I would make the following points:

1. There has been no survey of the cultural needs of Western Sydney. A group of residents has expressed a wish for a museum of the history of Parramatta and District. Another proposal is for a multi purpose facility that could house exhibitions from the Art Gallery, the Australian Museum, the MCA, the Powerhouse etc. There has been no express wish for a Powerhouse type museum.
2. The sale of the Ultimo site is estimated to yield \$150-200 million.
3. Estimated cost of a new museum at Parramatta is at least \$600 million (and it is supposed to be 40% bigger than the PHM). There is therefore a shortfall of at least \$400 million.
4. The cost of moving the "big things" will add several million dollars to this.
5. There is a high probability that these irreplaceable items will be damaged in transit.
6. The proposed site in Parramatta is flood prone. It was inundated in the recent storms.
7. The site belongs to Parramatta Council so there will be additional costs in its acquisition.
8. The proposed Parramatta site is 1/25 the size of the current site in Ultimo.

The danger is that we will lose the Powerhouse and Western Sydney will get a substandard facility. This must not be allowed to happen.

Tel: _____ email: _____

11/8/16