

Submission
No 98

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 8 August 2016

Partially
Confidential

Dear Chair I welcome the opportunity to make this submission to the Standing Committee on Museums and Galleries. I write in reference to 1 e of the Inquiry's Terms and References. My submission relates to the sale and relocation of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo. I support the Government's plans to develop a new museum in Parramatta. I have long thought that Parramatta should have a major cultural institution, preferably one that works as a museum of NSW history complementing significant sites such as Old Government House and Elizabeth Farm. A history museum of this sort could also work alongside a contemporary arts space/venue that would showcase the best of Australian and contemporary art. Such a museum would best reflect Parramatta's own past and present cultural significance. I do not support the sale of the Powerhouse Museum to fund a new museum in Parramatta. The Powerhouse Museum has a connection to its site in Ultimo that stretches back to the 1880s. It is one of Sydney's oldest museums and has a rich and diverse collection that is uniquely connected to its site. For example, the world famous shoe collection was acquired in the early 1900s for the edification of the neighbouring TAFE students. The Museum's extensive fashion collection is used for research by the many students from Sydney's fashion schools located in the inner city. The repurposed Ultimo Power Station building is ideal for the housing of the Museum's transport collection. The Powerhouse Museum is valued by many Sydneysiders. It is listed on the National Trust register and as a local heritage item in the City of Sydney. When it opened in 1988 it won the Sulman Award for architecture. It was a glamorous and exciting museum to visit with exhibitions that were interesting and accessible. The site is easy to access given its proximity to the CBD, Darling Harbour, Central and the new goods line. While I have been disappointed to see it under perform in recent years, I strongly believe it could once again be a great museum if properly supported. It is impossible to relocate the Powerhouse Museum as it is. The sale of the site will only pay for a smaller museum in Parramatta. Furthermore, it is sickening to think of the waste of money. The state government has invested millions of dollars in the Powerhouse and it will go to waste if they try and move it. The proposal lacks rational thought and needs a rethink. A better solution would be to build a new museum in Parramatta, perhaps as a partner to the Powerhouse in Ultimo, the Australian Museum and the Art Gallery of NSW. The demolition of the Powerhouse at Ultimo would be a shameless waste that will be regretted by future generations of Australians. Thank you for considering my submission.