

**Submission
No 137**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

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This submission addresses the following terms of reference:

- d) access to the collections of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Australian Museum and any other state collections held in trust for the people of New South Wales, and programs that promote physical and online access
- e) the sale of the Powerhouse Museum site in Ultimo and its proposed move to Parramatta, and whether there are alternative strategies to support museum development

Submission

Another submission deals with the need to retain the Powerhouse buildings per se. They are not fibro shacks that can be quickly bulldozed, but are beautifully built and must be preserved because of their quality and unique heritage value.

But an institution such as a museum is more than just buildings. This submission deals with the total picture and demonstrates that the total operation must be preserved, that if it is moved from the present site its qualities will be severely diminished, and further, that the costing of the whole process is irrational. The submission is based on a booklet, 'Heritage of the Powerhouse Museum', which arises from the input of many people with experience and qualifications in a wide range of relevant endeavours. All statements are factual: references are provided at <http://lockoweb.com/phm/booklet2/book2%20refs.htm> The document is appended in .pdf form and is online at <http://lockoweb.com/heritagephm/bulletins/heritage2a4completef.pdf> .

The basic points are as follow:

1. The museum is of world standard: this is enhanced because of the qualities of the building. It is the most significant arts and sciences museum in Australia. Because of its national importance, it is more important to have it in a position that is easily accessible to the state, the nation and international visitors than to have it in the population centre of Sydney. Its present site is ideal. In modern society, the synthesis of arts and sciences is essential to agile innovation, and the museum is well-placed to meet this need.
2. As well as being a great example of building skills the buildings remind us of the incredible feat of the construction of this, Australia's first major power station, and the establishment of the tram line and tram service in a mere 25 months.
3. The museum is successor to a long process of development notably involving the nearby Technological Museum, making many scientific, technological and artistic advances.
4. The museum is traditional home of many iconic exhibits, many with local relevance which will be lost in a relocation. Parramatta has its own proud history and deserves its own museum to reflect this.
5. The museum, both in terms of its 1988 buildings and as a symbol of Australia's cultural development, is a powerful marker of Australia's bicentenary. Many of the other buildings of the Darling Harbour precinct which marked the bicentenary have been demolished but this brilliant building conversion must be retained.
6. To trash such a remarkable cultural icon in its highly significant building is an act of barbarism that is unprecedented throughout the civilized peacetime world and would seriously damage our reputation as a cultured country.
7. The museum has an amazing human story. It also engenders great affection among many people because of its manifold qualities. If, despite all the facts that indicate that the museum should not be moved, the government goes ahead with its plans it must expect vigorous resistance and possibly direct action.
8. The project does not even have any economic benefit to the state. The bare site will not realise more than \$250 million. It will cost about that much to demolish the buildings and to transfer the exhibits to Parramatta. In the process, the existing building (worth about \$450 million) will be destroyed and to erect a new building of reasonable standard on the proposed Parramatta site will cost at least this amount. If the Powerhouse museum is retained, Parramatta can still have the museum it deserves and over half a billion dollars will be saved.

The idea of constructing a new museum at Parramatta has the full support of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance. It makes sense to establish a new facility, in the population centre of Sydney, to showcase modern Sydney's culture. It makes no sense at all to destroy the Powerhouse in the process.

The government has stated that regardless of the outcome of the coming Legislative Council inquiry, the 'move' will occur. This is a denial of due process that will be vigorously opposed.

Tom Lockley, 10 August 2016