

Submission  
No 126

## INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

## Submission to the Inquiry into museums and galleries

Response to point c) The public want access to lively, informative and innovative displays and events in museums. Remedies to current shortcomings in museums could be realised through

1. the employment of more EXPERTS whose knowledge can be applied to the development of collections and temporary exhibitions.
2. Detailed WEB RECORDS, including photos, of all collections
3. Easy ACCESS to collections not on show, by appointment with relevant staff.
4. The harnessing of local support through FACILITATING local groups' USE of the museum, including after hours, for FREE (not for corporate rates).
5. A network of small 'kunsthalle' that could utilise the large collections of the Powerhouse, Australian Museum, and Art Gallery of NSW to provide challenging exhibitions for a wide range of audiences.
6. Public collections could be re-organised into new specialist museums, eg, an Asian museum drawing on all public collections and also housed in the CBD, eg the Attorney-General's building near the Barracks. Or even a Decorative Arts and Design Museum.
6. The training of expert staff to engage with the public through web, media and event appearances, and to research and publish on collections.

Response to point e): The Powerhouse provides a vital function from its current base in Ultimo. It is easily accessible to the people of Sydney and visitors to Sydney. To move the whole museum to Parramatta would destroy the important cultural and historical significance of the Powerhouse. I would recommend that at the very minimum the main turbine hall be kept (it would be wasteful of taxpayer funds to move the steam engine and other exhibits which cost millions to install). Possibly the Harwood building could be sold, but certainly it is widely felt that the Powerhouse must retain a substantial presence on its current site.. There could be negotiation for those parts of its collection that Parramatta wants in its new museum building, even temporarily.

State collections need expert input to galvanise support through rewarding displays. Strategies for museum development are outlined in the response to c) above.

Response to point h). People come to major quality exhibitions. Museums should be working on 'ground breaking' exhibitions (even 5 years ahead) that attract not only people of this State, but also people from around Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. More attention needs to be given to loans, whether for large exhibitions or smaller displays, from the museums of Asia. Australian museum staff could be encouraged (through financially assisted secondment) to work in museums of our Asian region (as is happening at M+ Hong Kong, and the National Art Gallery of Singapore where Australians are employed). This would result in co-operative understanding of mutual benefit, and opportunities for exciting exhibitions and events.