Submission No 167

## INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

**Organisation**: Powerhouse Museum Alliance

**Date received**: 19 August 2016

## Powerhouse and Parramatta: 360 published opinions

Grace Cochrane AM, August 2016

## **Standing Committee 4: Museums and Galleries**

#### Terms of reference:

- d) access to the collections of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, [...] and programs that promote physical and online access
- e) The sale of the Powerhouse Museum site in Ultimo and its proposed move to Parramatta; whether there are alternative strategies to support museum development.

### Point of view:

I am an independent curator, writer, consultant and educator in the field of decorative arts, crafts and design. I have worked in this field for over 40 years, nearly 20 of them from 1988-2005 at the Powerhouse Museum as a former senior curator (CV supplied separately).

This is submitted on behalf of the working group, The Powerhouse Museum Alliance.

### **Submission:**

In early 2016, a group identified as The Powerhouse Museum Alliance formed, and set up a website: https://powerhousemuseumalliance.com/ describing itself as:

The Powerhouse Museum Alliance is a group of concerned citizens working to save the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo. The Alliance includes longstanding benefactors of the museum, former trustees, design and heritage experts and senior museum professionals.

The PMA strongly supports the development of a new museum in Parramatta. We ask the government to develop a coherent museum plan for NSW for the 21st century, underpinned by principles of equity and access to collections, and addressing glaring omissions in the profile of museums in NSW.

The website provides a news chronology of events associated with the proposal to move Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta, and a continuing archive of papers considering the obscure decision-making process, lack of consultation, faulty costing, lack of consideration for heritage aspects and ignorance of audience needs and preferences, in the context of both other options for Western Sydney, and for the Museum in Ultimo.

On 17 February, 2016, the Alliance published an Open Letter with 178 signatures of leading members of arts and business communities, in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/dont-destroy-the-powerhouse-businessmen-and-prominent-people-tell-nsw-government-20160217-gmwgrc.html Since that time, a further 181 signatures and comments were added, from a range of informed and experienced people from NSW, other Australian states and overseas. The letter said:

## An open letter from the Powerhouse Museum Alliance:

We join thousands of people from Sydney and beyond in urging the NSW Government to reconsider its plan to relocate the Powerhouse Museum from the heart of Sydney to Western Sydney.

For 122 years the citizens of our great city have found entertainment, enlightenment and education at this iconic institution in Harris Street, Ultimo. Its vast holdings embrace science, technology, social history and an encyclopaedic collection of decorative arts and design, making it a cultural institution unique in Australia.

The Ultimo Power House was brilliantly repurposed just 30 years ago as a world class museum. Since it opened in 1988 the museum building and its exhibitions have won numerous awards. The project was a major investment for the people of New South Wales That investment will be squandered if the museum's site is sold to developers.

The Powerhouse Museum is a vital part of the Ultimo education and innovation precinct. The new Goods Line walkway, light rail, and existing public transport ensure that the museum is easily accessed by visitors to Darling Harbour and the city.

We support the creation of a distinctive 'cultural beacon' in Parramatta, but to transport a pared-back, small scale Powerhouse would be folly.

Western Sydney deserves better – a unique institution shaped by community consultation, one that reflects the history, achievements and cultural diversity of the region and the aspirations of its people.

Nowhere else in the world are governments moving major museums away from the heart of their cities. Instead they are building satellite museums to display the collections of their great museums. The Powerhouse has the collections with which to create an original, exciting new museum for Western Sydney without abandoning its historic home.

Over ten thousand people have signed a petition which will bring this matter before the Parliament this month. Contact your Member of Parliament and add your voice to the growing movement to save the Powerhouse Museum and seek a visionary new cultural centre for Western Sydney.

> Tina and Maurice Green The Australian Ceramics Association (TACA) Ausglass
> Australian Society for History
> of Engineering & Technology
> Design Institute of Australia
> (DIA) Christina Sumner OAM John Swanton Ury and Dianne Szewcow Prof Frank Talbot AM Jonn Huwans
> Sue Hewitt
> Jill Hickson AM
> Ken & Lillian Horler
> Prof Ian Howard
> David Hill
> Linda Jackson
> Judy Jacovides
> Gunt Tawelman Bernice Murphy Sally & Jock Murray Dr Brian Nankivell ood Design Australia Andrew Tighe Jack Thompson AM Migration Heritage Project Illawarra The National Association of Visual Arts (NAVA) Jonica Newby Marc Newson CBE David Toohey Dr Grace Cochrane AM Sacha Coles Nancy Underhill Richard Utz Henric & Min Nicholas Judy Jacovides
> Gmnt Jagelman
> Mank Johnson AO
> Tricia Kwannagh
> Anne Keating
> Brian Keirnan
> Jemy Kee
> Kim Kilson
> Treor Kemady AM
> Ross & Irene Langlands
> Geoffrey Lehmann
> Damai Lesers AM r is unit Arts (NAVA)
>
> The Society of Arts & Crafts
> of NSW
>
> Port Macquarie
> Historical Society Hartley Cook Les Owen Brian Walsh Roslyn Oxley OAM Geoff Cousins AM Richard & Sue Walsh Tony Oxley Anne Warr Eva Cox AO Dr David Curtis Dr Nicholas Pappas AM Jolyon Warwick Jame Leon Paroissien AM Stephen Curtis Robert Darroch Jilly Pascoe Dr Anne Wats Timothy Pascoe AM Len Amadio Andrew Andersons AO Peter Watts AM Peter Watts AM
> Emeritus Prof Peter Webber
> Anthony Whealy QC
> John White
> David Williams AM
> Mary-Louise
> Williams AM Suzanne Davies Ian & Belinda Perryman Caroline Pidcock Carl Andreu Leigh Dayton Darani Lewers AM
> Helge Larsen
> Jane I Elsa Atkin AM Andrew Denton Robert Pittorino Anna Plunkett & Luke Sales Kathy Bail Michael Ball AO Geoff Dixon Trisha Dixon Michael Ball AO Marion Barker Marco Belgiorno-Zegna AM Colin Bell Robert Donohoe Brent Potts Virginia Duigan Robela Media Robon Williams AM Alan Landis George Liddle President Australian Production Designer's Guild Jenny Long Julie Lynch Emeritus Prof Richard Dunn Joe Eisenberg OAM Dr Claire Robert Bruce Beresford Jonathon Biggins Phillip Black Judith Rutherford AM Leon Sadubin Kristin William Prof Paul Fagan AM
> Warren Fahey AM
> Dr Kevin Fewster AM Tennifer Sanders Dr. Clive Lucas OBE President National Trust NSW Anne Schofield AM George Freedman John Freeland Andrew Upton
> Bill and Annette Blinco
> Brownyn Bancroft
> Les Blakebrough AM Nell, Tess & Emma Schofield Justin Macdonnell Tim McCormick Kave Schofield AO Kylie Winksworth Dr Carol Scott Graeme Wood Penelope Seidler AO
> Robyn Sharp
> Diana Simmonds Timothy & Renate Yates Dr Des Griffin AM Anne McCormick Val & Michael Gregg John McDonald

The further 181 signatures and comments that have since been added to the website are here: https://powerhousemuseumalliance.com/open-letter/
See also attached pdf: Powerhouse Museum Alliance – further signatures.

Submission No 167, Attachment 1

## INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

**Organisation**: Powerhouse Museum Alliance

**Date received**: 5 August 2016

# NSW Govt Upper House Inquiry: Museums and Galleries, 2016

Agenda: 3.0 - 3.30 September 6, 2016

## Submissions of specific relevance to the argument for not relocating the Powerhouse Museum.

These papers include support for developing a new cultural facility in Parramatta, within a strong policy for museums and galleries in NSW.

They were submitted by members of the informal lobby group, the Powerhouse Museum Alliance, with related submissions from external colleagues and organisations.

Links below refer directly to Parliament's website for this Inquiry.

## 1. Submissions: from the Powerhouse Museum Alliance

## 167: Powerhouse Museum Alliance: purpose and support

Background for this informal lobby group of professionals.

20167 Powerhouse Museum Alliance

## **Nicholas Pappas**

**113.** Abdication of statutory responsibilities by trustees and lack of inspection transparency in government processes. <u>P0113 Mr Nicholas Pappas</u>

#### **Jennifer Sanders**

**142:** Mythbusting: addressing the arguments to move the museum

**142a:** Costs and risks of moving the museum

142b: A cultural plan for the 21st century

**142c:** Moving Museums: a brief survey

**142d:** Planning for NSW's Cultural Development: a tale of two proposals

<u>▶</u>0142 Ms Jennifer Sanders;

▲0142a Ms Jennifer Sanders

△0142b Ms Jennifer Sanders

△0142c Ms Jennifer Sanders

**2**0142<u>d Ms Jennifer Sanders</u>

#### **Grace Cochrane**

**96:** Expectations of Audiences: constituents must be considered **96a:** Sustainability? Appropriate investment for sites and programs **96b:** For the Record: Briefing paper for Premier, August 2015

## **Kylie Winkworth**

**149:** Ten important issues regarding the proposed move of the Powerhouse Museum from Ultimo to Parramatta; and consideration of alternative strategies to support museum development. **20149** Ms Kylie Winkworth

## **Lindsay Sharp**

**148:** I: The Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta 'move': a critical analysis of the NSW Government's planning and costing processes: *main source document*. <u>0148 Dr Lindsay Sharp</u>

**148a**: II: The Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta 'move': a critical analysis of the NSW Government's suppressed planning and costing documentation...

## △0148a Dr Lindsay Sharp

**148b:** III: A possible alternative focused on human creativity and the creativity of western Sydney's multi-cultural Communities...

## △0148b Dr Lindsay Sharp

**148c:** IV: Widespread consultation required in the greater western Sydney region as to what kind of new cultural facility they wish to see established in Parramatta.

## **20148c Dr Lindsay Sharp**

**148d:** V: Site selection process in Parramatta. <u>P0148d Dr Lindsay Sharp</u>

**148e:** VI: Commercial aspects driving Ultimo site divestment/sale by Govt to facilitate the unaffordable, destructive and impractical concept of 'moving' the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. 

<u>P0148e Dr Lindsay Sharp</u>

**148f**: VII: Performance by Board of Trustees, dominance by Government, suboptimal project oversight, potential conflicts of personal interest, reduced access and risks to collections, misleading messaging and lack of transparency. Decline of museum's educational role; senior management project competence, appropriate design and exhibit development abilities and internal curatorial skills base.

## **2**0148f Dr Lindsay Sharp

**148g:** VIII: The new museum project in Western Australia – comparison with the 'Powerhouse Museum move' to Parramatta. 

<u>0148g Dr Lindsay Sharp</u>

**149h**: IX: Committee of Review proposal; an appraisal of the 'Powerhouse Museum move' to Parramatta project in terms of consultation, location, planning process, cost and scale. **20148h** Dr Lindsay Sharp

#### **Trevor Kennedy**

**141:** Plea to review decision, from PHM Life Fellow and benefactor.

△0141 Mr Trevor Kennedy

## 103 and 103a: Anne Schofield:

Comments from PHM Life Fellow, Honorary Associate and benefactor, on responses from donors and benefactors, criticism of funding cuts, consultation process and others.

20103a Ms Anne Schofield

## Marco Belgiorno-Zegna AM

**162:** International comparisons with proposal and no successful examples; value in satellites; inconsistency with other cultural institutions; Government's unwillingness consider any improvement in accessing the Powerhouse site from the Haymarket/Darling Harbour side, including Light Rail access; `...nothing other than an attempt by the NSW Government to curry favour with the western Sydney electorate. In pursuing this strategy the Government is merely taking a short-term view that may be in its own interests and not those of the people of NSW.'

№ 0162 Mr Marco Belgiorno-Zegna AM

# 2.0 Related papers: Individuals who oppose the relocation and suggest better alternatives

## **Lionel Glendenning**

155: Government cultural planning

**155a:** Powerhouse Museum: cultural investment

**155b:** Urban design and architecture

\$\sum\_0155 Mr Lionel Glendenning

20155a Mr Lionel Glendenning

60155b Mr Lionel Glendenning

## 158: Bernice Murphy

Questions significant presumptions, consequences, and shortfalls in both process and long-term outcomes; some irreversible consequences; alternative planning for direct access, stimulus and enrichment of communities radiating around Parramatta.

△0158 Ms Bernice Murphy

#### 132: Des Griffin

Within broad policy discussion, includes: The proposal to move the Powerhouse Museum to the western suburbs, specifically Parramatta, is one of the most ridiculous proposals concerning cultural institutions in the history of this state. Its rationale and costing are more than seriously flawed, the promoted reasons and outcomes are laughable and the major considerations which the government has addressed have been concealed.

△0132 Dr Desmond Griffin

#### **Christina Sumner**

**136:** 1) Access to the collections; 2) The sale of the Powerhouse Museum site in Ultimo and its proposed move to Parramatta, and whether there are alternative strategies.

**B**0136 Ms Christina Sumner OAM

## **Debbie Rudder**

**143: a.** Question costing process and conclusions for move; PHM needs new investment rather than costly move; better strategies for museum and gallery development on Western Sydney; **b.** Adequacy of funding support for collection-based museums, and transparency of advice; **c.** consider Castle Hill venue; impact of efficiency dividend on museum programs; value of web-site access.

△0143 Ms Debbie Rudder

### **Andrew Grant**

**105.** To discredit the argument advanced by Infrastructure NSW that the current location of the Powerhouse Museum is "remote" and therefore unsuitable because it falls outside a proposed "Sydney CBD cultural precinct". It also expresses concern about apparent inconsistencies between the Government's previous and current policy on this matter and in the decision-making process. **20105** Mr Andrew Grant

**105a.** Loss of the current site of the Powerhouse Museum would be a great loss to Australia's cultural heritage.  $\underline{\underline{}^{8}0105a}$  Mr Andrew Grant

## 135: Sandra McEwen

Mismanagement of public funds; inadequacy of proposed site; barrier to tourists; breakup of synergistic creative associations. <u>P</u>0135 Ms Sandra McEwen

#### 121: Patricia Johnston

Opposition to sale and relocation of Powerhouse Museum; request for better alternatives for Parramatta. <u>Policia Johnson</u>

#### 93: Belinda Nemec

Recommendation to reverse ill-thought out decision; relationship between the collections, exhibitions and programs of MAAS and the Ultimo site is extremely important; if moved to Parramatta, it will close entirely within twenty years, through lack of visitation and community support. Better options for Parramatta.

20093 Dr Belinda Nemec

## 144: Louise Douglas

Absence of research and strategic analysis is perplexing; Western Sydney cultural facilities should be enhanced; not convinced that there is strong enough foundation for moving the Powerhouse to Parramatta, but support different solutions so the cultural facilities of Western Sydney can be enhanced. <u>20144 Ms Louise Douglas</u>

#### 153: Rosalind Ward

Alternative strategies; costs of moving; impact of efficiency dividend.

20153 Ms Rosalind Ward

#### 65: Terence Measham

Significance of both collection and buildings; need central location.

Books Mr Terence Measham

### 90. Shirley Fitzgerald

The future of the Powerhouse Museum, and access to its collections.

60090 Dr Shirley Fitzgerald

## 119. Leo Schofield

A dozen cogent reasons as to why this proposal is not only misguided but also absurdly costly, in terms of both money and loss of prestige.

No. 119, Leo Schofield

#### **Tom Lockley**

**137**, **a**,**b**,**c**: Oppose the relocation; heritage value of buildings and large exhibits; and other issues such as costs, safety, place in Ultimo.

**2**0137 Mr Tom Lockley

△137a Mr Tom Lockley

△0137b Mr Tom Lockley

### 0015: Pyrmont History Group

For people of Ultimo and Pyrmont – and of the inner city as a whole – access to their own industrial and social heritage. <u>B0015 Pyrmont History Group</u>

### 0022: Ultimo Village Voice

Opposes the sale of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and its relocation to Parramatta, while firmly supporting the establishment of new cultural facilities in Western Sydney. 60022 Ultimo Village Voice

#### 169: Mrs E Bosel

Concern at inadequacy of site and safety of collection; the move will devalue potential for cultural tourism; no alternatives other than purchasing an adjacent building in Ultimo and curtail any plans to proceed with a move to Parramatta.

50169 Mrs E Boesel

#### 118: Darani Lewers

Serious flaws in proposal to relocate; consideration of alternative strategies. <u>P</u>0118 Mrs Darani Lewers

#### 139: Jane Burns

Oppose the move; questions of access, sale and transparency of process. 20139 Ms Jane Burns

#### 156: Charles Wilson

Concerned the proposed relocation to Parramatta will effectively kill off the Museum as a significant cultural institution; should stay in ...the tourism, creative and education precinct of Ultimo.. <u>Po156 Mr Charles Wilson</u>

#### 101: Janet De Boer

Access to collection from interstate; opposition to demolition of buildings; lack of adequate consultation re both Powerhouse and Parramatta. 

Both De Boer

## 104: Carl Andrew

Significance of collection; importance of central location. <u>P0104 Mr Carl Andrew</u>

#### 120: Sue Boaden

Oppose total move; consider better options. <a href="Moleone-Policy Boaden Cultural Planner">Moleone-Policy Boaden Cultural Planner</a>

### 97: Marina Garlick

Danger that we will lose the Powerhouse and western Sydney will get a substandard facility. Other options better for Parramatta. **20097** Ms Marina Garlick

## 122: Tim McDonald

Oppose move: proposal appears arbitrary, lacks context, appears to be policy making on the run, politically motivated rather than a considered response to process and fails to respond to identified needs of the community. 60122 Mr Tim McDonald

## 128: Irma Havlicek

To protect the Powerhouse Museum and its outstanding collection, is to leave it where it is; resource it adequately where it is, so that it can do its vital job of educating and enlightening visitors...; build a brilliant museum in Parramatta, and lend objects to it from all of Sydney's state museums. **20128** Ms Irma Havlicek

## 78: Garry Horvai

Criticism of government decision and process in the face of existing Powerhouse strategic plan; opposition to proposed move. <u>P0078 Mr Garry Horvai</u>

#### 157: John Petersen

Closure of Powerhouse Museum's Migration Heritage Centre as a consequence of efficiency dividends and budget cuts, is an example of high level of inequity in arts and cultural funding for ethnic communities and rural and regional areas of NSW.

20157 Mr John Petersen

## 5: Tor Larsen

Observations on audiences for both the Powerhouse in Ultimo, and for Parramatta; lack of transparency in planning. \$\overline{\infty}0005 \text{ Tor Larsen}\$

## 82: Rebecca Spindler

Opposition to move of Powerhouse; government has a visibly, very poor record of community consultation; move is symbolic of the Baird government consistently placing the desires of big business over the needs of its citizens. Better opportunities for Parramatta. 

20082 Dr Rebecca Spindler

#### 12: Jesse Adams Stein

Powerhouse Museum to be retained at its existing location in Ultimo: Cost, Community, Heritage and architecture, urban amenity, linkages with educational institutions. \$\sum\_{0012}\$ Jesse Adams Stein

## 19: Robert Jeffrey Mellifont

Oppose moving Powerhouse from harbourside where it is part of an existing cultural and heritage precinct for existing and growing audiences. <u>60019 Mr Jeffrey Mellefont</u>

#### 112: Ms Jeanie Kitchener:

Feels strongly about maintaining the Powerhouse museum on its current site; where museum designed around the original power station. <u>Pol112 Ms Jeanie Kitchener</u>

## 106: John August

Oppose the sale and total relocation; look at better options. <a>\tilde{L}\_0106</a> Mr John August

## 133. Dr Megan Hicks

Consideration of new museum in Parramatta and maintaining site in Ultimo.

<u>Policy of the Consideration of the Megan Hicks</u>

## 149 b-f: Kylie Winkworth: (extra papers re NSW museum policies)

- Potential funding impacts on museums and galleries affected by council amalgamations. 20149a Ms Kylie Winkworth
- NSW government policy funding and support for museums and galleries; & opportunities to revitalise the structure, reach and impact of museums in regional NSW. <u>P0149b Ms Kylie Winkworth</u>
- NSW government policy; Opportunities to revitalise the structure, reach and impact of museums; Impact of the efficiency dividend; Development and transparency of advice.
- Access to the collections of NSW government museums.
   20149d Ms Kylie Winkworth
- The economic impact of museums and galleries on cultural tourism; Sydney and regional NSW. 60149e Ms Kylie Winkworth

# 3.0 Related papers: Institutions that oppose the relocation and suggest better alternatives (among others)

21. Save the Powerhouse campaign

△0021 Save the Powerhouse Campaign

15. Pyrmont History Group

40. The Design Institute of Australia

20040 The Design Institute of Australia

44. 44a. North Parramatta Residents Action Group

<u>P0044 North Parramatta Residents Action Group Inc</u>

20044a North Parramatta Residents Action Group Inc.

61. Professional Historians Association of NSW

№0061 Professional Historians Association NSW and ACT

50. Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials

<u> 20050 Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials</u>

22. Ultimo Village Voice

₾0022 Ult<u>imo Village Voice</u>

29. Blue Mountains Cultural Centre - Blue Mountains City Council

20029 Blue Mountains Cultural Centre - Blue Mountains City Council

51. NAVA: National Association of Visual Arts

20051 National Association for the Visual Arts

42. Museums Galleries Australia

△0042 Museums Galleries Australia

**60. The Australian Ceramics Association** 

△0060 The Australian Ceramics Association

46. The National Trust of Australia

<u>Mational Trust of Australia</u>

131. Oriental Rug Society

△0131 Oriental Rug Society of NSW

166. Australian Society for History of Engineering and Technology Inc.

(ASHET) \( \bigsize 0166 \) Australian Society for History of Engineering and Technology Inc.

159. Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites

Monuments and Sites
Monuments and Sites

108. Engineers Australia

₾0108 Engineers Australia

27. Engineers Australia NSW Division - Engineering Heritage Sydney

20027 Engineers Australia NSW Division - Engineering Heritage Sydney

30. Greater Western Sydney Action Heritage Group

№0030 Greater Western Sydney Heritage Action Group