

**Supplementary
Submission
No 142d**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Name: Ms Jennifer Sanders

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The Hon Robert Borsak MLC
Committee Chair,
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4,
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Sydney NSW 2000

Upper House Inquiry into museums and galleries No. 4

Submission from Jennifer Sanders

Terms of Reference: 1c), 1d), 1e), 1f)

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

Summary

On Sunday 21st August, The Sun-Herald carried a front page story that the Minister for Finance, Service and Property, Dominic Perrotet (see below) was briefing former prime minister Paul Keating on the government's proposal for a cultural and heritage precinct bridging the Domain and Macquarie Street.

Sydney Living Museums is the prime mover behind the plan and proposes to build a new cultural centre to tell The Story of Sydney with space made available through the demolition of two 1960s buildings and funding made available from the sale of the Land and Property Information building (formerly Registrar-Generals).

The report announces that public comment will be sought in the next month and that the consultation will 'determine which parts of the proposal are accepted by government and which are amended to fit the new precinct plan' - as one would expect for such a high profile cultural project,

No doubt there will be a number of alternative proposals put forward to enliven the now named Macquarie Cultural and Heritage Precinct given the prime location on Macquarie Street.

However what is immediately apparent about this proposal is the complete contrast in the government's approach to this project when compared to the "done deal" announcements about the move of the Powerhouse Museum from its historic site in Ultimo to a flood prone riverside site in Parramatta.

There was no consultation with the public and nor, it appears, with the Powerhouse Museum itself, nor the players in the creative and education precinct in which the Museum is a key element, nor the local communities nor the Museum's audiences nor its benefactors - no consultation.

There was also, apparently, little or no consultation with Parramatta Council and none with the residents of Parramatta before the relocation plan was announced. In fact, when the plan was questioned, even criticised, by a wide range of NSW citizens, the response was that anyone questioning the plan was 'a hater.' This response ignored the fact that there is overwhelming support for the Premier's proposal to build 'a cultural beacon' in Parramatta. The disagreement is with the relocation and destruction of the Powerhouse to achieve this goal.

The Sydney Living Museums proposal is supported by a business case. The Powerhouse Museum relocation was announced with no costings beyond the sentence that the sale of the Powerhouse site will realise \$150 - 200 million and that will pay for the new Parramatta museum with money left over to put to programs.

Given the terms of reference being examined by this Inquiry in regard to NSW cultural policy and planning it is worth considering the wider potential of this and other proposals which will be considered by the Inquiry. In fact, as the first seat of government in New South Wales, Parramatta with its rich colonial heritage, would be an ideal place to tell the story of Sydney set in the bigger and more inclusive script of the story of New South Wales – and its place in Australia's history.

Jennifer Sanders

I am happy for my submission to be published with my name

I am happy to appear as a witness at the Inquiry

Jennifer Sanders

Brief Resume: Jennifer Sanders BA Hons Anthropology, USyd

Jennifer Sanders had a long and distinguished career at the Powerhouse Museum where she was Deputy Director, Collections, Content Development and Outreach from 2001 to February 2009. Appointed to the Powerhouse in 1978, Jennifer was a curator then senior curator, decorative arts and design for a decade.

A key member of the team for the Powerhouse redevelopment, in 1988 Ms Sanders was appointed Assistant Director Collections responsible for the Museum's curatorial, registration, preservation and regional NSW outreach programs and, for several years, exhibitions, education, publications and library services as well. In 2001 Ms Sanders was given responsibility for the NSW Migration Heritage Centre and later also Sydney Observatory and the Powerhouse Discovery Centre. Ms Sanders regularly deputised for the Museum's Director.

From 1999 to 2008 Ms Sanders was a member of the National Cultural Heritage Committee and, in 2001 she was a member of the NSW Centenary of Federation Committee (archiving, cataloguing, and preservation of historical materials). From 2007 to 2012, Ms Sanders was a member of the External Advisory Panel, Design Research Institute, RMIT University, Melbourne and Chair, Design Archives Advisory Panel, RMIT University.

From 2009, Ms Sanders has undertaken range of heritage, museum and curatorial consultancies.

1981 Churchill Fellowship: public access to museum collections, North America and Europe

1987 Museum Management Institute, Berkeley, USA. Getty Leadership Institute.

In 2003 Jennifer was awarded a Centenary of Federation Medal.

Macquarie Street revamp plan to unlock Sydney's oldest public buildings



Kirsty Needham

Australia's oldest public buildings will come under the spotlight in a multi-million dollar Baird government plan to transform Macquarie Street into a tourist-friendly cultural and heritage precinct, *The Sun-Herald* has learnt.

Despite boasting Governor Macquarie's Rum Hospital, Australia's first library and the UNESCO-listed convict site of Hyde Park Barracks, Macquarie Street is better known today for its doctors and politicians.



The Hyde Park Barracks on Macquarie Street, with buildings to be demolished at rear. *Photo: Peter Rae*

But a push by Sydney Living Museums (formerly the Historic Houses Trust) to boost the profile of the Museum of Sydney, and to better tell the story of colonial Sydney has prompted a rethink.

Public comment will be sought next month on a Macquarie Street precinct plan. It will canvas proposals to unlock access to the historic buildings and monuments stretching from the Mitchell Library to Queens Square, and encourage visitors to explore laneway links to the Domain.



The proposal would see the court building behind the Mint demolished. *Photo: Peter Rae*

Sydney Living Museums has submitted a business case to the government to move the Museum of Sydney to Macquarie Street, clearing space for a new cultural centre by demolishing two 1960s Supreme Court and State Records buildings behind the Mint and Hyde Park Barracks.

Two new buildings, connected by a glass structure and ground level cultural space, designed by architects FJMT, would replace them and house the new museum.

The project, called The Story of Sydney, would act as a pedestrian link between Macquarie Street and the Domain, and boost visitors to Hyde Park Barracks.

But Sydney Living Museums has also asked the government to sell the neighbouring sandstone Lands and Property Information building, potentially as a hotel, to fund the project.



The court building facing Hospital Road and the Domain is earmarked for demolition. *Photo: Peter Rae*

According to consultants Corview, who developed the business case, "The project includes options which investigate a mixed-use precinct including cultural uses and commercial uses such as retail and food and beverage."

Sydney Living Museums executive director Mark Goggin, the former marketing chief of the Powerhouse Museum, presented the plan to the NSW Heritage Council in May. Minutes of the meeting show the Heritage Council raised concerns about commercialisation and the "bulk and scale of new buildings", but supported the activation of Hospital Road for pedestrians along the Domain.



The Land and Property Information building could become a hotel under the plan. *Photo: Peter Rae*

The council agreed "the current MoS site is not working".

The Minister for Finance, Services and Property, Dominic Perrottet, has provided two briefings on the government's proposal for a cultural and heritage precinct to former prime minister Paul Keating, and sought his input.

Rediscovering the past

Macquarie Street - named after Governor Lachlan Macquarie - was designed as a ceremonial thoroughfare from the harbour to Hyde Park.



1. Museum of Sydney

Site of Australia's first Government House.

Museum opened in **1995** as part of a deal to preserve the site from high-rise development.

2. State Library of NSW

Opened in **1869** as the Sydney Free Library; Mitchell building opened in **1910**.

3. Parliament of New South Wales

Originally the north wing of the Rum Hospital. Parliament began meeting in **1824**.

4. Sydney Hospital

Australia's first hospital. Built in **1811**. Florence Nightingale sent a team of nurses at the request of Henry Parkes.

5. The Mint

Mr Keating in recent years has publicly condemned the [commercialisation of the Domain](#), which he claimed resembled a "sad, deserted fairground", and [criticised a planned expansion of the Art Gallery of NSW](#) as a "land grab".

The public consultation will determine which parts of the museum's proposal are accepted by the government, and which are amended to fit the new precinct plan.

Mr Perrottet is co-ordinating the Macquarie Street overhaul because of the large number of government buildings involved.

"Macquarie Street houses some of Sydney's most important heritage and historical treasures, and I am always looking at ways to enhance that heritage and make precincts like this one more accessible for locals and tourists to enjoy," he said.

A steering committee, involving all government agencies with heritage properties on Macquarie Street, and Sydney Living Museums, has met eight times since November.

It is understood the departments of health, heritage, justice and finance will need to agree to funding compromises that will see some agencies relinquish heritage buildings and trade-off maintenance costs with the potential for extra revenue.

The Macquarie Cultural and Heritage Precinct Plan is expected to be launched by the end of the year, with the redevelopment to be undertaken in stages.

The museum's proposal to knock down two buildings will be seriously considered, sources said, but another option could be to leave the resulting site as open space. Closing Hospital Road to traffic is also likely to be canvassed.

With the Land and Property Information registry already earmarked for partial privatisation, the sale or redevelopment of the heritage building is likely – but it could potentially become an option for a museum.

Sydney Living Museums has told the Heritage Council the existing Museum of Sydney site, above the archaeological remains of Australia's first Government House on Phillip Street, could become a national monument dedicated to First Contact and the nine Sydney governors who lived there.

Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon, the museum's acting executive director, said: "[It] is incredibly important in the history of Sydney and the early development of the colony, and we would like to focus much more attention on the exceptional cultural and heritage values it represents including for Aboriginal people and the first 60 years of the colony."

She said the proposed Macquarie Street museum would "tell the expanded story of Sydney for tourists and Australians".

