

**Submission  
No 34**

**INQUIRY INTO GOVERNMENT'S MANAGEMENT OF THE  
POWERHOUSE MUSEUM AND OTHER MUSEUMS AND  
CULTURAL PROJECTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Ms Linda Scott

**Date Received:** 3 May 2020

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Hon Robert Borsak MLC  
Chair, Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Borsak

I write you regarding your Select Committee Inquiry into the maintenance and management of the Powerhouse Museum and other cultural projects in New South Wales.

In March 2019, I successfully moved to have the City of Sydney resolve the following:

(A) Council note:

(i) that a recent New South Wales Parliamentary Inquiry has recommended that the business case for the move of the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta is 'inadequate,' and had made recommendations against the move;

(ii) the inquiry also recommended that the museum be 'restored to its former glory' by calling for major investment;

(iii) the inquiry further recognised the importance ensuring that Parramatta is afforded its own iconic cultural institution that 'reflects its Aboriginal, colonial and migration history';

(iv) since the move of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to the Powerhouse in 1979 by the NSW Labor Government under Premier Neville Wran, the Museum has become an institution and important part of the City's cultural fabric;

(v) the announcement in 2015 by the Liberal NSW Government proposing the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo to Parramatta was met with a major public backlash; and

(vi) both our City and western Sydney deserve world-class museums for the education of locals and tourists alike;

(B) Council endorse the findings of the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry regarding the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum;

(C) Council advocate strongly for the immediate restoration of artefacts to the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, and for more investment in the site into the future; and

(D) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Premier of NSW, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian and the NSW Opposition Leader, the Hon. Michael Daley expressing these views.

More recently, in April 2020, I moved for the City of Sydney to successfully adopt the updated position:

It is resolved that:

(A) Council reaffirm its strong opposition to plans to remove the Powerhouse Museum from its current Ultimo location, noting its continuing significance to the City of Sydney's cultural, social, scientific, industrial and economic history and heritage and its vital contribution to the Ultimo-Pyrmont-Chippendale creativity and innovation precinct;

(B) Council note that:

(i) a 2019 New South Wales Parliamentary Inquiry found that the business case for the move of the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta is 'inadequate', and had recommended against the move, instead calling for major investment to restore the museum "to its former glory";

(ii) despite these findings and recommendation and the City's and community's opposition to the move, the NSW Government is proceeding with plans to relocate the museum with a design for the new museum being selected through an international design competition;

(iii) the NSW Minister for the Arts remains committed to retaining the museum's Ultimo site for cultural and creative purposes;

(iv) despite this commitment, pressure continues for the site to be repurposed or redeveloped;

(C) if the NSW Government continues with the museum's relocation, Council:

(i) strongly advocate for continued use of the Ultimo site for cultural and creative purposes; and

(ii) strongly oppose repurposing of the site for other uses, sale of the site and unsympathetic, inappropriate development of all or part of the site; and

(D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to prepare a response in support of the NSW Government's application to state heritage list the Ultimo Tramways Powerhouse.

Alongside the Federal Member for Sydney, Tanya Plibersek MP, and the communities of Pyrmont and Ultimo, I remain strongly opposed to any relocation of The Powerhouse Museum from Ultimo, where the Museum has been located since 1893. 122 years of being a part of the Ultimo community, and 136 years as a museum in inner Sydney, it remains an important part of Sydney's cultural story.

I urge your Committee to continue to recommend to protect this significant part of Sydney's cultural and curative history through adequate and sustained funding. The funding allocated to move the Museum should be directed towards its management and development.

I continue to strongly support Western Sydney being home to their own museums and cultural centres, not second hand left overs from the inner city. The Casula Powerhouse Regional Arts Centre, run by Liverpool Council, is housed in another of Sydney's abandoned power stations and is a magnificent cultural facility for the people of the wider Western Sydney region. As a growing self-sustaining artistic hub, the people of Parramatta and Western Sydney deserve their own State Government funded museum space and facilities, with all the opportunities it would bring in terms of employment, internships and sheer fun. This can be achieved without moving the Powerhouse Museum.

The proposal of transporting the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta has continually been met with strong public backlash, including Parramatta communities. Through letters, protests, submissions and

petitions, it is clear public support continues to support the retention of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, and for the establishment of a new Western Sydney cultural hub.

**Therefore, I urge you to recommend that the NSW Government abandon their plans to move the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta, and also to recommend support for the City of Sydney's policy to retain the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, ensuring it is provided with sufficient funding to maintain its position as a global cultural and educational hub.**

Kind regards,

Linda Scott

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