

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Submission for Powerhouse Museum

The Powerhouse Museum originated from the Museum of Applied Art and Sciences in Harris Street just down the road. The MAAS prior to then was the hub of an education and research system through the School of Arts and such establishments throughout the state. Many of these School of Arts buildings still stand throughout the state and are the remnants of this 'further' education system in a time when education was limited.

The MAAS back then was a museum for education and a repository for the states technical and public development. The Powerhouse Museum built in 1988 was an extension/expansion of the MAAS museum developing the museum into a public interactive museum and showing off some of its larger and special exhibits such as the Boulton & Watt Steam Engine and Locomotive No.1 and it's train.

From Trove –

Function - Collection Management; History of Australian Engineering; History of Australian Science; History of Australian Technology

The Powerhouse Museum was opened to the public in 1988, however the Museum has a history that goes back over one hundred years, to when the Technological, Industrial and Sanitary Museum was established. The Museum's collection spans social history, music, science, technology, design, industry, decorative arts, transport and space exploration. The Powerhouse Museum, along with the Sydney Observatory, is managed by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.

Over the past years the management of the Powerhouse museum have taken the MAAS from being a museum of technology and science to an arts and exhibition centre, forgetting about its technology origins. Fashion and imported exhibits are dominant and display of the MAAS collection and exhibits currently stored at Castle Hill has become secondary. Much of the current permanent display items such as Steam Revolution and the larger Transport display have not been touched or revitalised since 1988 when they were first installed. The permanent exhibits are deteriorating and ignored by management. The staff operating and maintaining the permanent exhibits have been reduced over the years to a bare minimum. The collection at Castle Hill is rarely turned over and brought to the Ultimo museum as is purported.

The relocation of the MAAS to Parramatta as planned by the government will further bring the 'true' MAAS to an end. The Parramatta 'Exhibition' centre will no longer be a museum but a show space. It will not be able to proudly exhibit unique exhibits like the Boulton & Watt steam engine the last "operating" rotative Boulton & Watt engine in the world. It will not be able to realistically operate the steam exhibits as is currently done, which is also very unique to a public museum worldwide. The larger 'Transport' exhibits and aeroplanes will also have to find another home.

There has been no plan for the Castle Hill site which will be by default the true MAAS and its location, which is quite in accessible to the general public and overseas tourists, does not enhance its importance. It is currently viewed by management as a warehouse and workshop.

The museum management claim to have a shortage of space in the museum but there are large areas with absolutely nothing on them, bar a few couches. Yet the new Parramatta site is said to be smaller than the current Ultimo site, which leads to less exhibition space and display of the collection.

The proposal to relocate the MAAS to Parramatta is absurd. Parramatta should have its museum but one relevant to Parramatta and the western region.

Do not destroy our only technology museum.

April 2020