

**Submission
No 59**

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

Name: Mr Robert Gavagna

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OVERVIEW

The Powerhouse Museum is located on the very site that powered Sydney's tram network, then considered one of the world's largest. This network covered Sydney CBD plus a broad range of suburbs. Unfortunately, we didn't have the foresight to retain the network then, and we can't afford to replicate it now. And it appears we also lack the foresight to retain the Museum on its historical site.

Why are we prepared to squander this local Pyrmont based history?

Former Premier Baird's answer to this question was to ask "..don't you want Parramatta and the western suburbs to have a cultural centre of its own?"

Obviously, most Sydney citizens would indeed agree that Parramatta and the western suburbs should have a cultural centre to celebrate its own rich colonial history.

But why should Pyrmont relocate its specific history to Parramatta? Why on earth would Parramatta and western suburbs citizens want our history? Surely they would hope to have a centre to celebrate their own history! And don't forget, that even with a somewhat run down Powerhouse Museum, it still attracts more than 50,000 visitors each year. Is that cause for its relocation?

Or if the real, underlying reason for such a bizarre relocation is to create even more residential apartments in Pyrmont and Ultimo, why not build above the purpose designed museum? Such an engineering task is not beyond local capacity.

I say bizarre, because such a meaningless relocation would involve an enormous additional cost; indicated estimates for removal and relocation of museum exhibits could cost \$1,000,000,000 or more. This cost would be in addition to the cost of designing and constructing an appropriate facility in Parramatta or another western suburbs location.

It seems the vain attempts at retro justification of this earlier decision, just don't hold water. Why blow all these funds for no solid, sensible, justifiable reason. In short, as per the popular expression, 'the decision just doesn't pass the pub test'!

So, in order to provide Sydney's western suburbs with its own museum, Pyrmont is to lose a significant part of its own history and museum visitor attraction, and the relocation process will cost at least twice as much as it should.

Where on earth is the sense in this decision?

Why not simply swallow pride, accept it as having been a bad decision and save all of us a billion dollars!