

**Submission
No 106**

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

Name: Ms Kathy Elliott

Date Received: 16 May 2020

My name is Kathy Elliott, I have been self employed as an artist working in glass for 27 years.. I have have been engaging with the collection of the Powerhouse Museum since I was a high school student , then in my years as an art student, later as a professional and more recently as a parent.

The work I make with my husband Ben Edols is in the permanent collection of the Powerhouse Museum . We also have our work in the permanent collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Gallery of Australia, the Museum of Art and Design in New York,the Corning Museum in New York,the Toyama Glass Museum in Japan, the Auckland Museum in New Zealand and many others.

The relocation of the Powerhouse Museum has been a great concern to me. Sydney has the MCA and the Art Gallery of NSW which are both incredible institutions that specialise in the collection and exhibition of fine art. Fine art museums are necessary in our society to elevate our community by showing us something of the human condition. In the same way museums such as the Powerhouse that specialise in the Applied Sciences are essential to a community to document ,collect and reflect how a community is moving forward in it's everyday achievements from industrial design to the clothes we are wearing, the inventions that impact our daily life to the excellence in contemporary decorative art. The areas of life showcased at the Powerhouse mirror our own domestic experiences whether it's a memory of the clothes from our grandparents wardrobes or the eccentric backyard inventions of suburban Sydney. This is an important legacy that deserves to be front and centre in a city the size of Sydney. This is not some niche experience, some esoteric areas of study. These are world class exhibits containing an unmatched collection of decorative and applied art.

Personally I consider the Powerhouse primarily as a research facility. It is an invaluable resource for any practitioner of decorative art. The curators and staff have always been patient and abundant in their assistance with any help or enquiry I had for them in their specialist departments. You might argue this could continue if the Powerhouse were relocated but in my opinion these research centres should be located centrally for ease of access when people travel interstate. There is no other facility in Australia to match the breadth of the collection or curator expertise of the Powerhouse. I mainly accessed the expertise of the curators and the collection while I was a student living in Canberra. This would involve travel from Canberra by bus and a quick trip to the Powerhouse. If the Museum were relocated to Parramatta it is a long trip in addition to any travel from another city.

It would be an embarrassment for our city to not have this museum stay in it's present site. No other city in the world that values it's cultural institutions would move a museum of this importance outside of it's city centre. It is conceivable that you would build an annexe to house an area of specialisation but to propose the closing of the museum in it's custom built facility at Ultimo is an act of sabotage on the cultural richness of our city. Would the French relocate it's Musee Des Arts Decoratifs from the centre of Paris? It's time the talk of moving out of the Ultimo site was behind us and the focus can turn to an annexe so that more of the collection can be displayed. It should not come to an either or situation but it is vital the original Powerhouse Museum remain and the significant and beautiful exhibitions are seen by as many people as possible and if that means an annexe on a site in Parramatta then let that be the goal.