

**Submission
No 111**

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

Name: Mr Neil Joseph

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I am writing to express my concern at the continuing work on the move to relocate the Powerhouse museum to Parramatta. I **STRONGLY DISAGREE** with this move and the waste of public funds.

I am not happy with the plans to demolish Parramatta's much loved heritage buildings Wattle Grove and St George's Terrace, to put a museum there - especially when there are alternative community visions for an Arts and Cultural Precinct for a Museum at the 26 hectare Fleet Street Heritage Precinct in North Parramatta. It is a disgrace that this government refuse to listen to what the electorate want. Parramatta certainly want a museum that reflects the rich indigenous, colonial and multicultural past of this city. The powerhouse represents a completely different narrative which belongs right where it is in the heart of Sydney city. Top all that off with the wanton destruction of the remaining heritage in Parramatta is unacceptable.

The recent webinar consultations held in early April 2020, are of great concern with their lack of understanding of community issues, as reported by local community groups who attended and from the limited material in the presentation pack (see <http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/2440/new-powerhouse-in-parramatta-planning-presentation.pdf?fbclid=IwAR22Oxgba1z1MS-W4BT1wcrdA1aliaLMlnl4BcngRsShf4aglhufMVYeIP4>). I have seen nothing to help alleviate my fear that this project will be not be cancelled for a more common sense community led project. In fact, there was comment by our local community group and city councillors on how little the project is sounding like a museum, with the presentation outlining 40 residential apartments on top floor, 60 dorm beds for schools to stay overnight, a floor of retail and cafes and the rest of area being described as flexible event functions and exhibition space.

Of course, the whole idea of relocating a well respected and working museum, robbing one area of Sydney for another, is purely a whim of the government to allow repurposing of an inner city space by developers. Why not have **TWO** museums, each with separate purposes. One - the Powerhouse, reflecting our technological, artistic and scientific heritage as required by The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act, and another - at Fleet Street reflecting the unique nature of Parramatta as the link between indigenous, colonial and multicultural Australia. I note that Fleet Street heritage precinct is included in the move presentation, but no details of how this will be incorporated were forthcoming. Why not scale back to just the cultural precinct at Fleet Street and give the people what they want!!

I believe that within Fleet Street, the Female Factory and surrounding buildings and gardens are part of the fabric that make Australia what it is today - a co-joining of aboriginal, convict and free settlers - especially the women who had to endure the experience of the factory as their only means of surviving in this colony. A museum and cultural centre showcasing the history of this building, and the surrounding crucial heritage areas is a **MINIMUM** solution, to which only a portion of the funds of the Powerhouse move would more than adequately provide. We have many community vision statements and proposals for the alternatives to the Powerhouse Museum move - please listen to us, the people of Parramatta, who you claim to be providing for in all your communications - **LISTEN AND ACT FOR US PLEASE!!**

In the business case papers for the relocation Ref: http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/1539/maas_fbc_summary.pdf it states:

And more importantly, that the business case rests upon allowing extensive development at both Ultimo and Parramatta - not yet rejected by any proposal since

Please revisit the 2014 case proposal for more funds for the Ultimo Powerhouse, and subsequent strategy documents, given the cost of the move is now far more than was originally anticipated. You can still have stimulus for the economy under the umbrella of "museum development", just not this style or project! Weighed up against necessary funds for improving the current Powerhouse, an assumption that a move to Parramatta would be beneficial culturally and financially, is now seen to be quite invalid. All the decision making proposals referred to had not anticipated the current economic circumstances of fires, floods and pandemic. They had not anticipated the current mood of the population of Parramatta and Western Sydney for their OWN cultural museum and space to reflect THEIR unique heritage. They had not anticipated the ground swell of criticism from all manner of respected associations who have since criticised this move on a number of fronts. Put simply, the business case, the only one put forward for this project, is no longer valid and requires complete review. This business case must now be rejected. Considering the shameful waste of funds for such a move and the need for drought, bushfire and pandemic relief, one can only assume the premier and infrastructure NSW is being willfully ignorant. Stop this NOW!!