

Submission  
No 133

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

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Carriageworks deserves better treatment from the NSW Government.

I write to the Inquiry to ask that the State Government immediately commit sufficient funding to see Carriageworks maintain the independence of its operations and administration.

It is deeply shocking to learn that the State Government has abandoned Carriageworks. This inquiry must press the State Government to fully fund Carriageworks' operations through the disruption of COVID-19, and to continue this support when we emerge from the lockdown.

How do you measure the impact of a cultural project? Beyond the metrics of visits, the value of tickets sold, and the income for artist practitioners, Carriageworks plays a critical role in the Sydney arts ecosystem as the home of what's new and different. It's essential cultural infrastructure.

It gives us curation, produce and performance in a space that connects us to Sydney's heritage. It's a commercial-free zone. It's close to my Redfern home and accessible to anyone, from anywhere. A weekend visit has become an essential Sydney experience. When I asked Sydneysiders to sign a petition supporting Carriageworks earlier this month - I had friends and family from all over Australia joining in saying Carriageworks was an essential part of any visit.

When art is essential:  
You stop and gasp.  
Look again.  
Think about what this means.  
Find space in your heart.  
Open your mind.  
Be moved.  
Tell everyone.  
Come back for more.  
See it again.  
Bring people together.

Essential art isn't easy. It can't be produced with a template or a protocol. It's a complex and precious thing that's nurtured over time. I want to live in a community that supports artists. I want to experience their work in extraordinary spaces that have breathing room and raw character. I want these experiences to be part of my everyday - not staged as a special occasion. To hear that the Sydney Opera House is being considered as a potential operator for the Carriageworks precinct is another cause for concern.

The Opera House is harbourside high art, it's a big night out. Carriageworks is rusted soaring spaces with room to experiment and a Saturday market. If the Opera House is the front parlour, Carriageworks is the shed.

Good things happen in sheds: things are knocked up, they're not precious, there are experiments and tinkering. Life breaks out and relaxes. The marriage of the emerging arts and industrial artefacts is magic. Especially at scale. Look at the power of the Tate Modern's London Turbine Hall to attract global attention. Since 2015 the major installations at Carriageworks from Zhang Huan's Sydney Buddha, El Anatsui's retrospective, Katharina Grosse's drapes, Nick Cave's installations - they have given Sydney essential art. Home grown essential art puts Sydney on the global radar.

We need to look after the spaces that keep us real, that offer gritty backdrops for festivals, markets and installations. That offer space for resident companies and emerging artists. To have all this already in place at Carriageworks is an asset for NSW. It's future must be protected.