

Supplementary
Submission
No 74a

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

Name: Ms Jennifer Sanders

Date Received: 25 May 2020

Submission to the Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales.

18 May 2020

The Hon Robert Borsak MLC

Chair

Re Terms of Reference: Item 1 (a) (i) the core visions behind the move

(ii) the governance of the project etc.

(iii) the risks in the move, including damage to the collection etc.

Dear Mr Borsak,

Introduction:

This submission addresses claims and 'visions' attempting to justify the Government's plan to 'move' the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta – an impossibility. As is evident, there is a tsunami of well-paid consultants reports and glossy marketing brochures promoting this expensive and misguided 'vision' of former premier Baird and current Premier Berejiklian.

Accordingly, I have decided to address extracts from the *Powerhouse Precinct Parramatta International Design Competition, Stage 2 Design Brief, NSW Government, MAAS, Malcolm Reading Consultants, undated* and the released but then withdrawn *34-54 & 30B Phillip Street and 338 Church Street, Parramatta | Environmental Impact Statement | 04 May 2020 Ethos Urban | 2190947*. These extracts are all reproduced in red.

My comments concern facts and/or consequences and/or alternatives to this infrastructure project. This list is not exhaustive as I concluded fairly quickly that there is no heart, no soul, no intellect - let alone any museum experience of substance, especially concerning the 140 year old Powerhouse Museum, evident in the utterly inadequate Design Brief, ostensibly for a 'moved' Powerhouse Museum..

To begin with I have provided a statement about the world renowned and much loved Powerhouse Museum which is a physical and intellectual manifestation of the aspirations of its founders – the legacy of Sir Henry Parkes, Father of Federation and a working man and artisan.

Statement: The Core Vision of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo

The Powerhouse Museum is born of the Industrial Revolution, an epic period in our history, which gave rise to International Exhibitions showcasing the achievements of the Cultivated mind and the Skilled hand in the displays of the manufacture of nations' industries from across the world and at home.

The Powerhouse is unique for the synergy between the Museum's extraordinary collection and the magnificent spaces of the 1899 Ultimo Power House, one of Australia's earliest and most imposing industrial buildings, and the contemporary architecture of 1988 that is the Powerhouse Museum today. The Museum has proven to be a well-versed, award-winning museum with impressive flexibility, character and ambience.

A legacy of the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition, **the Powerhouse is about creativity and innovation in the applied arts and the applied sciences, explored in the context of history and contemporary life. The Powerhouse is a history museum.**

At the Museum's heart are stories of people designing and making across time and space, across cultures, across the arts and sciences. The collection represents ideas becoming reality to meet human needs – whether a fragment of a Coptic textile from 3rd century AD, a steam engine from the 19th built to power agricultural machinery or a glass work by an Australian maker.

Since 1893, the Museum has been **a leader in the science, education, creative and cultural precinct in Ultimo** which was established on the model of London's South Kensington museums, education and cultural precinct: Science Museum, Natural History Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, Royal Albert Hall, Royal College of Art, Imperial College London – a precinct that is the legacy of the inaugural 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations – the initiative of Prince Albert.

Both these historic precincts are tourist drawcards - 20 million visitors to the Powerhouse since its 1988 opening – the neighbouring Darling Harbour with the Australian National Maritime Museum on the same 'Cultural Ribbon', the Goods Line link to Central - buses, railway, taxis and the light rail bringing people from across Sydney, NSW, Australia and the world.

The Museum's world recognised building – its historic industrial fabric and modern architecture; and its Ultimo location - an architectural model for the Seidler Pool, the Woolley ABC HQ, Cox National Maritime Museum, UTS buildings – together with its diverse collection are intrinsic to the overarching narrative of science, design and industry - the Powerhouse Museum.

Allowing for the arcane expression, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act (1945) is as relevant today it was passed when by the NSW State Parliament. See extract below:

Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act 1945 No 31 [NSW]
Current version for 15 July 2015 to date, Page 7 of 12

14 Objects and functions of trustees

(1) The trustees shall have the following objects and may exercise any or all of the following functions:

(a) the control and management of the Museum,

(b) the maintenance and administration of the Museum in such manner as will effectively minister to the needs and demands of the community in any or all branches of applied science and art and, the development of industry by:

(i) the display of selected objects arranged to illustrate the industrial advance of civilisation and the development of inventions and manufactures,

(ii) the promotion of craftsmanship and artistic taste by illustrating the history and development of the applied arts,

(iii) lectures, broadcasts, films, publications and other educational means,

(iv) scientific research, or

(v) any other means necessary or desirable for the development of the natural resources and manufacturing industries of New South Wales.

The Powerhouse Museum is perfectly located and connected to its diverse audiences and partners. It makes a unique contribution as a cultural institution, not only to NSW but also to Australia and beyond.

This significant and world renowned museum is being **hijacked and disappeared** for the sake of a thought bubble – however ignorantly well-intended – which will **not** in any way, shape or form result in the ‘move’ of the Powerhouse to Parramatta.

At a time when we are searching for new ways to stimulate the economy, to encourage participation in science, to spark creative thinking, foster innovation and to reshape our manufacturing industries.....at this time, the renewed Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo - at its core – not as it has been detuned, muddled up, defunded and diminished in recent years - is ideally placed, intellectually and physically, to fulfill its purpose to be a place of inspiration to encourage aspiration.

See att: See att paper, J. Sanders, ‘The Powerhouse Museum: Its Place in the World, Our Nation, New South Wales, Our Neighbourhood and, Our Hearts and Minds’ OR ‘The Powerhouse Museum: A Tale of two Destructions: Conflagration followed 137 years later by Expropriation and Demolition’. Presented at A.ICOMOS 2019 Sydney talk Series No 6 ‘Policy, Power and the Cultural and Heritage Values of the Powerhouse Museum’, J.Sanders and K.Winkworth, 1st Oct 2019.

What is offered as the core visions for the New Powerhouse Parramatta

Not much.

As this is an infrastructure project promoted and driven by Infrastructure NSW, statements about the whys and wherefores of the ‘move’ of the Powerhouse Museum are largely expressed in terms of planning, urban design and building infrastructure with heroic assumptions as to operational capacities and visitor numbers – an absurd 2 million a year and open to the public 24 hours. Good luck with that!

The optimistic forecast of 2 million visitors (Powerhouse Parramatta, Consultation Summary Report, Aurecon, May 2020 Revision 1, p2) is puzzling given the number was initially 715,000 in 2023 rising to 1.106 million in 2050. (Section 4.5.2 Option 3 Final Business Case The New Museum in Western Sydney, 8 Jan 2019.)

Now 2 million pa – on what basis? An attempt to justify the latest revised BCR?

*“The Powerhouse has a long history of movement and transformation. Its first home was the Garden Palace where it opened in 1881. In 1882, a fire destroyed the Garden Palace, and the Powerhouse was re-established in the Agricultural Hall at the Domain in 1883. In 1893, the Powerhouse was relocated to Harris Street in Ultimo and in 1981 it was moved to the former Tram Depot. In 1988 it moved to its current home at the Ultimo Powerhouse. The Powerhouse Precinct at Parramatta will be the **sixth** time that the Powerhouse has moved and transformed **in response to the needs of a changing city**”. Stage 2 Design Brief p17*

The ‘**six moves**’ fairy story has had a long run despite several notifications that it is completely incorrect. The assertion that the Museum’s moves – 2 not 6 - are ‘**in response to the needs of a**

changing city are a fabrication. The two moves in the Museum's long history have been because the Museum outgrew its then premises (from Agricultural Hall – temporary home for 10 years to 1893 purpose built Technological Museum – home for 95 years)

The Powerhouse Museum cannot be moved to Parramatta as it is indivisible with its Ultimo site and much lauded building. The cynicism of the Government in asserting, as Premier Berejiklian said to my colleague Andrew Grant and I in a 15 September 2017 meeting, that using the Powerhouse name at Parramatta is just a branding exercise, is both breathtaking and cavalier. I can assure you that for the more than 20 million visitors to the Powerhouse Museum since 1988, the Powerhouse Museum is a unique physical, emotional and intellectual experience defined by the magnificence of its site, building, signature technology objects and exhibitions.

In the same vein of deliberate obfuscation, is the statement in the *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement, Ethos Urban, 4 May 2020* which says that

“The Powerhouse has occupied the Ultimo site since 1988” p7

This is deliberately misleading and ignores the fact that the Museum (MAAS now Powerhouse) opened in Ultimo as the Technological Museum in 1893 (see sequence below). Ultimo is a vibrant creative, cultural and education precinct anchored by the Powerhouse Museum since 1893. The Powerhouse has a leading role in this recognised precinct as one of NSW's three significant cultural institutions, the others being the Art Gallery of NSW and the Australian Museum.

Re number of moves by the Museum: to summarise:

The Museum was founded as the Technological, Industrial and Sanitary Museum in 1880 (*not* 1879) as a legacy of the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition held in the purpose-built Garden Palace in the Botanic Gardens. At the close of the exhibition, Sir Henry Parkes proposed that the Garden Palace be dedicated for public use. The Museum's first curator Joseph H Maiden began acquiring objects and preparing displays in one of the Garden Palace galleries.

However, on 22 Sept 1882, the Garden Palace was **destroyed by a huge conflagration before the Museum opened to the public**. This was the first destruction of the fledgling Museum. With a herculean effort, Maiden finally opened the Museum on 15 September 1883 in a temporary location - the 1879 Exhibition's undamaged adjacent Agricultural Hall.

1st Move: In 1893, the renamed Museum was moved to the purpose-built 1893 Technological Museum at 659 Harris Street, Ultimo, strategically located next to 1891 Sydney Technical College both designed by William Kemp, where it became the leading institution in this new science, education and cultural precinct. The Museum did not **'find'** itself in the Harris St building as stated in the Design Competition documents – a phrase intended to convey uncertainty and happenstance in this 1st move when, in fact it was government strategy to initiate and develop the education science and creative precinct that is Ultimo today.

2nd Move: In 1988, the Museum was transformed when it moved to 500 Harris Street into the award winning repurposing and development of the former Ultimo Power House and Tram Depot. As part of this massive 10 year project, in 1981 the Museum opened an exhibition gallery, Stage 1 of the Powerhouse Museum, in the Tram Depot, 200m across Harris St in Mary Ann St (*on the Powerhouse Museum's site*) to give visitors an experience of the new Powerhouse Museum

and a museum curators and exhibition designers the chance to trial interactives and hands-on elements.

The name, Powerhouse Museum was chosen as the Museum is inspired by and explores the industrial heritage expressed in the buildings, the location and, in the Powerhouse Museum's overarching narrative – the Industrial Revolution.

Thus there have only been **TWO moves** in the Museum's 140 year history – not six moves as spruikers claim – a ruse to give the impression that the Powerhouse is 'a pack it up and shift it museum'. Nothing is further from the truth.

The Ultimo Powerhouse Museum is widely acknowledged as one of the most site specific, context complementary and technically refined museums in Australia.

So the 'move the Powerhouse Museum plan' is pure and simple 'cargo-cult' spin – Parramatta will not have the Powerhouse Museum – nor was it ever possible as was made clear at the start by those of us with knowledge and experience of the Museum.

“This project marks a significant opportunity to support population growth, deliver significant economic benefit, enhance liveability outcomes, as well as leverage investment in public transport in one of the fastest evolving regions in NSW and Australia”. Stage 2 Design Brief p138

There would be a range of cultural infrastructure options for achieving the same results in terms of urban design outcomes – worthwhile projects which:

- do not have a total project cost of \$1.5bn++
- do not result in the destruction of the 140yr old Powerhouse Museum
- are better suited to the flood prone site
- would better complement the heritage buildings of Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace so they do not 'need' to be demolished.
- would mean funds were available to more wisely and widely fund regional cultural and heritage projects and programs.
- would foster the cultural aspirations expressed in the City of Parramatta's Cultural Plan Discussion Paper 2016 and expressed by the Parramatta community in multiple fora and documents.
- would be better suited to the tightness and constraints of the site, to highlight Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace, and to facilitate the desired circulation paths across the site from the CBD, through to and along the riverbank.
- would mean funds were available to more widely and wisely fund regional and city-wide museums.

Trying to accommodate the very specific infrastructure, museological and technical requirements of a major museum (as does the Ultimo Museum) – especially one with such a complex and imposing collection, only adds to the degree of difficulty, especially on this constrained, flood prone riverbank site.

This would no doubt explain why the Stage 2 Design Brief (pp130-131, 235-239), only specifies **5,200sqm of museum standard environmentally controlled presentation (exhibition space). The Powerhouse Museum has 21,800sq m of museum standard environmentally controlled exhibition spaces.**

Note, there is no doubt in my mind that there will be far less of the Museum's 500,000 object collection on display at Parramatta, even with the unrealistic expectation of 3-6 monthly changes of exhibitions, because there is only 25% of the Powerhouse Museum's exhibition spaces.

Based on the Powerhouse Museum's exhibition planning, a 500sqm exhibition curated from the Museum's collection would have on average between 300-500 objects, variables being size of objects and whether additional elements such as interactives, audio visuals and, if a family focussed exhibition – spaces for interaction and play. A minor temporary exhibition of 100sqm would have an average of 50 objects. So, say there were 4 exhibitions with max 500 objects and 2 with 50 objects then that is about 2,100 objects on display at Parramatta. Even if there were 2 x changeovers in a year, that is still only 4,200 objects, say 5,000 on display over 12 months. Fact: the Powerhouse has 75% more museum standard exhibition space so, on a standard museum calculation, can display 75% more objects than Parramatta using equivalent exhibitions as a base.

It is a lie to say that Parramatta will be equivalent to the Powerhouse Museum – it most certainly will not. It will not be displaying more of the Museum's collection. Perhaps the exhibitions will all be of the smallest objects in the Museum's collection – piled high to the ceilings, packed in drawers and set in ranks along the shelves – display storage in truth – not exhibitions – and even then not approaching the capacity of the Powerhouse.

As is the case with this ill-judged plan, I am unlikely to be proved wrong even if the fashionable models prevail of creative producers mining the collection for artist generated presentations of objects from the collection, and of immersive experiences for selfie opportunities.

Such experiences are **not** the product of the serious research and scholarship which underpin curated narrative exhibitions presenting the stories inherent in the themes and artefacts in the collection – museum exhibitions.

The prevalence for artist/creatives-produced exhibitions is a worrying instance of the flight from history which is increasingly evident in our cultural, educational and academic spheres.

The rest of the Parramatta building's spaces are for events, conferences, commercial kitchen, eateries, co-working spaces, labs, residential accommodation, retail, theatre experiences etc. – none of which is specified to have museum standard environmentally controlled conditions – presumably because none of these functions are specific to museum usage and functions.

"The Powerhouse emerged from a history of 19th Century grand exhibition halls, including the Grand Palais and the Garden Palace. The Powerhouse Precinct will radically return to its origins through the creation of large-scale flexible exhibition spaces that support high visitor numbers, engage communities with new technologies and provide opportunities for collaboration and exchange. Flexible exhibition spaces will ensure a significant increase of access to the Collection through the delivery of a changing, dynamic exhibition program." Stage 2 Design Brief p18

In 1893, the Technological Museum opened at 659 Harris Street Ultimo in a fit for purpose building which had display bays on each of its 3 floors. Its displays were arranged to exhibit and

explain objects related to economics of the natural products of Australia; the industrial advance of civilisation; and to promote craftsmanship and artistic taste. (Guide to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Harris St, Sydney, 28th edition 1961.)

The Powerhouse Museum has never been modelled on a trade hall like Paris's Grand Palais – which incidentally opened in 1900, well after the Museum was founded.

The acme of grand volumes for the Powerhouse Museum are the Wran Building, Galleria, Turbine Hall and Boiler Hall, the perfect volumes, the Boiler hall and Turbine Hall physical remnants of Sydney's industrial heritage, all with museum standard environmentally controlled conditions for displaying the Museum's imposing, massive objects of technology – the foundation objects of the Industrial Revolution.

No need to build anonymous, big spaces at Parramatta which don't have the required museum conditions for the Museum's significant and highly valuable collection. Unless of course these spaces are really designed for events, immersive experiences, light shows, parties, concerts etc sans Museum objects.

“In April 2018, the NSW Government announced the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta (now referred to as the ‘Powerhouse Precinct at Parramatta’). This move will enable the Museum to be the largest in NSW”. Stage 2 Design Brief p138

The Government's plan to 'move' the Powerhouse Museum will result in the demolition and sale of the Museum's Ultimo site. This destruction will then make the Parramatta building the largest 'not a museum' in NSW. Minister Harwin announced a 'cultural presence'- whatever that is - at Ultimo in the original Power House buildings as a sop to Sydney.

Is this destruction really the way to build culture in NSW? The Committee for Sydney 2019 benchmarking report shows that Sydney ranks at the bottom of its 30 global city peers for the number of museums, and also for the authenticity and diversity of local cultural experiences.

The Powerhouse Museum's museum standard exhibition and public spaces listed below will be demolished and the site sold if this plan proceeds:

- the magnificent 1988 Wran Building with its 1800sqm entry exhibition gallery plus the 530 sqm upper gallery.
- the Galleria with its soaring spaces specifically designed to showcase the priceless 1785 Boulton & Watt, operating in steam; Robert Stephenson's 1854 No 1 Locomotive with tender, 1st, 2nd & 3rd class carriages; the replica of Lawrence Hargrave's man lifting box kite, the original made and flown by Hargrave in 1894; Dick Smith's Bell Jetranger helicopter which he flew in the first solo circumnavigation of the world 1983 and; a favourite with generations – the working model Strasburg clock made by Richard Smith, 1887-89.

All these significant and much loved objects will be removed from display and put into storage although, somewhat grudgingly expressed:

‘There is an opportunity to examine the possibility of placing the Boulton and Watt engine on display within one of the circulation spaces in the Museum.’ Stage 2 Design Brief p24

This proposal is outrageous – this priceless artefact of international significance consigned to a circulation space with sub standard environmental conditions and, rumoured to be set to run on a push button – not steamed. The engine comes to life when steamed – the sounds of the steam revolution which powered the Industrial Revolution.

If this display prospect is true – or even in consideration, operation by electricity is an insane proposal. The engine requires lubrication or its internal components will be ruined – it is a steam object that requires the metal to be hot in its operation. The oil heats and becomes liquid insuring the lubrication of the engine, minimising wear or damage of the engine from binding and jamming. Only an idiot would suggest such an outrageous mode of operation – let alone the engine’s removal from the safe, secure and stunning setting of its Ultimo display, operating under steam as in 1785 – the full impact of motion, sounds and smells – deeply revealing of the industrial age of the object – in the Galleria of the Powerhouse Museum. Contrast this with an electric clock – no sounds and hidden damage. Seriously – you couldn’t make it up!

Note: Circulation spaces at Parramatta will *not* have museum standard environmental conditions.

No such display prospects are mooted for No 1 Locomotive or the Catalina Flying Boat, Frigate Bird II, though sketches approximating their respective profiles have been glimpsed in various spaces – also *without* museum standard environmental display conditions.

Back to the demolition of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo....

- Two theatres - a 250 seat and a 100 seat and shared projection box, backstage
- Learning/education/schools spaces, the Lace Study Centre, toilets and back of house, including under the forecourt.
- The exhibitions on levels 3 & 2 of the Wran building
- The exhibitions in 2 levels of the Switch House and the cafe, shop and cloakroom
- All the exhibitions in the Turbine Hall including the recreated Kings Cinema and Wong Sat shop from Fullerton NSW, as well as valuable and famous icons of the Museum’s collection.
- Steam Revolution, 11 historic engines powered by steam including significant Australian engines.
- All of the Boiler Hall exhibitions – the magnificent display of Aviation and Space hardware, the recreated Signal Box with its exhibition of rail history, Locomotive 1243 and the governors carriage removed along with the destination board from Central Station – just up the road.
- AND THE REST....

Also slated to be demolished, the former Ultimo Tram Depot – now known as the Harwood Building, with its fit for purpose exhibition gallery, library, conservation labs, photography studios, registration and collection management facilities, curatorial, workshops and exhibition assembly space, museum standard double loading docks, with high load lift to accessible secure collection storage, with all the support spaces and facilities for a real museum – the Powerhouse - even now being emptied to be demolished and sold.

*“The Powerhouse Precinct will offer a **once-in-a-generation** opportunity to create a **purpose built museum** to welcome people from across NSW and around the world to experience the Museum’s Collection.”*
Stage 2 Design Brief, p138

The opening of the Powerhouse Museum in 1988 was the result of determined efforts since the mid 1950s to find a new home for the Museum as it had outgrown its 1893 home at 659 Harris Street.

The visionary transformation of the Ultimo Power House set new benchmarks for museum experiences with a record of awards (see att List of Awards 1988-2008) since its 1988 opening ranging from architecture, design, technical capacities, exhibitions, events, public programs, publications, museological projects, IT projects and initiatives etc – all testament to the fact that the Powerhouse Museum is a fit for purpose museum – **a mere 32 years old, designed and built for a 100 year lifespan.**

The implication that infrastructure, such as the Powerhouse Museum, reaches its use-by date in a generation – say 25-30 years - is ridiculous and flies in the face of proven systems of risk management, planned maintenance and sustainability and, conceptual, strategic and practice renewal, which were the hallmarks of all the Powerhouse Museum's management, projects, programs and exhibitions when I was a member of the Museum's senior executive team (1988-2009).

The Stage 2 Design Brief specifies on 100 year life on a flood prone site – carrying the logic of their argument, does this mean Parramatta will be replaced in 30 years! Does this apply equally to all the other cultural institutions in Sydney – to Parliament House?

It is a statement which is also ignorant of the outstanding record of the Powerhouse Museum since 1988 – no doubt deliberately so - of the Museum's extensive programs and projects which connected the collection with audiences at Ultimo, across greater Sydney, across Australia, across the world and, even into space when in the Museum worked with NASA to provide a live feed of images from the Voyager 2 space probe's historic encounter with Neptune, screened in the theatre inside the Space Shuttle reproduction in the Boiler Hall.

The Museum is demonstrably able to meet the requirements of the digital age.

The Powerhouse will *“Invent a new paradigm for the design and operation of a museum to create spaces that enable flexibility and dynamic programs that support repeat visitation.” Stage 2 Design Brief p5*

This is a hollow statement, which reveals little understanding of museums and ignorance of the record of the Powerhouse Museum. The attached List of Exhibitions – and all the Annual Reports since opening in 1988, catalogue lively, varied, inventive, classic and innovative models for presenting the Museum's collection in ways which encourage new ways of thinking about our world – past, present and future.

With proper sustainable funding; a program of renewal, a catch up on delayed maintenance (see PWC Report – about \$2m in unfunded maintenance); and, recruitment of people with museological knowledge and experience, the Powerhouse Museum will remain a cultural leader in reaching diverse communities through its extraordinary collection.

No need to spend \$1.5bn plus, to disperse its collection and to destroy the Powerhouse Museum.

The Stage 2 Design Brief is a paradigm of phoniness – a brief for a phoney Powerhouse in brand only which reveals in the writers a lack of knowledge, understanding and experience of museum philosophy, practice and review based on audience response and engagement. There is a total bias to pursuing the plan to 'move' the Powerhouse – an impossibility.

*The Powerhouse will retain its contemporary relevance through the delivery of a dynamic program where **nothing is permanent**. This will future-proof the institution and give it the ability to constantly evolve and expand its programs in response to the needs of Sydney's growing communities.*

*This is a significant development from how the Powerhouse currently delivers programs, wherein **the majority of exhibitions have life spans of ten to 30 years**. Stage 2 Design Brief p24*

The goal of a 'museum' where 'nothing is permanent' is a retrograde, indeed laughable 'development' which reveals the ignorance and lack of understanding about how a major history museum like the Powerhouse uses its exhibition and related programs to engage visitors with its collection.

When the Powerhouse Museum opened it presented 23 exhibitions grouped into seven themes: Creativity and Australian Achievement; Everyday Life in Australia; Science Technology and Perception; Decorative Arts; and Bringing People Together. These overarching themes were explored through an active program of exhibitions ranging from permanent or in situ signature object installation, for example, No 1 Locomotive; the Boulton and Watt steam engine and the flight of airplanes surrounding the Catalina; to short term temporary displays such as the burnt shard of the cladding of the World Trade Centre presented to the Museum by a delegation of New York firemen to mark the shared agony of the terrorist attack of Sept 11 2001.

The permanent exhibitions themselves were regularly updated with new sub themes and collection, the addition of interactives, audio visuals, new acquisitions etc. In fact there were eight different types of exhibitions used as the template for planning the exhibition program for 1-3 years – a constantly evolving and responsive program informed by audience surveys, external events eg Sydney Olympics 2000, and opportunities for partnerships.

Finally for this submission, the EIS consultants report referred to earlier considers 3 options the first being the ridiculous:

“Option 1 – The ‘do nothing’ scenario

The ‘do nothing’ scenario considers retaining the existing site in situ and electing not to construct the proposed Powerhouse Parramatta. Whilst this outcome would retain all existing buildings including local heritage on the site, this outcome would also fail to realise the strategic need for the proposal, as discussed above, and would be inconsistent with the NSW Government’s strategic planning policies. It would also negatively impact the ongoing operation of the Powerhouse, which has been increasingly straining to meet its obligations to display, conserve, maintain, secure and operationally manage its collections. The Business Case Summary argues that, without fundamental change, this position is expected to deteriorate further. EIS pp13-14

This is a contradiction in terms and is based on a previously discredited ambit claim for grandiose expenditure by an inexperienced museum leadership – all of whom abandoned ship. The 2014 MAAS Final Business Case for the Renewal of the Powerhouse Museum is a litany of exaggerations, unsubstantiated claims and fallacious, illogical 'arguments' upon which the Government now bases its case for the 'move of the Powerhouse to Parramatta.

The Powerhouse Museum must remain in Ultimo and be renewed and the Parramatta community be engaged in meaningful consultation about cultural development and heritage custodianship in Parramatta. Show belief in the people of Parramatta and support their cultural aspirations.

Cultural development and support must be distributed across NSW in consultation with rural communities and centres. To proceed with the Government's 'move' the Powerhouse plan would be cultural vandalism and cultural divestment.

Jennifer Sanders

I am happy to have my name published with my submission

I am happy to appear before the Inquiry.

Credentials: I write as the former Deputy Director, Collections and Outreach, Powerhouse Museum from 2001 to February 2009. I began my career at the Museum in 1978 as museum assistant, curator then senior curator, decorative arts and design. I was a key member of the Powerhouse Museum development team before taking up senior executive positions in 1988 - Assistant Director, Associate Director then Deputy Director. All these roles always had responsibility for the Collection, Registration and Conservation and for periods, Exhibitions, Education, Library, Sydney Observatory, Museums Discovery Centre, Regional Services and the Migration Heritage Centre NSW.

I was a member of the National Cultural Heritage Committee from 1999 – 2008, from 2007 - 2012, I was a member of the External Advisory Panel, Design Research Institute, RMIT University, Melbourne. I am now a heritage and museum consultant. In 2001 I was awarded the Centenary of Federation Medal. I am a member of ICOM, TICCIH, AMaGA and the National Trust.