

<https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/western-sydney-powerhouse-museum-government-stand-20180424-p4zbf.html>

## **The Sydney Morning Herald**

### **Western Sydney urges government to stand ground on Powerhouse Museum**

**By Linda Morris**

25 April 2018 — 11:52am

The NSW government has received more ammunition to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta after key organisations and leaders from the region signed a letter urging it to remain steadfast in the face of growing opposition.

More than 30 organisations have put their names to the letter, organised by the Sydney Business Chamber, which has been sent to NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Opposition Leader Luke Foley.

[no photo]

The site of the new Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta.

*Photo: Louise Kennerley*

Support for the building of a Powerhouse Museum to anchor a new cultural precinct on the banks of the Parramatta River has come from across the business, health, tourism, finance, media and education sectors.

"We believe the establishment of a reinvigorated tier-one cultural institution is critical to the artistic and recreational development of western Sydney and Parramatta", they said.

Signatories include Lang Walker founder of the Walker Corporation, the chief executive officers of the YMCA, the Southern Cross Group, Westmead Private Hospital, Bankstown Airport and Rookwood Cemetery, the executive director of the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, Greg Whitby, and the managing director of the Arab Bank Australia, Joseph Rizk.

The letter also includes the signature of Dr Andy Marks, assistant vice-chancellor of Western Sydney University. The current vice-chancellor, Professor Barney Glover, is chair of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences' board of trustees, governing the Powerhouse site in Ultimo.

The letter observed it was long past time for the NSW government and Parliament to redress the inequality of cultural arts investment in the region where one-third of NSW's population lives but receives 1 per cent of Commonwealth arts program funding and 5.5 per cent of the state government's arts budget.

[no photo]

David Borger: A new Powerhouse Museum needs to be built in Parramatta, "no ifs, no buts". *Photo: Supplied*

Director of Western Sydney Business Chamber, David Borger, said it was hoped the letter would remind both political leaders of the region's cultural neglect and its rights to a top-tier cultural institution, "no ifs, no buts".

The state government was confident of bipartisan support for its relocation plans until two weeks ago when [the opposition announced it would not move the](#)

[museum](#) from Ultimo and instead build a dedicated performance and exhibition space in Parramatta where blockbuster exhibitions could roll through.

On the same day, the government was left embarrassed when one of its MPs crossed the floor of Parliament on the issue [forcing the release of the business case justifying relocation](#). That deadline expires today (Thursday).

In his own open letter to the Premier, Parramatta's Lord Mayor Andrew Wilson said a new Powerhouse Museum was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build Australia's next great museum and anchor a thriving western Sydney creative community which, for so long, had been starved of significant capital funds.

[no photo]Western Sydney leaders have urged Gladys Berejiklian to stay steadfast.  
*Photo: Natalie Roberts*

With an announcement thought to be imminent, Museums Australia, the national peak advocacy body representing museums and galleries, also [released a statement](#) expressing renewed concern for the safety and accessibility of the museum's valuable collections. National director Alex Marsden said her body stood by its submission to the Upper House inquiry, still underway, that greater consultation and investigation of options should take place to provide the best solutions for both the people of Western Sydney and the Powerhouse Museum in its role as a leading state and international institution. The Smithsonian model of different museums and galleries under one organisational structure had significant support, the statement noted.

Should relocation proceed, the state government must commit adequate relocation, capital development and ongoing operational funds to enable "an exemplary 21st-century cultural facility to thrive", the body said.



**[Linda Morris](#)**

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Linda Morris is an arts and books writer for The Sydney Morning Herald.