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Powerhouse release text

JODI MCKAY CALLS ON BEREJIKLIAN GOVERNMENT TO KEEP PROMISE TO PARRAMATTA AND SAVE WILLOW GROVE

NSW Labor Leader Jodi McKay has demanded the Berejiklian Government consult with the people of Parramatta over its controversial and increasingly troubled \$1.5 billion Powerhouse Museum relocation – ensuring the beloved heritage building Willow Grove is saved and incorporated into a future Parramatta arts and cultural facility.

On a visit to Willow Grove today, joined by Shadow Minister for Heritage Kate Washington and Federal Labor Parramatta MP Julie Owens, Ms McKay accused the Premier of breaking a promise to the people of Parramatta.

“We’ve never said it [Willow Grove] will go as part of the Powerhouse Museum. We’ve always said of course our intention is to save it.” [Premier Gladys Berejiklian, February 19, 2019](#)

Instead, in mid-December, with NSW distracted by devastating bushfires, her Government approved a bizarre, [heritage-destroying](#) design that was described by Labor as a “monstrosity on stilts”.

Surprisingly for such a flagship project, the Premier wasn’t even present at the announcement. Instead she left it to the Arts Minister.

“Spending \$1.5 billion on relocating museum exhibits across Sydney is a colossal indulgence at a time of bushfires, drought, and hospitals and schools under funding pressure. Labor believes there are so many more important uses of that money,” Ms McKay said.

“Gladys Berejiklian is hiding from the people of Parramatta because she knows she promised she would save Willow Grove and instead she’s called in the bulldozers.”

“The people of Parramatta weren’t consulted – and even worse, they were lied to.”

Ms McKay noted the Government was preparing to knock over another local icon, the Royal Oak Hotel established in 1813, which has long been cherished by Parramatta Eels fans after a big game. She said [Labor supported](#) bestowing a brilliant arts and cultural facility upon Parramatta that respects heritage.

“There are so many new buildings going up these days, and people in Parramatta know we need to balance that with a sensitivity to the rich history that makes this area so special,” Ms McKay said.

Ms Washington added: “You don’t celebrate history by destroying history. The awful irony of bulldozing irreplaceable heritage buildings to make way for a new museum seems to have been lost on Gladys Berejiklian and her Government.”

Willow Grove, built in the 1870s as a private villa and used as a maternity hospital in the 1920s, is [listed](#) on the State Heritage Inventory as “historically significant” and “a good example of a Victorian Italianate two-storey villa, readily identifiable as part of historic building stock and strongly contributing to the streetscape.” Also on the Government’s chopping block as part of the Powerhouse design is St George’s Terrace, built in 1881, and [listed](#) on the State Heritage Inventory as “historically significant”.

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