

Labor

MEDIA RELEASE

JODI MCKAY MP

NSW LABOR LEADER

WALT SECORD MLC

SHADOW MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

SHADOW TREASURER

**PREMIER: WHEN YOU APPOINT A NEW ARTS MINISTER ... ALSO DITCH
\$1.5 BILLION POWERHOUSE MUSEUM PROPERTY DEAL**

NSW Labor today called on NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian to take the opportunity with the resignation of the Arts Minister Don Harwin to also scrap the \$1.5 billion Powerhouse Museum move.

Last night (April 10), Mr Harwin resigned after police issued him with a \$1000 fine for breaching public health orders involving his Pearl Beach holiday home. This will require the Premier to appoint a new Arts Minister

Ms Berejiklian should also take the opportunity to “ditch” the costly Powerhouse Museum plan.

NSW Labor leader Jodi McKay said there is strong opposition to the forced closure of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo and sale of the site to property developers. In addition, the Parramatta site is on a floodplain.

“NSW Labor has strongly opposed the Powerhouse Museum forced re-location as it is a monumental waste - costing at least \$1.5 billion,” Ms McKay said.

“The Powerhouse Museum has always been a property deal for the Berejiklian Government. We would rather see the \$1.5 billion re-directed to other priorities.”

“With the resignation of the Arts Minister, now is the time to ditch the Powerhouse Museum plan,” Ms McKay said.

NSW Shadow Treasurer and Shadow Minister for the Arts Walt Secord said that in these extreme economic circumstances with tens of thousands unemployed, it was hard for the Premier to justify the Powerhouse Museum splurge.

Mr Secord said: “The COVID-crisis has been an absolute disaster for the arts. Artists were the hardest and the first hit. Live performances were the first events cancelled and artists know that they will be the last group to be re-hired during the recovery stage.

“The Morrison and Berejiklian governments – in their various stimulus plans – have completely overlooked the unique circumstances of arts, event and entertainment workers, who largely comprise freelance artists.

“Both Federal and State governments failed to acknowledge artists need to put food on the table and a roof over their heads like everyone else.

Furthermore, freelancers have fallen through the cracks of the JobKeeper

“Due to the nature of their work, many Australian artists do not have savings’ buffers. In fact, many young artists were in the unfortunate situation of supporting their performance work with casual hospitality work– and then both sources evaporated immediately. They got a double whammy of losing both income streams in a single week.

“Furthermore, internationally recognised and established creators found themselves with no work at all – with major screen work and live performances all cancelled.”

As for the Arts Minister Don Harwin resignation, Mr Secord said: “Mr Harwin had no other choice than offer his resignation and the Premier had no other choice than accept that resignation.

“Clearly, he did the wrong thing and there is no way, the Premier could allow a Minister of the Crown to survive after police issued him with a \$1000 fine for breaching a public health order.”

“The Premier, Deputy Premier, the Health Minister and the Police Commissioner told everyone to stay in Sydney and not visit their holiday homes.

“In New Zealand Health Minister was demoted by the Prime Minister and Scotland’s chief medical officer was sacked – for similar breaches. The Premier had no longer choice but to accept his resignation.”

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MEDIA CONTACT: 0418 625 276

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