

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/powerhouse-museum-reopening-left-a-mystery-20200526-p54whe.html?fbclid=IwAR07dmUhTRGXpzE4FBR9cwH490BJVWuEXgLUyQpS-s3S8kx8AVEB8Ph6Yx0>

Powerhouse Museum reopening left a mystery

By [Linda Morris](#)

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Delays to the reopening of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo have sparked concerns that the NSW government intends to use health considerations linked to COVID-19 to prematurely close the institution to the public.

While the Art Gallery of NSW and Museum of Contemporary Art are reopening their doors in June in the wake of the coronavirus lockdown, the museum remains closed with no date yet set for its reopening.

The *Herald* sought clarification from Create NSW about the opening of the Powerhouse Museum and received the same response twice: "We are reviewing how each of our sites can operate under the latest NSW Health guidance for managing COVID-19. An announcement will be made shortly."

[A date is yet to be set for the reopening of the Powerhouse Museum
CREDIT: BROOK MITCHELL]

Greens MP David Shoebridge said he feared the government was attempting to refuse the people of NSW the chance to farewell the Powerhouse Museum.

The museum's heritage buildings, including the Turbine Hall with its suspended aircraft, had been scheduled to close on June 30 under plans to relocate the museum to Parramatta. The Wran Building with its entrance, theatrettes, and Touring Hall housing the Locomotive No 1 and Boulton & Watt Steam Engine - the latter regarded as one of the most significant technological artefacts to have ever reached Australia - was to have followed in 12 months.

A fresh parliamentary inquiry has been launched into the state government's \$1.1 billion plan to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. The same select committee last year urged relocation be abandoned and western Sydney be given its own world-class institution.

"No doubt they realise the moment would be used to build opportunities to protest the government's plans," said Mr Shoebridge, the inquiry's deputy chairman. "This

is one of the worst examples of hiding a deeply unpopular government decision under the cover of a COVID-19 emergency response. I believe the Powerhouse will not go quietly into the night."

A source, who is familiar with the museum's situation but not authorised to speak publicly, said: "If this destruction is to go ahead, people should be given an opportunity to see the museum before it is euthanised. To not let the museum reopen would be doubly sad for staff."

The Environment Impact Statement for Parramatta Powerhouse still to be exhibited. Premature closure would leave the government vulnerable to protests that it was pre-empting the consultation process.

A draft summary, released prematurely by the Department of Planning, supported the demolition of two "one of a kind" historic buildings in the Parramatta CBD for the Powerhouse's new home.