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Powerhouse Museum: The Community Speaks National Trust (NSW) Survey Reveals Overwhelming Vote to Stay at Ultimo

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MEDIA RELEASE

On 30 April 2020, the National Trust (NSW) asked the community to complete a survey about the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo. The community could participate in the survey until 8 May 2020. The purpose of undertaking the survey was to quantify and qualify the significance of the museum in its current location at Ultimo, its built, social and cultural heritage, and the significance of its collection to the people of New South Wales. The National Trust (NSW) distributed a link to the online survey to its members and subscribers to its eNews, to the organisation's Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter followers.

The National Trust (NSW) received 1,320 responses to its survey.

"The overwhelming response to the survey we conducted was that people want the Powerhouse Museum and its collection to remain where it is," said Graham Quint, National Trust (NSW)'s Director, Conservation. "People from all postcodes across Sydney, throughout New South Wales and around the world participated and shared their views with us. The responses indicated that the Powerhouse is such a socially significant place, a fine example of built heritage in its own right and contains an extraordinary collection that tells the story of innovation, technological development, progress and advancement in Australia.

"It is regarded as a powerhouse of knowledge for inquisitive minds – young and old alike – and its location in the precinct of the University of Technology, Sydney speaks volumes of our need for yet more discovery in the field of STEM. It is also ideally placed for the tourism and transport hubs of the CBD and the fact that it is actually a Powerhouse – it simply belongs where it is," Graham Quint said.

"The National Trust (NSW) was so dismayed to read over the weekend that the NSW Premier, in considering the relocation project for the Powerhouse, decided to proceed. We have more than 1,300 people who took the time to share their thoughts on how important this place is to them and they did this in the grips of a global pandemic as they watch the social and economic ramifications of this crisis unfold," Graham Quint said. "It is *that* important to people."

Two key questions in the survey were:

- Do you think the Powerhouse Museum and its collection should stay open in Ultimo?
To which 98.6 per cent of survey respondents said yes, and 1.32 per cent said no.
- Do you think the Powerhouse Museum, including the buildings and the permanent collection, should be listed on the State Heritage Register? To which 98.2 per cent of respondents said yes, and 1.4 per cent said no.

Some key community sentiment about the importance of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo's significance to the people of New South Wales was reflected in the following results:

- 94 per cent of those surveyed strongly agreed that the Powerhouse Museum is an iconic place to visit in Sydney.
- 98 per cent of those surveyed strongly agreed that the Powerhouse Museum is an important cultural institution.
- 98 per cent of those surveyed strongly agreed that the Powerhouse Museum plays an important role in the education of school age students in NSW.
- 91 per cent of those surveyed strongly agreed that the Powerhouse Museum's buildings and its exhibits are both of significant value to the people of NSW.

As a result of the survey, the National Trust (NSW) has made a submission to the Heritage Council of New South Wales to consider placing the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo and its permanent collection on the State Heritage Register.

The National Trust (NSW) maintains its position that:

- The Powerhouse Museum and its collection should be maintained at Ultimo in its current location.
- The community's consistent and persistent position on this should be considered by the NSW Government – particularly now in the context of economic and social uncertainty due to COVID-19.
- Parramatta should be provided with its own museum when the time is right.
- Willow Grove and St. George's Terrace should be preserved at Parramatta.

"We urge the Premier of our great state to reconsider the decision to relocate the Powerhouse Museum, to hear the community, recognise the significance of this wonderful cultural institution and where it is located today," Graham Quint said. "It would be a beacon of hope that while the world is changing in many frightening ways around us, the community can be heard, their views can be appreciated and our Government will listen."

Read the National Trust (NSW) report *The Powerhouse Museum: Your Say*

Graham Quint, Director, Conservation at the National Trust (NSW) is available for interview:

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The Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Australia.