

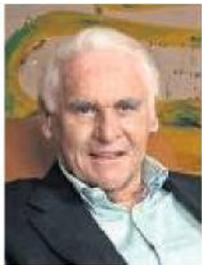
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/developer-lang-walker-appointed-to-new-look-powerhouse-museum-board-20201106-p56c6m.html>

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Billionaire developer joins board of Powerhouse - Sydney

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Megan Gorrey



Lang Walker. Photo: Louise Kennerley

One of the state's leading developers has been appointed to the board of the Powerhouse Museum, as the NSW government pushes ahead with plans for a new building at Parramatta and an overhaul of its Ultimo site.

Billionaire property developer Lang Walker will join former NSW Liberal leader Peter Collins and Mark Hassell, a partner at consulting giant KPMG, as trustees on a new-look Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences board at a time of significant upheaval for the Sydney arts institution.

The government is forging ahead with its \$840 million ambition to construct the new Parramatta Powerhouse, while it eyes the possible redevelopment of part of the existing museum site in inner-city Ultimo.

Announcing the appointments yesterday, Arts Minister Don Harwin said the three "recognised business leaders would bring "significant experience and strategic expertise to the board".

He said this expertise would be important as the government "embarks on this exciting period of transformation which will deliver a more diverse and accessible arts and cultural environment for many generations to come".

"I look forward to their guidance as we work together to deliver on an important expansion and transformation of the museum for the people of NSW," he said.

Museum consultant Kylie Winkworth criticised the lack of diversity and experience in museum management and collections among the trustees.

“I fear with these appointments we might be going into another round of ‘Save the Powerhouse’. Museums and our cultural institutions are not small operations; they are managing huge and highly valuable assets,” she said.

“What are the skills the government thinks the museum board needs? It seems to be property development, political nous and heading up a company.”

The appointments coincide with the departure of Western Sydney University vice-chancellor Barney Glover, who stepped down from the board yesterday. Mr Collins will replace Professor Glover as the board’s president.

Mr Collins is a former arts minister and leader of the NSW opposition, who previously worked as a journalist and a barrister. A published author, he has a “deep interest in museums”, the government said in a press release.

It said investing in greater Sydney was a priority for Mr Walker, whose Walker Corporation is developing the Parramatta Square precinct. Mr Walker was not available for comment.

The chief executive of property giant Dexus, Darren Steinberg, and businessman Tim Ebbeck exited the museum’s board last year. Mr Steinberg had resigned from his position “due to a possible conflict that may arise with the potential sale of the Powerhouse site”, a spokesman for Dexus said in December.

The state government has since abandoned its divisive plan to shift the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta and sell off the Ultimo site to developers.

<https://todayspaper.smedia.com.au/smh/PrintArticle.aspx?doc=SMH%2F2020%2F11%2F07&entity=ar01205&mode=text>