

<https://www.goulburnpost.com.au/story/7131804/old-steam-engines-relocation-goes-off-the-boil/>

Goulburn Post

FEBRUARY 18 2021 - 6:00AM

Powerhouse Museum pulls pin on Goulburn Maudslay move



Louise Thrower



STALLED: The council was working with local engineer Ken Ainsworth to accommodate the Maudslay beam engine at The Waterworks. The Powerhouse Museum has deferred a decision on its relocation to Goulburn. Photo: Louise Thrower.

Hopes that a historic beam engine would be relocated from Sydney's Powerhouse Museum to Goulburn have been dashed, at least for now. Council general manager Warwick Bennett said the proposed transfer of the 1837 Maudslay Sons and Field steam engine had been caught up in the Powerhouse's "politics" and controversy surrounding an additional facility at Parramatta.

A state Upper House inquiry into the government's plan for the museum resumed on Monday. The Maudslay move rated a mention.

READ MORE:

[Goulburn works to reclaim Old Brewery's Maudslay steam engine](#)

[Goulburn continues talks with Powerhouse Museum over engine](#)

[Goulburn's Maudslay Sons and Field steam engine hits inquiry](#)

[Maudslay engine's proposed Goulburn move comes in for scrutiny](#)

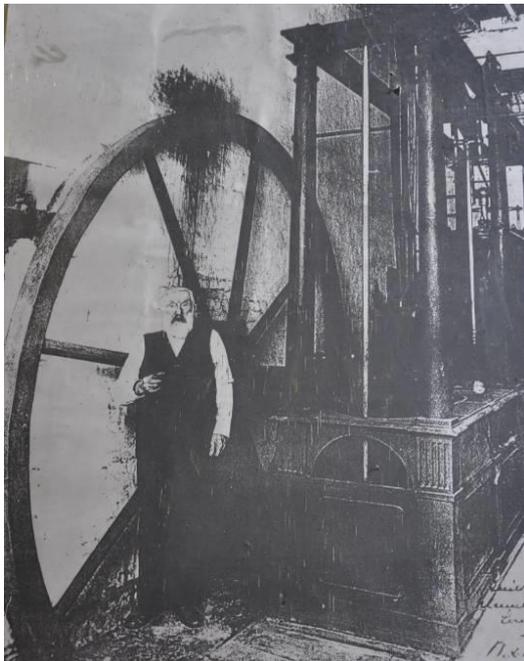
"We have been informed by the Powerhouse management that they are now basically deferring this (relocation and loan) decision while they sort out the internal politics, the consultation needs of those involved with the museum and I am hoping, (with) the Goulburn community," he told Tuesday night's council meeting.

"...We'll wait until the matter re-emerges and any offer that comes to us for that engine. It's extremely disappointing because it's a Goulburn asset and it would be great to have it back at The Waterworks Museum."

The Maudslay was however brought here in 1837 to power an industrial complex at the Old Goulburn Brewery. Manufactured in England by Maudslay Sons and Field, it was thought to be the world's only surviving six-beam engine. The steam-powered equipment was moved to the Sydney's Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences from the brewery in the 1920s. Current Brewery owner Michael O'Halloran would like to see it back at the complex, while the council has lobbied for its relocation to The Waterworks at Marsden Weir.

ALSO READ: [Police make bid for new station on old council depot site](#)

On Monday, Shadow Arts Minister Walt Secord questioned Powerhouse CEO Lisa Havilah on a council notation in Tuesday's business paper that "the proposal was no longer supported by the museum's) management and was unlikely to proceed in the short term."



UNIQUE: Bartlett's Brewery owner, William Bartlett, pictured with the Maudslay beam engine before its early 1920s move to Sydney's Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Photo from '10,000 Years of Sydney Life: A Guide to Archaeological Discovery.'

Ms Havilah replied that "consideration of the loan was ongoing."
"Not according to the business paper...(It) recommends completion in this long-running debate on whether the engine will be returned to Goulburn," Mr Secord countered. "I'm not sure where they received that advice but I'll take it on notice," Ms Havilah answered.

ALSO READ: [Residents look to the bigger picture on Hurst Street heritage](#)

Last September, Mr Secord said he was "highly sceptical" that the loan would proceed. He argued that the government's decision to have two Powerhouse Museums, one in the city and the other at Parramatta, would have consequences for the loan of other items to rural and regional areas. But he also called on the government to "do the right thing by Goulburn."

Mr Bennett said there was "no question" the Maudslay could have been safely relocated. This was despite evidence of two former Powerhouse curators to the inquiry that the engine was "extremely fragile" and components could shatter if transported.

The GM said local engineer, Ken Ainsworth, who had vast experience with old steam engines, thought it could be safely moved. He was advising the council on how it could be accommodated at The Waterworks.

"There were just a number of criteria that we had to meet; it had to be on permanent display, remain in public ownership and in a safe, enclosed environment out of the flood zone. We could meet all of those," Mr Bennett said.

No money had been spent at this stage as the council was awaiting the museum's final decision before commencing investigations.

At the October 20 meeting, councillors discussed the move's costs in a closed session on the basis of commercial in confidence. *The Goulburn Post* unsuccessfully challenged the closed talks, arguing the council and Powerhouse were publicly funded bodies.

But Mr Bennett replied that the council still had to act in a commercial way.

"It has also been requested of us that the matter be dealt with in confidence as there would need to be a significant public announcement, including support of the government, prior to this being finalised," he told the meeting.

If councillors believed it should be discussed openly, Mr Bennett asked that the matter be withdrawn in order to firstly gain approval from the museum and the government.

But on Wednesday, the GM said he thought a final decision would come in December but it never did.

"I think it will come back on the agenda after The Powerhouse works through its internal processes and the parliament settles what is happening with a new museum at Parramatta," he said.