

26 February 2021

'The Government's proposed expansion of Castle Hill Discovery Centre ... is completely unnecessary'

Save the Powerhouse email and Facebook:

Hi Everyone,

It has been said many times before, but it's still worth repeating. The Government's proposed expansion of its uninspiring Castle Hill Discovery Centre, over 20km from Sydney and Parramatta in the middle of nowhere, is COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY.

The Powerhouse already has all the essential facilities required for smooth future functioning including collection storage, curation, exhibition preparation and backroom operations, in the custom-designed Harwood Building.

The MAAS CEO's "explanation" that the extra storage space is needed because the museum's large collection is 'growing all the time' is just not good enough. With efficient planning of the so-called "Ultimo Renewal" there would be ample room for a large part of the current collection, and the rest, including new additions could be accommodated at Castle Hill with minor modifications.

By NOT building the expansion, the Government could save (estimate) \$50M for spending on other projects more beneficial to the NSW community, such as building three new regional museums.

Experts warn that storing collections far away from the relevant museums (at Ultimo and/or Parramatta) would put them at great risk as many of these fragile objects would need to be transported frequently (whenever temporary exhibitions changed)

Additionally unnecessary transportation would be a further waste of public money, contributing to traffic congestion in Sydney and air pollution.

Museum specialists further advise that future exhibition preparation from a remote location is inefficient and impractical. It would again generate a lot of road traffic, with a waste of qualified staff time spent on the road, while Curators are also better located at the museum where the exhibition is actually mounted in order to address problems as they occur and maintain the exhibition in perfect condition (Refer Andrew Grant/Ian Debenham/Andrew Simpson's testimony at 21-08-2020 Upper House Inquiry hearing <http://tiny.cc/n1rqtz> - [Pages 17-27](#)).

From the public's perspective, Castle Hill is remote and difficult to access by public transport. It also has limited car parking space. Visitors, especially international tourists with tight itineraries, will be reluctant to brave the time-consuming journey to Castle Hill, (half an hour by metro plus a twenty minute walk) when the acclaimed Ultimo Powerhouse is conveniently located at the heart of Sydney.

Castle Hill therefore seems destined to remain primarily as a storage centre since it cannot pretend to offer a genuine exhibition space alternative (to either Ultimo or Parramatta) except to serve a few local residents.

It is concerning that the planned additional areas at Castle Hill for storing large objects *could* arguably represent the 1st stage of dismantling the Space, Transport and Steam Revolution permanent exhibitions in Ultimo (although this has not been confirmed by MAAS.)

And the ultimate irony of this wantonly wasteful and ill-planned project is that Castle Hill's HISTORIC EUCALYPT PLANTATION would be destroyed to make way for the new building-

at the same time that MAAS is scheduling in June 2021 an “Eucalyptusdom” exhibition <https://maas.museum/event/eucalyptusdom/> in tribute to the time-honoured tree - in the same way that it plans to demolish Willow Grove mansion in Parramatta and mount an exhibition in the proposed new museum describing the villa’s rich history!
It is important that the community make submissions against this project (on exhibition until

04 March, 2021 at <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/35916>). Please mark your submission clearly as an OBJECTION (or it could be registered as a comment). You are welcome to use any points from this post.

Save the Powerhouse

