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# Fashion a worthy focus for revitalised Powerhouse

By **Kellie Hush**

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The late *Harper's Bazaar* fashion director Diana Vreeland once proclaimed: "Fashion is part of the daily air and it changes all the time. You can even see the approaching of a revolution in clothes."

A fitting musing for the change and renewal taking place at Powerhouse Ultimo that will see a reimagining of the museum putting design and fashion to the forefront.

[Models take to the stage at the Powerhouse on Tuesday. *CREDIT: NICK MOIR*]

As a museum of applied arts and sciences the Powerhouse is a living memory of our material heritage. How appropriate then that our nation's fashion industry should take a lead role in reframing the museum's future.

The industry I love and have dedicated my career to, pumped \$27.2 billion into the Australian economy last year and employed nearly half a million people – 77 per cent of whom are women.

And that's just the economic story. The pleasure that fashion brings into so many lives every single day is immeasurable because it is often so personal. The world of fashion is too often maligned as an industry low on substance and high on champagne, when the outputs of the fashion greats that have stitched our lives together through history are etched into our DNA – every one of us.

From your very first pair of Speedos to your first Carla Zampatti jumpsuit, what we wear is who we are. It is our amour, it reflects our mood, it marks a time in history and our own personal story. A great outfit will make you feel confident and kick-ass. When you have a fantastic outfit on, you feel just as fantastic.

Fashion is art and it is everyday life. And what a beautiful juxtaposition. It has an emotional and magical power and the Powerhouse's vast design and fashion collection traces every step of Australian life through an evocative fashion lens.

As a trustee of the Powerhouse, I have been fortunate to have spent many hours viewing the fashion pieces and the revered collection of more than 500,000 objects that tells the stories of where we've been and where we want to go as a society. But why I love fashion so much is because it is a business born of reinvention. Every single season it reinvents itself!

Ultimo and the precincts that surround it have changed a lot since 1988 when the Power House first stirred into its new life as a museum. This renewal will see the birth of a creative industries precinct – a home for designers, creators, the makers and the innovators. And what an incredible opportunity for generations to come, to have the museum to gather and share ideas and creativity.

It's not often cultural institutions have the scope to bring the industry on board, and indeed inside the walls of a museum as this renewal will do.

For young designers of today, and tomorrow, Ultimo will be a place to collaborate, source inspiration from the incredible collection, and see the world's best international exhibitions right here in Sydney – this is a truly remarkable gift to creative industries in Australia.

**Kellie Hush is a Powerhouse trustee and former editor-in-chief of *Harper's Bazaar*.**