

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/a-game-changer-university-joining-forces-with-the-powerhouse-in-a-landmark-deal-20220919-p5bj9o.html>

## ‘A game-changer’: University joining forces with the Powerhouse in a landmark deal



By [Linda Morris](#)

September 23, 2022 — 12.01am

Once a suitor for the Powerhouse Museum’s prime real estate, the University of Technology has now entered into a “game-changer” \$10 million partnership with the cultural institution.

Under the 10-year agreement, the two institutions are to partner on major international and local festivals and events, including Vivid, Australian Fashion Week, and [South by Southwest](#).



(From left) NSW Arts Minister Ben Franklin (left), Powerhouse CEO Lisa Havilah, UTS School of Design dean Elizabeth Mossop, Bachelor of design in visual communication student Sancia Ridgeway and fashion designer Akira Isogawa. *CREDIT: KATE GERAGHTY*

They will work together to lift the profile of Australian fashion nationally and internationally and bring new studio work opportunities for Indigenous students.

“Gone are the days when museums and galleries are big square rooms filled with glass cabinets,” NSW Arts Minister Ben Franklin said.

Five years ago, the university was in private discussions with the NSW government [to buy the site of the Powerhouse Museum](#), at Ultimo. The rumoured \$100 million-plus offer came at a time when the government had announced the museum was to be relocated to Parramatta. Now that the Powerhouse is about to undertake [a \\$500 million renovation](#), the close neighbours are to become collaborators.

Professor Elizabeth Mossop, dean of the faculty of Design, Architecture and Building at UTS, said reinvestment in the museum “was the best outcome”.



Iordanes Spyridon Gogos show during Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2022 at the Powerhouse Museum. *CREDIT:GETTY*

“The fashion and design focus of the museum is perfect in the way it matches up with our fashion and design disciplines,” Mossop said. “They’ve got this world-class costume collection which is of huge interest to our researchers, for example. Our academics are both researchers and creative practitioners so it gives us the opportunity to collaborate with them on exhibitions.”

The foundation partnership will last for a decade, officially beginning when the renewed Powerhouse at Ultimo reopens to the public by 2027.

Powerhouse Museum, whose focus on fashion and design at Ultimo has been contentious, has a target to raise \$50 million in private donations towards the costs of its \$500 million redevelopment.

[Five architectural design teams](#) have been shortlisted as part of a national design competition for the redevelopment, [the scope of which has attracted widespread public criticism](#). A university representative will sit as an adviser on the design competition jury.

Part of the \$10 million spent will be an upfront donation and the rest a contribution to programs. The final split is still to be finalised, museum CEO Lisa Havilah said.

The partnership has been endorsed by fashion designer Akira Isogawa, whose signature garments form part of the museum's fashion collection, and last month joined UTS as a research supervisor.

"It will be a game-changer for UTS students who will have the opportunity to collaborate with creatives across education, the arts, government, and the private sector.

"It is so important that students are able to connect with industry leaders, and I am especially heartened that regional students will have access to world-class facilities as well."

Sancia Ridgeway, a second-year student studying a Bachelor of Design in Visual Communications at UTS, said the partnership made her hopeful for future career options, employment and internship opportunities for students either during their study or afterwards.

"I also want to emphasise that I think there should be a focus on First Nations knowledge and First Nations design."

Franklin said partnerships between museums and universities were the way of the future.