

## **The Powerhouse Museum on the brink of extinction.**

**The Powerhouse Museum is not being renewed; it is being demolished at a cost of \$500m. A 142 year old museum is now on the brink of extinction.**

### **What's at risk in the secret 'Ultimo Renewal' Powerhouse Museum demolition plans?**

- The government is spending \$500 million to erase all trace of the 1988 Powerhouse Museum, its major buildings and signature exhibitions, turning the PHM into a fashion, design and creative industries precinct
- The 'Ultimo Renewal' scheme is a cynical continuation of the NSW government's determined eight year Powerhouse Museum demolition, downsizing and asset grab
- In July 2020 Perrottet promised the Powerhouse Museum was saved. It is not. After the big announcement they continued delivery of the same scheme set in place in 2018.
- The PHM is being demolished and redeveloped in secret plans as a creative industries precinct with subsidised artists' studios, theatres and a focus on fashion and design
- The PHM will no longer be the Powerhouse Museum in name, purpose, audiences or content. This is deliberate. It is now Powerhouse Ultimo.
- In the design competition now underway, only the brick shell of the former power station will be kept. All the museum infrastructure, mezzanines and ramps will be demolished to create four vast venue spaces including a 1,500 seat theatre.
- The Sulman award winning Wran building on Harris Street will be demolished. In its place will be an eight storey building along Harris St, erasing both the Wran building and the sunny public square at the museum's entry.
- Just three large objects will be left in the former Powerhouse Museum, stranded among the pots and frocks. The secret design brief only requires consideration of three large objects to remain in the former PHM.
- The rest of the museum's 350,000 objects exhibited and once housed in the PHM are being evicted to the inaccessible Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill
- Most at-risk are the internationally significant transport, power and engineering collections for which the PHM was purpose designed. These collections are being evicted from their purposed designed exhibition spaces and will never be seen together again.
- For the first time since the 1960s the PHM has no curator of transport and engineering. Skills and knowledge are being disappeared, along with the collections.
- The Harwood building, the former tram depot and state-of- the-art collection facility has been excised from the PHM without explanation or consultation. The plans for this building are secret. It will likely be a development site.
- The Harwood building is an integral part of the PHM's history, design and museum operations. It was purchased by the MAAS Trust in 1964 for £180,000 for use as a transport museum. In the 1970s it was saved by a Green Ban. Its loss will forever degrade the functionality of the PHM, and the transport history and industrial heritage values of the Powerhouse Museum.
- The loss of the Harwood building permanently reduces access to the PHM's collections and wrecks future opportunities for education, trades training, collection access, large object conservation, exhibition fabrication and community engagement.
- The government says its 'Powerhouse Ultimo' will be bigger than the PHM. Not true. It will be smaller than the Real Powerhouse Museum, at a staggering cost of \$500m.
- Based on a recent statement, the government's 'Powerhouse Ultimo' scheme will have less than 50% of the exhibition space in the real PHM.
- The museum's traditional family audiences are being ignored. For the first time last year there was no summer exhibition for families. Programming is skewed to artists and fashion, not families and education.

- There is no recognition that the Powerhouse Museum is a state museum, endowed and built by and for the people of NSW. The PHM's regional communities and affiliated societies have been ignored; and the museum's membership program abolished.
- While Central/ Ultimo is being developed as an education and Tech Precinct, the government is evicting the PHM's science and technology exhibitions and collections, turning the former museum into a function centre and contemporary arts facility for fashion designers, artists and creatives. This makes no policy sense.
- The PHM's history as an industrial and transport heritage site is at risk of demolition.
- Meanwhile the No.1 interest of high value cultural tourists is visiting history, heritage buildings, monuments and sites. So why demolish the state's major heritage museum?
- Sydney ranks 41 out of 48 global peer cities for the number of museums. (It ranks **26 out of 48** for the number of theatres.)The city needs **more** museums, not museum demolition and downsizing.
- Sydney needs to keep its unique heritage buildings, museums and precincts. And it should provide more diversity in its cultural offering.

### What you can do to save the PHM....

- Visit the PHM and see *Steam Revolution* and the remains of the *Transport, Flight and Space* exhibition before it is dismantled and the collections disappear to storage at Castle Hill
- Tell your family and friends the Powerhouse Museum is NOT SAVED. It is NOT being renewed. It is being demolished.
- Write to your MP and ask them to speak out on saving the PHM
- Write to the Premier to complain about his broken promises on the PHM, detailed in the media release under his name of 4 July 2020 <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/more-powerhouse-for-people-%E2%80%93-nsw-government-to-retain-ultimo-museum>
- Write to the Planning Minister and complain about the secrecy and lack of transparent consultation over the EIS. Ask him to reject the EIS and design competition.
- Write to the Labor Opposition leader Chris Minns and ask that Labor commits to saving the PHM
- Share the news of the looming closure and demolition of the PHM among your networks, in the media, on talk back radio, and on social media

### Key Demands

- There is only one Powerhouse Museum and it is in Ultimo, its home since 1893
- The PHM must retain its unique brand and identity as **the Powerhouse Museum**
- The unnecessary, wasteful and destructive design competition should be cancelled
- The Powerhouse Museum must be renewed as a **museum** of applied arts and sciences, displaying science, engineering, transport, innovation, social history, design and fashion
- The Powerhouse Museum must be renewed as a family museum, an education destination, and as one of Sydney's internationally recognised tourism attractions
- Renewal of the PHM must be done in consultation with the PHM's architect, and with respect for its transport and industrial history, heritage values and award winning design
- The Harwood building must be retained and continue its functions as an integral part of the PHM's history, design and operations, enhancing public access to the collections, education, trades training, conservation and research
- The whole Powerhouse Museum site should be listed on the State Heritage Register, along with the museum's notable *in situ* transport and engineering installations
- The creative industries precinct should be developed at North Eveleigh, strengthening the role and remit of Carriageworks

<https://powerhousemuseumalliance.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/savethepowerhouse/>

The Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal EIS papers for the secret design competition are on this link. See also the submissions under the submissions tab.

<https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/powerhouse-ultimo-renewal>