

CAMPAIGN TO SAVE THE POWERHOUSE Bulletin 83

Australia's major museum of arts and sciences in Sydney's most evocative heritage building.

SUPER-URGENT POWERHOUSE MUSEUM MESSAGE: PLEASE FORWARD IT TO ANY INTERESTED PEOPLE OR ORGANISATIONS

Please read this and act quickly: there is a fear that the current consultation and information sessions may be used to justify a Government application for a detailed Significant Development Application (SSDA). An SSDA essentially allows the state Government complete control over the project. This means that the Government might even make more irrevocable decisions about the fate of the museum before the 'caretaker' election period begins.

Can you come to a final consultation and information meeting to be held by the Government on Thursday 2 March at the Powerhouse Museum, 5 pm to 7 pm?

(If as many people as possible can be there at **6 pm** we might be able to get a group photo! and better yet, we can try to convey the important messages!)

... and / or you could also email your opinions, but please **do it now!** Read the next section, and then look at the **Suggestions for action** later in this email.

Basic information

Eight years ago the Government intended to demolish the Powerhouse Museum and 'move' it to Parramatta. This intention has changed over the years, and here is a brief outline of the Government's present position with an indication of the suggestion of Lionel Glendenning, submitted to the Government as part of the Masterplanning Dialogue of late 2020 (and ignored by the Government!)

INDICATIVE SUMMARY OF GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL	INDICATIVE SUMMARY OF AN ALTERNATIVE
'Powerhouse Ultimo': Creative Industries hub with emphasis on fashion and design and some museum-type displays Cost estimate \$480-500 million	THE Powerhouse MUSEUM of Applied Arts and Sciences with an upgraded budget to enable improvement and full museum functions Cost \$250 million
Only the walls and roof of the original 'Powerhouses' must be retained, along with any vestiges of the original power station use, eg the Case cranes on level 1	Retain and refurbish the Museum, the 1988 award-winning adaptive reuse of the Ultimo Powerhouse and Tram Shed with its Wran building Galleria
A building 'envelope' about six stories throughout, forecourt to be built on, Level 1 playground to go. Heritage listing	The Museum's precinct and all existing buildings to be heritage-listed and fully

restricted to the original Powerhouse structures as decided by the present Government appointees	protected with open space retained on Harris Street
All interior fixtures and features will be removed as is under way already; only original powerhouse walls to remain. Wran building (the award-winning 1988 museum conversion) to be demolished. A completely new facility to be developed	Retain and refresh signature museum exhibitions including Steam, Transport, Space, Boulton and Watt, Loco no 2, Experimentations, Social History, Decorative Arts and Design. major displays and remaining architectural features, eg mezzanine floor on level 2
Have unspecified 'museum' characteristics with only temporary exhibitions. Loco no 1, the Catalina and the 1785 Boulton and Watt steam engine to be the only permanent items. All exhibits will be removed during demolition and rebuilding 'so as to ensure their protection'.	Have a variety of experiences: permanent exhibitions, focus exhibitions and temporary exhibitions across applied arts and sciences engaging education and family audiences using interactives, audio-visuals and public programs and including night-time use
All museum-oriented collection curatorial activities to be at Castle Hill: Ultimo activities to be handled by a new 'community curatorial' group and include emphasis on night activities	Museum workshops in the historic Harwood Building to facilitate the production of Australian museum displays at Ultimo

Suggestions for action:

If you do not approve of the Government proposal, or wish for a delay in any further Government action before the elections, please:

- If possible, attend the final 'consultation and information' at the Powerhouse Ultimo (500 Harris Street, Ultimo), Thursday 2 March: 5 pm-7 pm. It would be good if we could have as many people as possible attending at 6 pm.
- and / or email I: powerhouse.ultimo@infrastructure.nsw.gov.au with cc to info@powerhousemuseumalliance.com . A possible draft email is below.
- If you take part in the online survey <https://swipengage.com/#/PHUR> be sure to use the comments spaces to make your opinion clear, and we strongly recommend that you also send an email to info@powerhousemuseumalliance.com outlining your comments.

We want to be fair to everyone, so If you approve of the Government proposal it is also important that you say so. If possible, attend the final 'consultation and information' session as above. Also, the Government 'online survey' at <https://swipengage.com/#/PHUR> would be ideal for this purpose and / or email

powerhouse.ultimo@infrastructure.nsw.gov.au . (We can find very few members of the informed public who support the Government's actions and you are invited to send a cc to info@powerhousemuseumalliance.com).

For further information:

The Government recommends their website at <https://insw.com/powerhouseultimorenewal> . We have for many years asked for more information: most recently we have sought access to last year's Ultimo design competition brief and the work of the winning architectural consortium, but the Government has refused access.

The Powerhouse Museum Alliance is an informal coalition of the overwhelming majority of the informed public and relevant organisations who do not agree with the Government's proposed actions, and since early 2015 has provided an information archive on <https://powerhousemuseumalliance.com/>. We strongly recommend that you check out the information on this site, especially the first item in <https://powerhousemuseumalliance.com/museum-plans-and-problems-into-2023/> and <https://powerhousemuseumalliance.com/museum-plans-and-problems-into-2023/fact-sheet-the-powerhouse-museum-move-1-feb-2023/> You should also refer to the huge **Save the Powerhouse** Facebook page to gauge popular support for the museum.

Thank you for reading this email, and we hope that you can give your opinion in this 'once in a generation' opportunity to affect the future of this potentially world-class museum,

Possible draft email for your consideration:

Address line for all emails: powerhouse.ultimo@infrastructure.nsw.gov.au, cc info@powerhousemuseumalliance.com , (consider adding your local MP, etc).

If you prefer the alternative outlined above: *I do not approve of the Government's plans for THE Powerhouse MUSEUM. I prefer the retention and refurbishment of the existing museum, including the 1988 museum collection and the Harwood building. No further action should be taken in this regard until after the election, and a full independent expert review of Government plans should be undertaken as soon as possible.*

Don't forget: if you approve of the Government's plans it is also important to email them accordingly!

Tom Lockley, PO Box 301. Pyrmont 2009
tomlockley@gmail.com is the best method of communication)



The new building is already known as ‘the sandcrawler’ by many. We would like to know more about it but one of the few things we know for certain is that the consultations of mid-2022 did not support the replacement of the Wran building as shown. The Government has refused to give access to the competition design brief and the work of the successful architectural consortium, claiming it is confidential. One wonders why?



The Government-appointed heritage assessor refused classification for the museum as a whole because he claimed ‘the connections between the collection and its place do not warrant a listing at the NSW state heritage level’. It ‘shows evidence of significant human activity at a local level only’. It ‘is important for its associations with an identifiable group [also] at the local level only’. By our count, 28 major groups, local, national, interstate and even overseas, including the National Trust (NSW) have made strong submissions for the retention of THE Powerhouse MUSEUM at Ultimo.