

To

- The Hon. Chris Minns, NSW Prime Minister
- The Hon. Prue Car, Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney
- The Hon. Penny Sharpe, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage
- The Hon. John Graham, Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, Minister for Jobs and Tourism
- The Hon. Daniel Mookhey, Treasurer
- The Hon. Ryan Park, Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast
- The Hon. Jo Haylen, Minister for Transport
- The Hon. Paul Scully, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
- The Hon. Sophie Cotsis, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Work Health and Safety
- The Hon. Yasmin Catley, Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism
- The Hon. Jihad Dib, Minister for Customer Services and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Youth Justice
- The Hon. Kate Washington, Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Disability Inclusion
- The Hon. Michael Daley, Attorney General
- The Hon. Tara Moriarty, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional NSW, Minister for Western NSW
- The Hon. Ron Hoenig, Minister for Local Government
- The Hon. Courtney Houssos, Minister for Finance, Minister for Natural Resources
- The Hon. Stephen Kamper, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Land and Properties, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sports
- The Hon. Rose Jackson, Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, Minister for the North Coast
- The Hon. Anoulack Chanhtivong, Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, Minister for Corrections
- The Hon. Tim Crakanthorp, Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, Minister for the Hunter
- The Hon. David Harris, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for the Central Coast
- The Hon. Jodie Harrison, Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- The Hon. Jennie Aitchison, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

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- The Hon. Anthony Albanese, Australia Prime Minister
- The Hon. Tony Burke, Federal Minister for the Arts
- The Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Federal Member for Sydney
- The Hon. Alex Greenwich, Member for Sydney
- The Hon. Kobi Shetty, Member for Balmain

RE: Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

Dear Minister,

We write to express our utmost concern for the future of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo.

“Save the Powerhouse” is a community campaign opposing the “Ultimo Renewal” project which would convert the world-class, venerated Powerhouse Applied Arts and Sciences **Museum** into a commercially driven creative arts and events “**Precinct**.”

In the weeks before the State election we were repeatedly promised that, if Labor was elected, the “Renewal” project would be **PAUSED** while the new Government reviewed its contractual obligations and widely **CONSULTED** with the relevant parties and the public.

Yet, three and a half months after the election, no genuine consultation has taken place, but-

- The “Ultimo Renewal” SSP DA stage 2 is still proceeding and the EIS is being prepared.
- The project is still advertised on the new “Powerhouse” website, which has been enlarged and any reference to “museum” has been dropped.
- The MAAS and Create NSW management teams who devised and developed the project are still in place.
- MAAS is currently advertising for further PR to help to spread the “Renewal” message
- The hoarding along Harris St is still in place.
- The unions “were recently advised by management that there was no change to the former government’s plans to substantially demolish the Powerhouse museum and move the collection”, and that 58 staff will be moved to Castle Hill in a very near future although this is strongly opposed by the PSA.
- Documents (Business cases, Design briefs and similar) hidden by the previous Government but that your Government promised would be made public, have not been released to anyone.

We, and the vast majority of our 5,000+ followers, strongly oppose the “Renewal” project proposed and initiated by the former government, but apparently under threat of being adopted and advanced unchanged by the current Labor government.

We object specifically to the proposed demolition of the priceless, heritage-rich Wran Building although we certainly do not oppose realistic repairs and improvements. All of this would be far more economical than the estimated \$500M for the so-called “Renewal”.

The “Renewal” project would

- change our respected world-class Applied Arts and Science Museum into a Fashion and Design Gallery (**no longer a museum**)
- **halve the museum exhibition space** (10,000m<sup>2</sup> as opposed to current 20,000+)
- require the closure of the Museum for more than 3 years. This would probably mean the public completely forget about it during this time.

Further, the visitation rate has dropped dramatically (from over 700,000 in 2018/19 to less than a quarter of this in 2021/22 <http://tiny.cc/6c48vz> ) when other museums (eg the Australian Museum) saw a marked rise.

It is ironic that the Arts Minister, John Graham who stated before the election that the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo was “**a big part of the Wran story**” seems now to support the demolition of the Wran building!

The proposed “Renewal” was also strongly opposed by the second Upper House Inquiry into Museums with the firm support of Labor Members Walt Secord and Rose Jackson.

If the project is not halted urgently the EIS will soon be placed on Exhibition and will, no doubt, attract hundreds of opposing submissions, as indicated by the success of the member for Balmain, Kobi Shetty's petition [https://www.kobishetty.org.au/save\\_our\\_powerhouse\\_23](https://www.kobishetty.org.au/save_our_powerhouse_23) (1,400+ signatories so far).

The previous government customarily dealt with this by hiring a PR consulting firm (including an expert at “managing community outrage”!) to prepare the requisite “Response to Submissions”. The “Response” as reported had almost nothing to do with the actual substance of the submissions (almost wholly negative <http://tiny.cc/ec48vz> ) received.

Would a Government that promised genuine public consultations resolve to such tactics? **Public discontent and international embarrassment** would also be unavoidable.

“Save the Powerhouse” believes the Cabinet will shortly decide on the future of the “Ultimo Renewal” project and **demands that the project be cancelled**.

The Premier, Chris Minns and the Treasurer, Daniel Mookhey recently warned that “The NSW budget is poised to remain in the red...and that the state had lurched from a once-in-a-generation pandemic into a once-in-a-generation cost of living crisis.”

“There are tough choices ahead, they will not be easy, but they cannot be avoided,” added the Treasurer.

We believe the “(Powerhouse) Ultimo Renewal” project is a prime candidate for such “tough choices”.

The \$500M earmarked for this unpopular and destructive project could be used for the construction of thousands of social housing units the Minister for Housing, Rose Jackson says are desperately needed.

If the “Renewal” was allowed to proceed the Labor Government would endorse responsibility for a \$2 Billion unpopular project marred by 9 years of impropriety, falsehood and secrecy. The project was initiated by then Premier Mike Baird in 2014 who thought that transferring the Powerhouse to Parramatta would win the Coalition voices in the West which proved wrong.

We remain available for any further discussion you may think necessary,

Patricia JOHNSON & Jean-Pierre ALEXANDRE  
Co-Convenors

*Save the Powerhouse*



[Savethepowerhouse](#)