

## POWERHOUSE MUSEUM EXPERTS OFFER GENUINE “REVITALISATION” PLAN

Save the Powerhouse Museum [savethepowerhouse@gmail.com](mailto:savethepowerhouse@gmail.com) (and Facebook)

**15 March, 2024**

Hi everyone,

The Powerhouse Museum Alliance (PMA) held a thought-provoking event “Revitalising the **REAL** Powerhouse Museum” at the Ultimo Community Centre on Friday March 15. The event was hosted by Save the Powerhouse/Friends of Ultimo and MC'd by respected Museums Consultant **Kylie Winkworth**.

It's main object was to challenge the current, deeply unpopular, version of “Revitalisation” imposed by the NSW Government after 9 years of internal disagreement and to offer a viable alternative which would make closure of the Museum (from February 5, 2024), completely unnecessary and would cost the tax-payer significantly less. All the speakers were experts in their field.

First was **Alan Croker**, Australia's leading Heritage Conservation specialist. He is widely--known as the author of the **very professional Conservation Management Plan** for the Sydney Opera House.

He showed clearly that this had played “**a pivotal role**” in its ongoing success, and said that the MAAS Management Team initially wanted the same level of professionalism for the Powerhouse Museum's CMP. They commissioned Croker, then unaccountably abandoned the plan and its author- not allowing him to complete it but instead asking Curio Projects to produce an alternative plan, (watch Croker's full presentation <https://youtu.be/yL17IZsp2Vc>)

**Dr Lindsay Sharp**, the second speaker and PMA member, was equally famous as PHM's Founding Director.

Lindsay used his extensive international experience (eg London, USA) to highlight not only the breadth and depth of PHM's 500,000 object collections, but also their relevance to **LOCAL history**. “What is the point of “decanting” the collections to Castle Hill storage” he asked, “where they have no meaning? The context and history of the collections is here, in Pyrmont and Ultimo, based on **Lionel Glendenning's brilliant conversion of the old Power Station**.”

“You don't create a museum just with “built form”, he concluded, taking as a model the Derby Museum's (UK) handbook. “It takes people and groups. **Community consultation is ESSENTIAL** and the (Government's) plan is mindless and out of date. Under this plan, **space in the PHM would be massively reduced**. Getting rid of objects (the collections) means getting rid of the Museum! (watch Sharp's full presentation <https://youtu.be/UEIkMh89X8A> and <http://tiny.cc/h9bkxz>)

**Jennifer Sanders**, for many years the PHM's Deputy Director, continued the theme that PHM is –as we all know- the “**PEOPLE'S MUSEUM**”. “It belongs to us, and its future.

“Revitalisation” must in reality be a renewal of the “people's museum”, inspired by our memories and its heritage, purpose, collections and architecture.

She showed (PowerPoint) in detail the evolution of the PHM's architecture from the earliest days up to the opening in 1988, with the gradual acquisition of the three (now) iconic “large objects” – Loco No1, the Boulton and Watt steam engine, and the mighty Catalina flying boat.

“The (Government's) current plan has none of this. It is just a GAP - all steam-related items have been removed, according to those drawings that have been made public. **No civilised society in the world would ever attempt what they are doing** to one of the world's leading arts and sciences museums. (watch Sander's full presentation <https://youtu.be/G77I2M4s3vI>)

Finally, Lindsay and Jennifer together offered a feasible plan for “Revitalisation” which -  
- **Did not involve closing the museum** while essential repairs were made and maintenance measures put in place.

- **Engaged all community groups and stakeholders** in full consultation and reflected their wishes in any future PHM projects.

- Detailed planned exhibitions in line with the PHM’s original purpose as a world-class “arts and sciences” museum

In summary, they provided a blueprint for the “**REAL MUSEUM**” that people have always wanted! (watch [https://youtu.be/CR\\_tYffijSg](https://youtu.be/CR_tYffijSg) )

After PMA’s speeches, Save the Powerhouse/Friends of Ultimo, as hosts, warmly thanked those who had attended the event, and also UCC’s Manager, Martin Warren and helpful staff for supplying the venue and logistical assistance

The **Heritage Council** officially announced it considered heritage-listing the whole Powerhouse Museum site including the “Wran” additions and the Harwood Building.

The proposed listing is detailed on the Heritage Council’s website

<https://apps.environment.nsw.gov.au/dpcheritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5068313> and **submissions** to [heritagemailbox@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:heritagemailbox@environment.nsw.gov.au) are accepted until

**Tuesday April 9.**

If you want to support the principles of the PHM outline suggested by PMA, we strongly encourage you to make a **SUPPORTING** submission as, again, “numbers will count” and may help to genuinely “Save the Powerhouse”.

*Save the Powerhouse*

