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Concerns grow over Powerhouse Museum as heritage items are shipped out

Tom Lockley

Gadigal Country/Sydney

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A rail carriage being removed from the Powerhouse Museum. Photo: Save the Powerhouse/Facebook

Supporters of the Powerhouse Museum are concerned that NSW Labor is not sticking to its promise to retain the arts and sciences museum.

Museum experts and the public are in favour of retaining the museum, established in 1988, but Labor wants to gut it and create a creative arts centre for fashion and design, with three enormous event spaces.

See also

[Concern grows over NSW Labor's secret plan for Powerhouse Museum](#)
[Powerhouse Museum 'rejuvenation' threatens to destroy its historic character](#)
[Powerhouse Museum sell-off a 'shameful act of vandalism'](#)

The former plan would save about \$300 million and it would win lots of votes.

For nearly 10 years, both major parties have played many dirty tricks. But a new low was reached on June 20 when the early 1900s [Governor's Rail Carriage](#) was removed in the dead of night, trucked off to a storeroom at Castle Hill.

It came from the middle of the level one transport display — a joy and inspiration to visitors since the museum opened in 1988.

Locomotive 1243 was removed a few nights later. Built in 1882 a few hundred metres from the Powerhouse Museum, it is a wonderful example of manufacturing industry at the time.

Already nearly half the area has been stripped, and work is under way to remove the iconic [Catalina aircraft](#).

The space display and items, such as the Central Station destination board of the steam train era, will be removed and not replaced.

There are fears for the safety of the exhibits, judging by the way the remainder of the area has been stripped.

As well as marking 200 years of European settlement, 1988 was the beginning of a new awareness of the importance of First Nations culture.

The “adaptive reuse” of the derelict power station was recognised with world-wide architectural awards: no one then would have believed it would be destroyed less than half a century later.

After a huge struggle, supporters of the museum have managed to establish an assessment of the heritage value of the museum.

Labor is ignoring the law which states a new major project cannot be “determined” (given a “go” order) before a range of social and environmental factors are taken into account. But it is stripping the museum without waiting for the outcomes of consultations.

Evidence has been advanced showing that the \$350 million building program for a new Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta will end up with an inferior museum.

There have been at least 10 major consultative exercises, all of which have shown huge support for retaining the Powerhouse Museum “as is, where is”.

It needs upgrading, not demolition and degradation. But Labor’s plan is to strip the interior of the building back to the original walls: it will be just an empty space with a few token decorative items.

No one with experience was involved in any of the decisions which began in November 2014, when then Premier Mike Baird first announced, controversially, that the Ultimo museum would be moved to Parramatta.



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