

Fri 28/02/2025 2:01 AM

AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY EVER?

Save the Powerhouse Museum <savethepowerhouse@gmail.com>

Hi everyone,

The Labor NSW Government decided from the beginning that constructing new homes would be their main priority, which seemed like a good idea given the acute shortage of accommodation in NSW, above all for the less wealthy.

So why are they spending so much effort and money on a museum demolition project rejected by the vast majority of the community and condemned by most museum experts worldwide.

They could not find the few million dollars necessary to save the Selwyn Street Boarding Houses in Paddington <https://www.smh.com.au/property/news/john-will-be-evicted-from-his-forever-home-he-has-nowhere-to-go-20250117-p5l5bs.html> but will waste close to half a billion dollars on the Powerhouse Museum "Revitalisation" which will transform a venerated applied arts and science museum into an event and space-for-hire venue, demolishing all traces of the Wran heritage adaptation of the old power station and reducing the museum exhibition area by 75%.

The new home construction in NSW is far below the Government's target, with "workforce shortages remaining the most significant challenge across all sectors of the industry." <https://www.mbansw.asn.au/media/industry-news/nsw-moves-further-away-housing-accord-target>.

So, why is the Government diverting its precious construction workforce on a project everybody rejects? How many new homes could those who will be employed to destroy the Powerhouse Museum have constructed?

Governments traditionally undertake large public construction projects in periods of downturn, keeping the industry afloat, and avoid them when the industry overheats? Why is the NSW Government doing exactly the opposite?

The Federal and SA Government will spend \$ 2.4 billion rescuing the Whyalla Steelworks but NSW bought 12,000 tonnes of steel from Vietnam to build the Parramatta "milk crate". "Triple the amount of steel used to build the Allianz Stadium" said the Arts Minister John Graham proudly.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/news/powerhouse-parramatta-construction-kicks-off#:~:text=NSW%20Minister%20for%20the%20Arts%20John%20Graham%20said%3A&text=%E2%80%9CThe%20construction%20of%20the%20museum,exoskeleton%20are%20epic%20in%20scale>.

The MAAS Management and Board of Trustees were given custody of a world-class Applied Arts and Sciences Museum in Ultimo with 21,500m² of exhibition areas and of the Sydney Observatory. Both venues welcomed the public 7 days a week and 364 days a year (only closed on Christmas day!), for their enjoyment and education.

The Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo has now been closed for over a year and is unlikely to ever re-open again in its previous form and the Observatory can only be visited on pre-arranged tours costing a family with 2 kids \$120.

When Parramatta opens (in 2026?) and Ultimo re-opens (when, if ever?), after nearly \$2 billion of wasted public money the combined total exhibition area of the two venues will only be less than a half of that in Ultimo before closure - Parramatta has only one exhibition-quality space of 5,000m² and Ultimo's total space will be just over 5,000m². Further, the MAAS Management has reserved the right not to use these spaces exclusively for Applied Arts and Science exhibitions.

The Auditor-General will conduct a “Performance Audit” of “Planned Investment in arts and culture” which “will examine the effectiveness of the planning, design and construction for the Powerhouse Museum Parramatta and Ultimo projects” in 2024-27 <https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/annual-work-program-2024-27>

An opportunity to shed expert light on one of the biggest wastes of public money in Australia’s history?

Sign our joint petition <https://chng.it/x6r5ZRtCQK> if you have not done so yet and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

The petition has now collected 9,965 signatures, only 35 signatures short of the 10,000 benchmark. It has also received 466 comments, almost all of them opposing the “Revitalisation” and condemning the Government’s actions <http://tiny.cc/vma4001>

Save the Powerhouse

 **Savethepowerhouse**

[and on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1B7QE8Q4pc/>]