

30 May 2025

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/as-parramatta-s-powerhouse-museum-reaches-full-height-secret-lifted-on-target-opening-date-20250530-p5m3iw.html>

As Parramatta's Powerhouse Museum reaches full height, secret lifted on target opening date



By [Anthony Segaert](#)

May 30, 2025 — 12.23pm

Parramatta's \$915 million Powerhouse Museum is being targeted to open in September next year after four years of construction on the largest new cultural institution in the state since the Sydney Opera House.

The intended opening date puts it close to two years behind its [promised opening date](#), which has been pushed back due to unseasonal rains and a complex building process.



Parramatta's Powerhouse Museum has a target opening date of September 2026

.CREDIT:SITTHIXAY DITTHAVONG

The new target opening date was inadvertently revealed by Premier Chris Minns at a press conference at the site on Friday morning, during which he announced a \$5 million donation from the philanthropic Neilson Foundation for a range of exhibitions at the site.

“It’s not far away, probably September of next year it’ll open its doors, and it’ll be an exciting day for our beautiful city,” he said. When a reporter clarified the target opening date, Minns responded: “Well, it may well be that I wasn’t supposed to say that, but that’s what we’re aiming for, and so it’s not too far away. We really want to open as soon as possible.

“If it’s held back, it will only be because it’ll be a bigger, better exhibition.”

The museum has now reached its full 75-metre height, and its exoskeleton – the “milk crate”-like external steel pillars that leave the internal floor space free of columns – is also complete.



Premier Chris Minns, with Parramatta MP Donna Davis (left) and Powerhouse museum chief executive Lisa Havilah (right), toured the new site on Friday morning. *CREDIT: SITTHIXAY DITTHAVONG*

The Neilson Foundation’s donation will go towards new exhibitions at the venue, including *The Dark*, a children’s exhibition focusing on “the new frontiers of discovery”, said [billionaire founder](#) Kerr Neilson.

While Powerhouse Parramatta is expected to open next year, its Ultimo site (which will still house exhibitions) is also undergoing a major renovation. The museum's move to Parramatta has been controversial, with [cost blowouts](#) and changes made over concerns the area, next to the river, could flood.

Earlier this year, [the Herald revealed](#) the museum and its chief executive spent \$30,000 on a Christmas party that included a performative carve-up of a whole yellowfin tuna.

Minns said on Friday that the city's cultural institutions were just as important as its sporting ones.

"I know a lot of time and effort goes into stadiums, football stadiums in particular, and I love football, great fun, but these cultural institutions, these museums, are as important as football stadiums," he said.

"They're really the beating heart of what a city is all about. They drive as much tourism dollars and economic opportunity, but they also say something about the city that lives beyond the newspapers, politicians [and] what's on the nightly news."

The Sydney Morning Herald has opened its bureau in the heart of Parramatta. Email parramatta@smh.com.au with news tips.