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Steve Kamper

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Media Release

Contract awarded for the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo Revitalisation

Thursday, 26 June 2025

The Minns Labor Government is taking the next step in the heritage revitalisation of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, confirming Richard Crookes Constructions has been awarded the main works contract to deliver the \$300 million renewal of the Ultimo site.

Richard Crookes Constructions was selected through a competitive tender process and have extensive experience delivering complex cultural infrastructure projects for the NSW Government – including Naala Badu (Sydney Modern) and the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct revitalisation.

During construction, the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo Revitalisation project will create around 750 jobs, and inject \$225 million into the local economy.

Infrastructure NSW, who are responsible for delivery of the project, and the Powerhouse Museum collaborated with award-winning architects Durbach Block Jagers, Architectus, Tyrell Studio and Yousofzay + Hart to reimagine and renew the iconic 146-year-old cultural institution.

Key features of the new design include:

- **Conservation and restoration:** Preserving the heritage-listed Power Station buildings for ongoing adaptive reuse by the Powerhouse Museum.
- **New and improved exhibition spaces:** Designed to meet international museum standards for exhibitions across the applied arts and sciences, exhibition spaces will increase to 7,500sqm, (up from 6,850sqm)
- **Reorientation:** Aligning the museum to face The Goods Line, enhancing connections with the Sydney CBD, including easier access to the Museum from major public transport options. The new entrance will reveal the heritage facades of the original power station built in 1899 and the 1902 Turbine Hall.
- **Activation of the Harris Street façade:** Enhancing the museum's contribution to the Ultimo streetscape, including subsidised workspaces for NSW practitioners across the applied arts and sciences, and a community meeting space.
- **Central circulation system:** Establishing an intuitive and accessible circulation system to support a high-quality visitor experience.
- **Reimagined public domain:** Delivering a 2,000sqm public space at the northern end of The Goods Line, a landscaped courtyard adjacent to the former Ultimo Post Office, and an internal courtyard accessible from Macarthur Street.

During the tender process, all three contractors advised that parts of the Wran and Galleria buildings' internal steel structure are unsafe, with design of steel structures, load capability,

fabrication and erection found to be non-compliant with the National Construction Code if retained. As such the internal steel structures will need to be disassembled and replaced to ensure the safety of construction workers on site and the long-term structural integrity of the buildings.

Following feedback, a modification to the development's approval will be lodged with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure next week which will include allowing for the dismantling and replacement of the Wran and Galleria building's non-compliant internal steel structures, while continuing to maintain the heritage requirements of the built form.

These modifications are covered within the existing budget.

Site preparation works, approved under the State Significant Development Application, continue to be carried out with main works construction expected to take up to three years.

The 1899 Ultimo Tram Depot (The Harwood Building) will continue to be used for museum operations including conservation laboratories, workshops and staff offices.

Following the conclusion of the revitalisation, the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo will continue to exhibit its iconic objects from the collection, including the Boulton & Watt Steam Engine, the Catalina flying boat Frigate Bird II and Locomotive Number 1.

For more information visit: [Powerhouse Ultimo | NSW Government](#)

Minister for Jobs and Tourism and Minister for Lands and Property Steve Kamper said:

"We are confident Richard Crookes Constructions, with their extensive experience and proven track record in delivering complex heritage revitalisations and renowned Sydney cultural institutions, is the perfect choice for this project.

"The Minns Labor Government committed to preserving and enhancing this iconic institution for future generations and confident this revitalisation will deliver the best and safest outcome for the museum and the passionate community of visitors who eagerly await its completion.

"Importantly the shape and scale of the iconic Wran and Galleria buildings will be safely replaced and future-proofed, so they can be enjoyed by visitors and the community for decades to come.

"Keeping the structures is not only unsafe and non-compliant, it would cost the taxpayer more and give a limited warranty on the buildings, which isn't justifiable given the end product will look the same."

Minister for the Arts and Minister for Music and Nighttime Economy John Graham said:

"As custodians of one of the largest and most exceptional collections of objects in Australia, the Powerhouse Museum plays an important role in bringing the arts, design, science and technology and their history together.

"That is why the Minns Labor Government is investing in the heritage revitalisation, to secure the future of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, and make sure the museum is equipped with a range of exhibition spaces to meet international standards and showcase the Powerhouse Collection to its fullest potential.

"We always maintained we will preserve the Wran legacy with this project, and that is why some materials in the Wran and Galleria buildings will be replaced and rebuilt, to ensure a long future for these buildings."

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