

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-08-27/nsw-powerhouse-parramatta-ceo-lisa-havilah-steps-aside/107086160>

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ABC News

Powerhouse Parramatta CEO Lisa Havilah steps aside ahead of grand opening



By Nabil Al-Nashar



Lisa Havilah has stepped aside as CEO pending "investigations into governance and procurement". (ABC News: *Helena Burke*)

In short:

Lisa Havilah has stepped aside as Powerhouse Parramatta CEO pending "investigations into governance and procurement" by the NSW government.

Ms Havilah was appointed Powerhouse Parramatta CEO in 2018.

What's next?

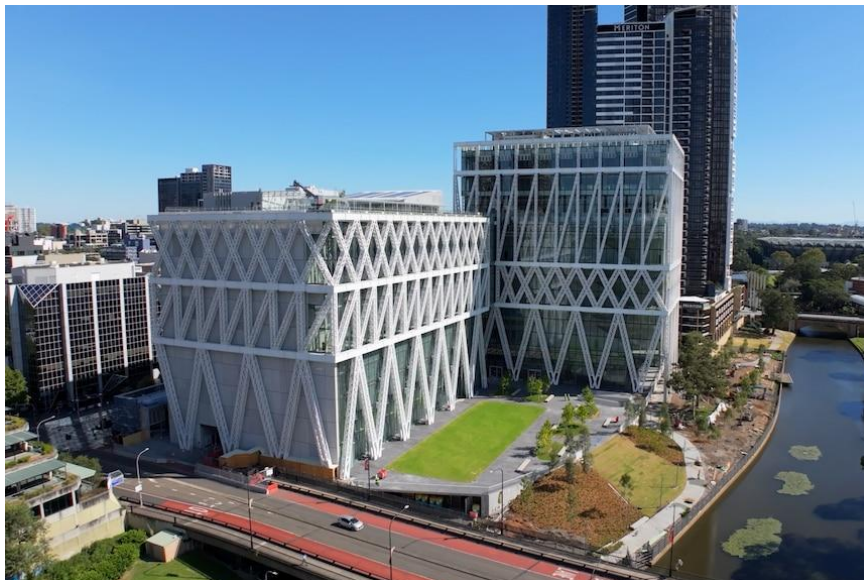
President of the Powerhouse Trust David Borger says the museum is still on track to open on November 7.

Powerhouse Parramatta CEO Lisa Havilah has stepped aside 10 weeks before the cultural institution opens in Western Sydney.

The decision was announced in a statement from the office of Minister for Arts John Graham on Thursday, which said she had stood aside while "investigations into governance and procurement" were underway.

In a statement to the ABC, a spokesperson for the Department of Creative Industries said the matters were "complex and involve multiple lines of inquiry".

"The Department has a responsibility to address these matters with due diligence and procedural fairness," the spokesperson said.



The museum will be open to the public in November.
(Supplied: Powerhouse Parramatta)

"As the investigation is continuing and no formal findings or conclusions have been made, it would not be appropriate to provide further comment at this stage."

'Challenging time'

President of the Powerhouse Trust David Borger told 702 ABC Sydney the announcement came at a challenging time.

"I think obviously, it's challenging...these things are always somewhat surprising," he said.

"Obviously it's not an ideal situation this close to the opening."

He also confirmed the opening date would not be impacted.

"A 100 per cent the curtains are going to rise on the November 7....and there's no changing that," he said.

Ms Havilah was tasked with overseeing the \$915 million build of Powerhouse Parramatta [following her appointment in 2018](#).

The development is the city's most significant cultural infrastructure project since the Sydney Opera House.



David Borger reacted to the news of Ms Havilah leaving the CEO role.
(ABC News: *Monish Nand*)

Interim team to lead opening

Ahead of the museum's November opening, an interim team to oversee the organisation has been established.

From September 1, NSW Government Architect Abbie Galvin will step in as CEO and former Sydney Opera House CEO Louise Herron has been named strategic advisor.

Mr Graham's office described Ms Galvin as "an experienced senior executive with significant experience across the public, infrastructure and cultural sectors".

Ms Havilah has been the chief executive of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) for more than seven years and previously oversaw the significant expansion of the Carriageworks multi-arts hub in Redfern.

But in March this year, Ms Havilah was grilled over "budget blowouts" for the Powerhouse Parramatta by upper house MP Chris Rath.

"I know there have been budget blowouts from years and years gone by, but are we expecting any further cost blowouts from the relocation, or has it all basically been accounted for now in the budget?" he said.



Powerhouse Parramatta faced accusations of a budget blowout.
(ABC News: Monish Nand)

Ms Havilah denied any such budget blowouts.

"There haven't been any budget overruns on Powerhouse Parramatta or the revitalisation of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo. They're both being delivered within the allocated budget," she said.

The ABC has contacted Ms Havilah for comment.

Speaking to the ABC earlier this month, Ms Havilah said she was eager to attend the opening.

"I won't be holding the scissors, but I'm looking forward to watching that ribbon being cut," she said.

She also confirmed NSW Treasury executive Cassandra Wilkinson's sudden appointment to the Powerhouse as Chief Operating Officer in July.

"She [Ms Wilkinson] is acting in the COO role, and she's continuing that work and has been a great member of the team," she said.