From: Save the Powerhouse Museum <savethepowerhouse@gmail.com>
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Subject: A LONG LITANY OF LABOR BROKEN PROMISES

Hi everyone,

We all remember museum and heritage expert Kylie Winkworth's "Labor's Ten Broken Promises on the Powerhouse Museum, and more", in which she catalogued ten…and more promises Labor made, and subsequently broke, regarding the Powerhouse Museum http://tiny.cc/nn5b101.

Her statement followed then-Shadow Arts Minister John Graham's now-infamous proclamation that "Only Labor will save the Powerhouse Museum", made on the Museum's forecourt on 22 March 2023, just three days before the state election http://tiny.cc/hr5b101.

Since then, the NSW Government has regularly added to what is now a long litany of broken promises.
The latest broken promise to enter the record, however, is particularly striking.

THE NSW GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING SELLING PART OR ALL OF THE ULTIMO SITE

On 16 September 2024, the Government issued a **MINISTERIAL** media release entitled "Powerhouse heritage listing guarantees Museum's future in Ultimo" http://tiny.cc/du5b101, congratulating itself on the heritage listing of the "Powerhouse Museum Complex" on 12 July 2024 http://tiny.cc/8u5b101.

Why the two-month delay between the listing and the media release?

The state listing covered the entire museum complex, including the Wran additions and the Harwood Building, the former tram depot.
"**This amendment ensures that the architectural and historical significance of the entire Powerhouse Museum Complex is recognised and protected**," boasted Heritage NSW Executive Director Sam Kidman.

Two years later, following the demolition of the entire "Wran heritage" and amid substantial cost overruns at both Parramatta and Ultimo, we now learn that the NSW Government is "considering all possible options" to help balance the books.
Among those options is reportedly the sale of the Harwood Building, or even the entire Ultimo site, **a return to the 2015 "Baird" square one**.
Read Linda Morris in the Sydney Morning Herald of 5 September, in "Secret plan to sell off Powerhouse museum building as budget crisis looms" https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/secret-plan-to-sell-off-powerhouse-museum-building-as-budget-crisis-looms-20260826-p60rt4.html.

"NSW Treasury is now scrutinising the operating budgets of both Powerhouse Parramatta and Ultimo" she writes, adding "This masthead understands that **as part**

of that review, there is to be a wholesale reconsideration of the $300 million Ultimo rebuild, and even the retention of the site itself."

The mere contemplation of selling part or all of the Ultimo site is a complete denial of the ministerial statement of September 2024.
After this latest reversal, who could possibly trust an official declaration from this Government?

THERE WILL BE FAR FEWER COLLECTION OBJECTS IN PARRAMATTA THAN THERE WERE IN ULTIMO

Arts Minister John Graham and (stood aside) MAAS CEO Lisa Havilah have repeatedly stated over the years that the Parramatta "Milkcrate" would be the largest museum in Australia (a claim that may be technically true following the closure of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo) and that its size would allow more collection objects to be displayed than at Ultimo.

In fact, the Parramatta institution will open on 7 November with five exhibitions occupying five spaces, covering a total of 5,552 m².
For details read Kylie Winkworth's analysis http://tiny.cc/6w7b101).

The official media release claims that these exhibitions will present 1,600 objects from the MAAS collection. Yet we have been able to identify only 910: approximately 560 objects in The Mall, and 350 across Task Eternal. The Turning, The Dark and Overflow do not appear to contain any collection objects.

It is very different from the opening of the Ultimo museum in 1988, when 25 exhibitions were presented across 25 spaces and over 20,000 m², with more than 10,000 collection objects on display.

There are also far fewer objects than were presented in the Ultimo museum's final exhibition, Leo Schofield's "1,001 Remarkable Objects", which ended after only a few months following the museum's unnecessary closure in February 2024.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Our revered Powerhouse Museum building in Ultimo has been entirely destroyed and, in the same way as Willow Grove in Parramatta, is gone forever.
BUT ITS ORIGINAL CONCEPT IS ETERNAL.
It is still not too late to rebuild a **GENUINE** Museum of Applied Arts and Science on the ruins of the original, something the Parramatta "Milkcrate" will never be.
There are however four main conditions for that to happen and URGENT ACTION is needed:

(a) Disconnect immediately the Ultimo project from Parramatta and leave the latter to develop the way it was designed for: a commercial event centre.

(b) Suspend immediately the construction in progress and nominate a panel of GENUINE Science, Technology and Applied Arts Museums experts to

redesign the building into a functional MAAS Museum within the allocated budget.
The current project will only deliver yet another unmanageable event centre:

- Its large volumes are ill-adapted to the display of the Museum's rich and diverse collections
- The pastiche replicate of the Wran building roof shape is an insult to the most basic heritage principles.
  In addition it is hidden behind a row of shops which completely degrade the image of the institution.

(c) Recruit a competent and experienced General Manager, and rebuild the Board of Trustees with people genuinely knowledgeable in Sciences, Technology and Applied Arts and are committed to their duties under the MAAS Act 1945 https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1945-031.
(d) Start immediately rebuilding the experienced team which was depleted by the former management and let go the sycophants.

What can you do?
Show the people's voice and write to the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for the Arts.

Save the Powerhouse
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