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(Email and Facebook)

PARRAMATTA MILKCRATE IS "A VENUE FOR MEETINGS AND CORPORATE EVENTS"
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Hi everyone,
For years, Save the Powerhouse, with many others, have repeatedly said that the Parramatta "Milkcrate" would never be a museum, nor the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) institution that was promised. Instead, it has been constructed and is now being promoted as a venue for events and conferences for hire.

This was systematically denied by MAAS, Create NSW and the Arts Minister but has now been candidly confirmed by Meetings & Conventions Asia in its 11 September 2026 article, "Powerhouse Parramatta opens new stage for Sydney events".
https://www.meetings-conventions-asia.com/News/Venues/Powerhouse-Parramatta-opens-new-stage-for-Sydney-events

The article states unequivocally: "**Powerhouse Parramatta will open on 7 November as a major new cultural venue for meetings and corporate events**."

We learn that: "The A$915 million museum offers seven meeting rooms, with its largest configurations accommodating up to 1,000 guests. **The venue is taking enquiries for events from December 2026**."

Visitors will also be able to "visit" an exhibition if they happen to have some spare time between a product launch and a roof top private function the article explains: "Its appeal lies in the range of experiences planners can build into one venue. Conferences, product launches and gala dinners can be combined with exhibition visits, culinary programmes or rooftop functions overlooking the Parramatta River."

For years, the public was assured that Western Sydney was getting a STEM museum - not an events and conference centre with some exhibitions attached but the Meetings & Conventions Asia article confirms that the reality is completely different.
The question now is simple: why were the public, taxpayers and the people of Western Sydney repeatedly told otherwise?

We have to wonder what the International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC) in Darling Harbour makes of this new competitor opening its doors just 20 kilometres to the West.
ICC was built a few years ago with hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money and was intended to strengthen Sydney's position as a premier destination for major conferences, conventions and exhibitions.
"Whether you are organising a convention for thousands or a more intimate corporate event, our team will go out of their way to deliver a truly memorable event" reads ICC's webpage.

Now, another major publicly funded venue is entering the same market in Western Sydney—one that, according to Meetings & Conventions Asia, is being actively promoted for conferences, product launches, gala dinners and other corporate events.

But there is an even bigger question.
Are the operators of ICC Sydney aware that another venue based on essentially the same operating model as Parramatta is currently being built next door on the ashes of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo?

Both the Parramatta and Ultimo developments are being funded from the State's Arts budget, at the expense of other museums, galleries and cultural institutions across NSW. Yet both appear increasingly positioned to compete for a share of Sydney's convention, conference and corporate events market.
In other words, **Arts funding is being used to build venues that will compete in the commercial events sector**.

That raises obvious questions for the NSW Government:

- Why are taxpayers funding multiple venues to compete for the same conference and events business while other museums and galleries across the state struggle for funding?
- If these projects are genuinely cultural institutions, why is their ability to attract conferences, product launches and gala dinners being promoted as a key part of their appeal?
- And if they are, essentially, commercial events venues, why are they being funded from the Arts budget?

In an article dated 12 September, City Hub comments on the recent revelation that the NSW Government was considering all possible options to reduce the costs of the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo so-called "heritage revitalisation".(refer to our previous post)
https://cityhub.com.au/fears-for-ultimo-powerhouses-future-as-government-reportedly-considers-options/

Interviewed by City Hub, Friends of Ultimo/Save the Powerhouse said "We understand that the NSW Government is currently "considering all possible options" to reduce the costs of the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo so-called 'heritage revitalisation'."
"The project involves replacing a revered, world-class applied arts and sciences museum with two inferior function and entertainment centres - **NOT MUSEUMS** - in Ultimo and Parramatta. The totally unnecessary project costs around $2 billion to NSW taxpayers."
"The entire Wran Building and Galleria has now been demolished, despite the complex being listed on the State Heritage Register in July 2024." The Wran Building, which arts minister John Graham campaigned on saving, has been razed to the ground.
"The budget overruns now emerging during construction, together with forecast unsustainable future operating costs, were entirely predictable. **This must be one of the most extensively foretold debacles in NSW**."

A “revitalised” museum cannot function without the Harwood Building, we further argued - it houses the only loading dock serving the complex, following the cancellation of plans for a new loading dock on the north side of Macarthur Street as part of an earlier cost-cutting exercise.”

For his part Sydney MLA Alex Greenwich told City Hub. “The Powerhouse has strong links to local creative and innovative hubs, as well as the converted electric tram power station it occupies. The community would strongly oppose another attempt to empty the Powerhouse of the important cultural, scientific and artistic stories it has told for more than a century.”

Greens Balmain MLA Kobi Shetty concurred. “Our community fought for over a decade to stop the demolition and sale of this important cultural icon in our city. **Right before the last state election, John Graham stood in front of the Powerhouse with the then Labor candidate for Balmain to announce that the Powerhouse would not be demolished or sold**, but would be renovated and reopened for our community.”

A MAJOR ELECTORAL PROMISE BROKEN!

Save the Powerhouse

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