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6 September

2GB Radio: Luke Grant

Interview with Kylie Winkworth: go to 1.35 to 1.50 minutes on recording.

Save the Powerhouse

IT WAS NEVER GOING TO ADD UP

Today, 6 September, radio broadcaster Luke Grant interviewed Kylie Winkworth, museum and heritage expert, former Powerhouse Museum Trustee and Powerhouse Museum Alliance (PMA) member on his 2GB "Weekends" programme.

Listen to the interview on <https://omny.fm/.../weekends-with-luke-grant-sunday-6...> from 1:33:27

Commenting on the SMH revelation yesterday (5 September) that "the Minns government (was) investigating options to sell the Harwood Building" following the recent stepping aside of the MAAS CEO and COO, Winkworth remarked: "It would not surprise me if the policy was, 'Let's not waste a good crisis. Let's flog the rest of the assets.'"

She continued: "A treasured historic public museum based in Ultimo since 1893, which the Government promised to preserve, renew and keep open, has been demolished. Now they are looking at selling off the museum's own property, the Harwood Building, which is essential to the operation of the museum - if they have any intention of having a museum at Ultimo. But many of us doubt that."

The Government promised to build a STEM museum in Parramatta for a total cost of \$645 million, including the \$140 million they spent purchasing the land. It was going to open in 2023.

The Government has (now) said it is \$915 million, including the Castle Hill J-Store and all the exhibitions" and continues to maintain that the project is on budget and will open at the end of 2026.

"But didn't they know that there was going to be a funding crisis?" Grant asked.

Winkworth replied: "Anybody who knows about building would think, 'If it is four years late, it is not on budget.' You have to be in La La Land to think that it is on budget. We estimated it at \$1.5 billion" (excluding the \$500 million the Ultimo "revitalisation" will cost).

She also criticised the fundamental design concept underpinning the Parramatta project: "The whole concept of having multipurpose spaces that actually work for museums and collections is wrong. Everybody knows that when you have to put a museum exhibition into a vast space, it costs more."

Save the Powerhouse notes that MAAS spent \$18 million constructing a temporary steel structure to accommodate its "Task Eternal" opening exhibition in a large volume space in Parramatta.

Unfortunately the Ultimo "heritage revitalisation" project is "based on the same flawed model as Parramatta, with only three large volumes particularly designed for performance but not for museum exhibitions."

"It was never going to add up. YOU CANNOT BUILD A GREAT INSTITUTION FROM A NARRATIVE OF CULTURAL DEPRIVATION," Winkworth concluded.

Well said Kylie!



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