22 September, 2026
Save the Powerhouse email:

SIGN KOBI SHETTY'S PETITION "TO STOP THE SELL-OFF AND SAVE THE POWERHOUSE"
Save the Powerhouse Museum <savethepowerhouse@gmail.com>

Hi everyone,

(1) In a recent article in the SMH Linda Morris revealed that the NSW Government was "considering all possible options" to make up for large cost overruns in Parramatta and Ultimo including selling the Harwood Building or even the whole Ultimo site.
Read "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

Kobi Shetty, member for Balmain, has now given a notice of motion to the NSW Legislative Assembly on 15 September "that this House:

- Recognises that the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo is a world class cultural and educational institution that **the community fought hard to save from demolition**.
- Notes that despite their promise to save the Powerhouse, the Government is considering selling part of the museum in Ultimo to make up for budget blow-outs on the development in Parramatta.
- **Calls on the Government not to betray our community** – to finalise the renovations and reopen the Powerhouse in Ultimo."

Watch Kobi's giving notice https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7EZmOZBwxE
and sign her petition to "**stop the sell-off and save the Powerhouse**."
https://www.kobishetty.org.au/save-the-powerhouse-ultimo?utm_campaign=save_the_powerhouse_p&utm_medium=email&utm_source=jamieparker

(2) Our recent post, entitled "Parramatta Milkcrate is a venue for meetings and corporate events," received **a record 30,600+ views**.

The post stated that "the venue is taking enquiries for events from December 2026", while advertising the fact that "the A$915 million museum offers seven meeting rooms, with its largest configurations accommodating up to 1,000 guests."

Save the Powerhouse acknowledges that most cultural institutions contain a café and/or souvenir shop, and that many occasionally make some of their spaces available for private events or functions while continuing to fulfil their institutional purpose of being: "**a permanent, inclusive, and ethical not-for-profit institution serving society through research, conservation, and education regarding tangible and intangible heritage**." (ICOMOS, 2022)

Our concern is that the "Milkcrate" design appears to have deliberately departed from this fundamental definition. It was purpose-built with a substantial focus on events and functions, with even its limited exhibition spaces designed to be converted into event spaces.

We do not oppose Parramatta having an event **centre if that is what its community wants**…although we question whether this reflects the community's priorities.

What we cannot accept is the **construction and operation of an event and function centre through the NSW Arts budget**, at the expense of other museums, galleries and cultural institutions across the state and which resulted in the demolition of a world-class functioning **GENUINE** applied arts and science museum.
Public cultural (limited) budget should support the core cultural, educational, research and heritage functions of our institutions. It should not be diverted to subsidise commercial facilities.

(3) As the date of the "Milkcrate" grand opening (7 November 2026) nears we learn that:

- The venue will open with a $4.5M, 23-day festival.
Read SMH of 19 September https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/powerhouse-parramatta-s-4-5-million-opening-festival-revealed-20260919-p60y0b.html

- The venue opening hours will be extended to 10am-9pm (Thursday to Sunday only) during the festival but will then revert to its "normal" 10am-5pm, 7 days a week schedule afterwards.

- "Task eternal", its star exhibition, will be charged $10 to children aged 16 and under and $40 to adults.
A $100 outing for a couple with 2 kids!

- A recent survey of 1,100 people showed that "more than half of respondents (52%) were either unsure (10%) or certain (42%) they wouldn't attend."
Read the SMH of 21 September https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/new-powerhouse-divides-voters-in-the-lead-up-to-opening-20260921-p60xtv.html

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