

**Friday 27 April 2018**

## **Statement on the Future of the Powerhouse Museum From the Powerhouse Museum Alliance (PMA)**

Another day; another secret sell-off of public assets in NSW. Nothing is safe. Not even a treasured public museum is secure from the secret real estate deals of the Berejiklian government.

In the face of sustained community objections, AND universal support for a new museum in Parramatta, the Berejiklian government has reportedly signed off on the 'move' of the Powerhouse Museum (PHM) to Parramatta.

This step represents the unprecedented demolition of a major public museum. No government anywhere in the world has ever moved a major state museum out of the city centre to a less accessible location.

The Powerhouse Museum Alliance condemns the NSW government's secret plans to close the Powerhouse Museum and evict it from its award winning buildings and accessible historic site at Ultimo, its home since 1893. This is shameless asset stripping of award winning, purpose designed museum facilities that were built and endowed by previous generations of NSW taxpayers.

The Powerhouse Museum is not a redundant asset or a development opportunity. It is a much loved family museum that for the last 30 years has brought joy and wonder to millions of visitors from across Sydney, regional NSW, interstate and the overseas. The Powerhouse Museum must continue to serve the people of NSW as one of their treasured state institutions, accessible to all.

The NSW Arts Minister Don Harwin has broken his undertaking to release the business case before making a decision on the move of the Powerhouse Museum. The government's refusal to release the business case all but confirms that this is a bad deal for NSW taxpayers and museum lovers.

After the \$2.4bcash splash on three stadiums between the city and Parramatta, the government can surely afford to build a new museum in Parramatta without selling off the PHM in Ultimo. It is a reckless waste of taxpayers' money to spend \$1.2b 'moving' the Powerhouse just 23ks west for no net gain in cultural facilities. For the same money the government could create a NSW Smithsonian, a network of new museums in western Sydney and regional NSW, with the Powerhouse as the centrepiece.

Good governments expand museum opportunities for the whole community. We expect responsible governments safeguard the cultural legacy of previous generations of taxpayers, and protect the endowment of thousands of donors and philanthropists. By treating the PHM as a disposable asset the Berejiklian government is breaking its most basic obligation to the community of NSW and the museum's donors and supporters.

The Powerhouse Museum Alliance asks the community to contact the Premier and their state MPs to object to the government's reckless museum demolition plan.

For and on behalf of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance <https://powerhousemuseumalliance.com/>

And the 11,000 signatories to the petition presented to NSW Parliament, 25 Feb 2016; 178 signatories to the PMA's 17 Feb 2016 open letter; authors of the 133 submissions to the Upper House Inquiry who oppose the Powerhouse move – representing 94% of all the submissions about the Powerhouse; countless museum visitors and supporters from across NSW; and followers of Save the Powerhouse.

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