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New Powerhouse Museum design unveiled.

PARRAMATTA

Virtual tour of Powerhouse Museum's new Parramatta site

Stacy Thomas, Parramatta Advertiser

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NOW it's official the Powerhouse Museum is relocating to Parramatta, there is a call to give western Sydney residents free access when it opens.

Sydney Business Chamber, Western Sydney director David Borger likened the site to [MONA](#) in Tasmania and the [National Portrait Gallery](#) in London, where entry is free. "If you want attendance to increase, dropping the fees and making the money via eateries, shopping and other avenues on the site, would help," he said.

He said offering free entry removed a barrier. "People need access. We want people to be inspired," he said. "The best thing about a museum is having a collection of objects and showing it in a new way."

MONA's doors welcomed 1.28 million visitors in 2017 and is the second most visited tourism attraction in Tasmania behind Salamanca Market. This year to date, 30 per cent of its visitors are Tasmanian and are offered free entry.



Powerhouse Museum is coming to Parramatta.



A look inside the new museum.

The Hobart museum site has diversified with a hotel, cellar door, cafe, restaurant and bars to keep the crowds entertained.

The National Portrait Gallery ranks in London's top 10 free attractions with almost two million visitors each year. It has added to its offerings with a restaurant and cafe and gallery shop.

The [Powerhouse Museum](#), expected to have a million visitors annually, is the centrepiece of a new arts and cultural precinct which will include a modernised [Riverside Theatres](#) complex, cafes, bars and public spaces.

Also included in the project's scope is the expansion of the current museum's discovery centre at Castle Hill. This would provide a purpose-built facility for the care and storage of the collections.

Parramatta Council was quick to get the ball rolling, advertising a project manager cultural infrastructure role.



What the museum site currently looks like.

The position's main responsibility over the course of the next three years is the Riverside Theatres redevelopment and proposed new Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Parramatta.

The Powerhouse Museum site will also be home to Australia's largest planetarium and Premier Gladys Berejiklian said it would be bigger and better than anything "NSW has ever seen". She said it would rival the [London Science Museum](#) and [Smithsonian Air and Space Museum](#).

"It is so important that young people are excited and inspired by science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics because the jobs of tomorrow will rely heavily on these disciplines," Ms Berejiklian said.



A concept image of the museum.

Early works will start in 2019 and it is due to be open to visitors in 2023. The net cost to government for the museum relocation is \$645 million.

It has been likened to London's [Here East](#) cultural precinct and Hong Kong's [West Kowloon](#) cultural district.

Parramatta state Liberal MP Geoff Lee said the space would encourage kids to become scientists, researchers, engineers, mathematicians and astronauts. "It will inspire our kids to reach for the stars," he said.