

Walt Secord MLC

Shadow Minister for the Arts

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LABOR ENDORSES PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY'S KEY RECOMMENDATION ON POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

NSW Labor today endorsed the key finding of a cross-party parliamentary two-and-a-half year inquiry that recommended against the Berejiklian Government's controversial plan to move the Powerhouse Museum.

The main recommendation vindicated Labor's January 20 election commitment to retain the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo and establish a world class cultural institution in Western Sydney.

"The Powerhouse Museum project has lurched from crisis to crisis. The Berejiklian Government's handling of the Powerhouse Museum has been a colossal economic disaster for the community, and the only winners in this whole exercise will be property developers," Shadow Arts Minister Walt Secord said.

"The Powerhouse also demonstrates the wrong priorities and the waste and mismanagement of the NSW Liberals and Nationals.

"The Liberals and Nationals will spend more than \$1 billion forcibly moving the Powerhouse Museum and more than \$2.2 billion on Sydney stadiums, but on the other hand, they cannot find the funds to properly fund our schools and hospitals.

"If the Berejiklian Government continues to ignore the community, they will splurge more than a billion dollars chasing a vanity thought-bubble by the Premier and the Arts Minister."

Mr Secord said the final report of the cross-party parliamentary inquiry, handed down today (February 28), revealed the Berejiklian Government's handling of the Powerhouse move has been plagued by mismanagement, inadequate business cases; politically-driven decision-making and a project which had the potential for billion dollar cost blow-outs.

(The Berejiklian Government's own business case stated that it will cost at least \$1.179 billion to move the Powerhouse Museum. In this year's budget, the Berejiklian Government has allocated \$645 million to move the Powerhouse.)

On January 20, NSW Labor announced it would redirect savings from cancelling the Powerhouse move towards supporting arts in Western Sydney and rural and regional areas by:

- Building a \$500 million world class cultural institution at Parramatta;
- Retaining the Powerhouse Museum at its Ultimo site;
- Redeveloping the Riverside Theatre;
- Establishing a \$100 million Western Sydney Cultural Fund;
- Creating a \$15 million theatre and playwriting support package to support independent theatre and Australian stories including support for Urban Theatre Projects; and
- Expanding programs in Western Sydney, rural and regional areas including the Sydney Festival's children's program.

Currently, there is no State Cultural Institution in Western Sydney. NSW Labor has pledged that the Western Sydney-based Cultural Institution would be created in consultation with the local communities.