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June 20

**Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Attention – Marcus Jennejohn
PO Box 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124,**

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Subject: Parramatta Powerhouse Project EIS

I object to the Powerhouse Parramatta project.

I have not made any reportable political donations.

I write to you in regard to the decision by the State Government to close the much loved and respected Ultimo Powerhouse Museum and to construct a new facility at Parramatta.

This is a deeply unpopular decision involving the destruction of significant public heritage. Nowhere else has a museum of this extraordinary cultural significance been lost to the public. I, as a member of the public, request that the views of the overwhelming majority of the public be listened to and responded to by retaining the museum as it currently exists. The museum belongs to the people of NSW.

The new museum as proposed for Parramatta is not a suitable configuration as a museum but is more like a function centre. It clearly has not been designed as a special purpose museum and is incapable of housing the more significant exhibits from the Ultimo Powerhouse. It is misleading of the Government to refer to the new museum as a relocation of the Powerhouse. The reality is the apparent intention of the Government is to close the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum and disband the bulk of its extraordinary and unique collections. There is no obvious connection between the Ultimo Powerhouse and the proposed Parramatta building.

The location proposed for the new museum building is proven to be flood prone and therefore quite unsuitable for the storage or display of cultural artefacts. There will be significant issues of accessibility to the building.

At this time the proposed funding for the “relocation” project would be better spent on bushfire relief/recovery or on economic recovery following COVID-19. It would be a gross misuse of public funding to waste these funds on the deeply unpopular “relocation” project. At a time when the Government speaks of creating jobs, the sacking of the current Powerhouse workforce is contradictory and reprehensible.

MAAS has been located in Ultimo for the entirety of its existence. The Ultimo Tramway Power Station building is a significant heritage structure that has been sensitively adapted to house the MAAS exhibits. The Powerhouse Museum ceases to

exist without its being at the power station buildings. If relocated it is not MAAS and it is not the Powerhouse Museum.

The present Ultimo location is ideal for access by Sydneysiders and by visitors whether local or international. It is essential that the Powerhouse Museum have at least the current accessibility.

The MAAS collections have been purchased and maintained through public funds and belong to the people of NSW. The intended disbursement of the extensive collections would be contrary to public ownership and interest.

The proposed site at Parramatta will be much more difficult to access, particularly for non-local visitors. The site does not allow for any future expansion and is not “future proof”. The site is too small and is obviously flood prone. The proposed milk crate design is simply a ridiculous proposition. The selection of the site and design has excluded community consultation. The expressed wishes of the community are for a different type of museum celebrating the indigenous and post indigenous culture of NSW and/or the stories of migration and multiculturalism. These themes do not fit with the MAAS concept.

The Boulton and Watt 1785 beam engine exhibited in the Powerhouse at Ultimo is perhaps the most acclaimed cultural artefact of the industrial age. Yet it has zero future in the proposed Parramatta museum. I estimated it would cost between \$20 to \$30 million to relocate to a suitable new site. The proposed museum is not a suitable site.

The destruction of existing heritage buildings to build a museum is totally unacceptable. Willowgrove must be retained as an integral part of any development of this site.

The government has been unable to form any coherent business case to support relocation. The relocation costs will be extreme and these funds should instead be applied to an alternative museum (eg, Fleet Street precinct) or to bushfire relief or to the pandemic recovery.

The Parramatta Powerhouse project must not involve the destruction of public institutions (Ultimo Powerhouse) or the loss of publicly owned assets (Ultimo Powerhouse and its collections) or the destruction of local heritage (Willowgrove and the St Georges terraces.)

In conclusion the “relocation” project is an act of cultural vandalism. The project is a gross waste of taxpayer funds.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.