

# Parramatta Powerhouse EIS Submission

## Summary

I OBJECT to the Powerhouse Parramatta project and insist most strongly that it not proceed.

The project as described in these documents is not in the interests of Parramatta, the Greater Sydney area, or Australian domestic or international tourism.

My detailed objections are discussed below.

## Comments on exhibited document: New Powerhouse – Request for SEARs

### **OBJECTION: The concept of this project was flawed from the outset.**

When requesting the SEARs for this project, the request insufficiently disclosed numerous key details of great import to the evaluation of the environmental impact assessment for this project, including but not limited to:

- The extent of any efforts made during design selection and refinement to retain the Willow Grove and St. George's Terrace sites.
- The strength of community desire to keep those structures.
- How construction of a community multi-function building in a location inappropriate for a museum justifies using that project as an excuse to destroy an award-winning museum in a more transport-central location for visitors from around NSW (including southern, eastern, and northern Sydney), Australia, and the world.
- The very significant issue that the selected site will have regarding flooding, and why other sites were not selected given the flooding and heritage issues inherent in this site.
- The potential significant impact on historic value of artefacts like the Boulton & Watt beam engine when removed from the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo and possibly damaged or installed in a sub-standard manner at the Parramatta Powerhouse or elsewhere

If disclosed, these details may have led to increased requirements for the EIS.

## Section 3.1, Background and Project Rationale

### **OBJECTION: This is neither the best-value nor the most appropriate project to “bring culture to the West”.**

The decision to pursue this project was made by fiat, prior to any feasibility, costing, environmental or heritage studies, let alone community consultation, being done. The museum chosen to populate Parramatta's cultural district was the one which would cost the most to move, and which would result in the relocation of the entire Ultimo based museum, including public facing exhibits and functions such as classes for children and lectures for the wider community as well as back office functions.

To date, the government has had great difficulty getting the BCR to be greater than 1.0, even before the normal construction overages typical for this government are taken into account. This goes as far as the extent to which they're making what SHOULD be a museum building into a commercial money-churner to justify doing the project at all:

- Function halls for hire, some complete with built-in seating banks!
- Units for rent!
- Community rooms for hire!

- A dining and entertainment precinct on the ground floor!

This “trying so hard to make it stack up that it ceases to be much of a museum at all” approach demonstrates that this project is not a sound investment of government funds. No evidence has been presented that they considered the potential BCRs of alternative projects such as I enumerate in my comments on section 3.2, which would likely have provided better value per dollar spent.

### Section 3.2, Alternatives Considered

**OBJECTION: The government’s justification for creating this “Powerhouse Precinct” in Parramatta rests on the unsupported and inaccurate argument that the Powerhouse buildings in Ultimo are toward the end of their useful lives, and therefore it makes sense to move it rather than give Parramatta a voice in the kind of cultural institution they receive, and where it is located.**

The “Do Nothing” approach states that “The existing museum at Ultimo would continue to operate with infrastructure reaching the end of its useful life and with diminishing relevance in contrast to the programming which could occur in a more modern facility.” This is incorrect on two counts:

- The infrastructure is not reaching the end of its useful life. Many museums, including science museums / experiential discovery rooms such as the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia USA or Palais de la Découverte in Paris France, are contained within buildings that are a century old or even more. And the 1980s adaptive re-use of the oldest buildings combined with modern sections of the museum in Ultimo was designed and constructed to last far more than 30 years. Yet the writer of the above quote represents that it’s “reaching the end of its useful life” as fact whilst offering no details to back up something that appears counter to reality.
- An older building that was built to last, and which housed major real world industrial innovation in Sydney, doesn’t have “diminishing relevance” to a museum of the history of science, industry, engineering, and design. And it certainly doesn’t preclude modern programming.

It appears that the even government itself has now recognised this, with its renewed commitment to keep the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo open, although there are now concerns regarding with what form the museum will take at Ultimo, possibly even including removing everything, or most everything, directly relevant to the historical buildings (the industry/engineering/science exhibits) and replacing them with textile arts facilities.

The idea of ripping out an internationally-known museum located in the tourist centre of Sydney and creating a community function centre with a bit of “function” space that could do double duty for exhibits in residential suburbs, as indicated by the “Functional Options” detailed in section 3.2, is ridiculous. It proposes the museum equivalent of tearing down Parliament and replacing it with a Westfield, because the shopping centre will include a food court in which MPs could gather. The overall impact of such a move on the environment of greater Sydney, is profoundly negative. It destroys a unique cultural institution with exhibits of noteworthy objects from industrial history and claims to “replace” it with a local community centre of the sort that could be anywhere, in any repurposed warehouse with a fancy sign out front, or in any disposable, “easily recyclable” glass building held up by a bit of steel, on a low-value building site unsuitable for most purposes, as is currently planned. The replacement is NOT of equal cultural value to what is being destroyed.

No evidence is provided that they considered and rigorously evaluated other options for a cultural presence for Parramatta, such as:

- Creating a more general museum space and arts precinct in the Fleet Street Heritage District that could accommodate the presence of exhibits related to that heritage area and considered valuable by the community, drawn from multiple museums, or
- Building an additional site for the Art Gallery of NSW in Parramatta instead of expanding it at its original site in the CBD, at great expense, or
- Building an additional site for the Australian Museum in Parramatta instead of expanding it at its original site in the CBD, at great expense.

When such an expensive initiative is undertaken, surely it would be more fiscally responsible to consider alternative ways to “provide culture” for an area the government feels is under-served that might be both a better fit for the community and less costly.

In terms of “Design alternatives”, no mention is made of a priority being placed on preservation of the selected site’s existing heritage buildings.

#### Section 4.0, Site Description

**OBJECTION: It is wantonly wasteful and ironic for the government to support demolishing heritage properties in order to build a museum, which is a place that is supposed to honour history.**

That the government proposes to demolish heritage-listed buildings that have stood for over 140 years to build what appears to be an easily-disposable modern glass and steel shell to hold a community function centre, which itself will have no history, in the name of bringing culture to the West is unbelievable.

The site is unsuitable for a museum, due to its riverfront location and the propensity for that area to flood when it rains.

#### Section 5.0, Project Description

**OBJECTION a: The proposed structure is NOT a museum, all government PR to the contrary.**

When the government had to file legally binding paperwork defining the project, suddenly the project was described in a manner that makes it clear it is not a replacement for the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo at all.

The evidence for this is in the wording of the content in this section: nowhere in the project description section does the word “museum” even appear. Instead, there are words and phrases like:

- “an iconic cultural institution”, which is used a lot to describe it, because they have trouble sticking with one vision of it across the many years this project has been pursued, and such a generic description fits everything from a school concert hall, to an art school, to a lyric theatre, to a music conservatory, to a hall for travelling exhibits, and finally, possibly but certainly not limited to, a museum.
- “a major focal point for education and cultural programs focused on engaging communities with the arts and sciences”, which could very well mean that it’s a city TAFE branch or community centre, not a museum.
- “bringing significant social and economic opportunity to the local and wider community”, which sounds like it’s a generic commercial building of any sort being created as part of an urban renewal effort, again, not necessarily a museum.
- “public presentation spaces, front-and back-of-house spaces, education and community spaces, co-working and staff office spaces, residencies and retail spaces”, which again, make

it sound like a multi-purpose community centre or perhaps a part-residential college, not a museum.

If this project is not to build a museum, then it is improper to “sell” it as any sort of replacement justifying ANY changes whatsoever to the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum site, including changes in its exhibits or leasing out/selling of space.

**OBJECTION b: There’s a Green Ban on the Willow Grove and St. George’s Terrace sites.**

It will be difficult – and if possible at all, expensive – to get the project done, given the current insistence on demolition of those heritage properties.

[Section 6.2, Planning Context](#)

**OBJECTION: It assumes permission to demolish Willow Grove and St. George’s Terrace, and assumes that it will be possible to find someone to do the work for a reasonable price.**

Clauses 2.7 (demolition requires consent) and 5.10 (heritage conservation), seem to consider permission to demolish these structures, and the ability to find vendors to do that work, as a tick box item. It’s far from it.

As stated above, this is far from guaranteed, and if achievable at all, it will cost major dollars and be done over the strong objections of the community. The CFMMEU has placed a rare green ban on these properties, and that’s going to make it more difficult to source a vendor to do the work of demolition AND the work of building anything on the ground on which those buildings sat.

[Comments on exhibited document: EIS](#)

[Section 1.1, Overview of Proposed Development](#)

**OBJECTION: The proposed structure is NOT a museum, all government PR to the contrary.**

The list of items that will be constructed as part of the “Powerhouse Parramatta” does not mention any museum spaces. It will feature NO permanent exhibit galleries, if the list of “spaces” in this section is accurate.

The government has claimed that this project is intended to replace an actual museum filled with historic objects having both historic and cultural relevance to NSW. As with a similar section in the request for SEARs, the word “museum” appears nowhere in this overview section, although it includes an expanded list of even more “spaces” that have nothing to do with the core purpose of a museum.

Even the simplest, most lay, definition of a museum from the online dictionary.com states that it is “a building or place where works of art, scientific specimens, or other objects of permanent value are kept and displayed.”

Yet this facility offers no such dedicated spaces. There are generic “front of house” and “back of house” facilities. Generic “public presentation spaces” that could equally be used for conferences as for museum exhibits. Education spaces, a commercial kitchen, a visual arts studio, and retail spaces. This isn’t a museum.

[Section 1.2, Background and strategic need](#)

**OBJECTION: The government’s justification for creating this “Powerhouse Precinct” in Parramatta rests on the unsupported and inaccurate argument that the Powerhouse buildings in Ultimo are toward the end of their useful lives, and therefore it makes sense to move that institution to**

**Parramatta rather than give Parramatta a voice in the kind of cultural institution they receive, and where it is located.**

The Western Sydney region may be short on cultural institutions, and the LNP may feel electoral guilt about this that they're having trouble living with, but this is the wrong project being built in the wrong location.

In this section, the EIS claims that the government had to "urgently" consider "relocating" the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta because the Ultimo buildings were reaching the end of their useful life. Many museums, including science museums / experiential discovery rooms such as the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia USA or Palais de la Découverte in Paris France, are contained within buildings that are a century old or even more. And the 1980s adaptive re-use of the oldest buildings combined with modern sections of the museum in Ultimo was designed and constructed to last far more than 30 years. The EIS offers as evidence no factual details associated with this assertion which does not, given the existence of other museums in structures just as old, appear to be act-based. Indeed, just a couple years prior to the "we must move it!" initiative, a different report cited far more modest costings to update the Powerhouse Museum buildings in Ultimo to current standards. Please see the submissions and hearing transcripts to the original Museums and Galleries inquiry for a reference to this report.

The idea of ripping out an internationally-known museum located in the tourist centre of Sydney and creating a community function centre with a bit of "function" space that could do double duty for exhibits in residential suburbs is ridiculous. It proposes the museum equivalent of tearing down Parliament and replacing it with a Westfield, because the shopping centre will include a food court in which MPs could gather. The overall impact of such a move on the environment of greater Sydney, is profoundly negative. It destroys a unique cultural institution with exhibits of noteworthy objects from industrial history and claims to "replace" it with a local community centre of the sort that could be anywhere, in any repurposed warehouse with a fancy sign out front, or in any disposable, "easily recyclable" glass building held up by a bit of steel, on a low-value building site unsuitable for most purposes, as is currently planned. The replacement is NOT of equal cultural value to what it claims to be replacing.

No evidence is provided that the Ultimo site is no longer fit for purpose and cannot be made fit for purpose in a way that delivers far more economic benefit than destroying it and substituting this community centre in Parramatta, for it. No evidence is provided that the business case for this structure on this site in Parramatta stacks up in a way that provides more value to the people of New South Wales than other alternatives, or even that this project provides a BCR greater than 1.0. (This is critical because numerous issues such as significant under-costings and omissions were found by museum experts analysing the original business case released as part of the Museums and Galleries inquiry by the Upper House.) The EIS notes that a business case summary for the Parramatta project was published, but I do not believe that a recent detailed business case for the Parramatta Powerhouse project has been released for public review. (It may be in the thousands of single physical sheets of paper data-dumped as part of the Powerhouse Museum project's document dump at Parliament, but if it is, I haven't gotten to it yet in my hours of reviewing and reading those materials.)

No evidence is provided that they considered and rigorously evaluated other options for a cultural presence for Parramatta, such as:

- Creating a more general museum space and arts precinct in the Fleet Street Heritage District that could accommodate the presence of exhibits related to that heritage area and considered valuable by the community, drawn from multiple museums, or
- Building an additional site for the Art Gallery of NSW in Parramatta instead of expanding it at its original site in the CBD, at great expense, or
- Building an additional site for the Australian Museum in Parramatta instead of expanding it at its original site in the CBD, at great expense.

When such an expensive initiative is undertaken, surely it would be more fiscally responsible to consider alternative ways to “provide culture” for an area the government feels is under-served that might be both a better fit for the community and less costly.

### Section 1.3, Objectives of the development

**OBJECTION: This section makes no mention of safe, secure (to specific international museum standards) galleries to hold permanent exhibits, which are a key part of any museum.**

Again, the description of the development sounds more like a community centre for Parramatta than a museum, although in this section, the government does claim to be creating a museum.

It refers to objectives like:

- Creating local pedestrian movement in the area,
- Creating public domain areas to support public gatherings,
- Creating a precinct with multiple entry and exit points to be used as a pedestrian corridor,
- Prioritising active transport, etc. in addition to...
- A “dynamic and constantly changing program” of exhibits.

The first four are hardly key objectives of any museum development, and the last item betrays a lack of knowledge about the purpose of museums. Museums have a significant core collection of permanent exhibits that are major drawcards for the institution. These are supplemented by, but not replaced by, a rotating program of additional exhibits of interest to visitors.

### Section 1.4, Analysis of alternatives

**OBJECTION: An insufficient list of alternatives has been investigated; in particular, the creation of a Museum of NSW in the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct was not considered.**

The obvious alternative to investigate is a different museum, in a different and more historic location, rather than an old car park on land that is basically useless for many purposes due to being located on a flood plain.

One extremely intriguing alternative that the government declined to investigate is the North Parramatta Residents Action Group’s proposal for a Museum of NSW, among the marvellous convict-built sandstone buildings in the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct – an area that is tailor-made for a cultural precinct in the Parramatta CBD. This would be an ADDITION to the cultural facilities of NSW, not a downgrade to them. It would have the following benefits for Parramatta:

- It would provide great adaptive re-use options for the historic buildings in that precinct.
- It would honour the history of the area and particularly, the role that Parramatta played in the early years of NSW, much as the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo honours the history of its location.
- The size of the precinct would lend itself to expansion, as opposed to the extremely constrained site proposed for the Powerhouse Parramatta project.

- It would not require the demolition of rare remaining heritage structures (Willow Grove, St. George's Terrace) to create.

The "option 3" listed does not go into detail as to efforts made to retain the Willow Grove and St. George's Terrace structures. There have been reports that the bidding design firms were not strongly encouraged to develop designs preserving those structures, which are well-loved by the Parramatta community that this development is planned to serve. The document's statement that firms were "requested... to consider aspects of heritage and cultural significance" does not strong encouragement make. This is concerning due to representations to the contrary being made by the government to Parramatta residents.

#### Section 2.1.3, Transport and Access

**OBJECTION: The site is difficult to access for non-locals, especially tourists. Combined with the "local community centre" nature of the development, this does not make it likely that there will be significant numbers of non-local visitors.**

If you're not from the immediate area of the facility in Western Sydney, you could find yourself on a bus, a metro train, a cityrail train (or two), and then a bus or possibly a second metro train... just to get out to a site that is mostly a local community centre and dining like you have in your own suburb, with a bit of exhibit space, a cooking school (like you probably have closer to home), community meeting rooms (probably irrelevant to you as you live elsewhere), and a corporate function centre (again, like you probably have closer to home or your workplace if you don't work in Parramatta).

Whilst it is great to talk about how frequently trains run to and from Parramatta, that neglects that many people do not live directly on the line that services Parramatta express. Their journey – including that of international tourists who either have to figure out a multi-mode journey on Sydney's public transport network or take a very expensive taxi – is far less straightforward and far more time-consuming.

The Ferry from Circular Quay is an alternative, you say? Not during low tide, and not when flooding occurs or is expected. Half the times I've tried to take the ferry to Parramatta, we've had to alight at Rydalmere and take a bus to the ferry wharf due to low tide making the full route impassable. (This may be anecdotal evidence, but it's enough of a frustration to me, because it has happened enough times, that I no longer bother with the ferry.) It's also not a useful alternative if you have limited time, as would many tourists.

This difficulty of access combined with the lack of compelling, unique-in-Australia-and-the-world functionality delivered by the project makes it unlikely that the project's goal of being attractive to international visitors will be met. Most significant international cities have science edutainment facilities grander than the one proposed for the Parramatta Powerhouse, so that won't make the commute seem sufficiently worthwhile to attract many international visitors. Australian cooking classes will likely have limited appeal to non-locals as well, given the significant transport time required to get to them. Local functions and a weekly local farmer's market will also have limited appeal to non-locals given that The Rocks has a great local market for tourists to visit, as do other communities within a short taxi ride of the CBD.

#### Section 2.1.4, Heritage context

**OBJECTION: Willow Grove and St. George's Terrace are structures whose retention on that site is something the community feels very strongly about, and insufficient mention of this local significance is made in this section.**

The latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was rather brutal to Parramatta, in terms of the destruction of heritage to create now-dated-looking “modern” commercial buildings. And recently, a beloved old pub was demolished for the sake of “progress”.

The very clinical descriptions of the Willow Grove and St. George’s Terrace buildings in the EIS do not sufficiently communicate the value that the local community puts on these buildings. Locals know that these surviving structures are not “dime a dozen”, and are worthy of preservation as examples of local architecture of that vintage – if for no other reason than so many other structures of similar vintage have been lost due to redevelopment.

More importantly, Willow Grove in particular is part of the fabric of the community. More than just a physical building, part of Willow Grove’s life was spent as a maternity hospital for 3 decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, giving it a place in the history of women in Parramatta in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and many of their descendants who live in the area today.

These buildings and their value to the community absolutely deserve better than for video recordings to be made, key pieces to be salvaged, and an “interpretation” and plaque kept somewhere on the new milk crate buildings’ site, over the ground on which these buildings once stood.

There is something surreal and highly culturally inappropriate about destroying heritage to build a museum – which by the definition of museum, though perhaps not by the definition of this not-a-museum-but-called-a-museum project, is a repository of heritage, be it scientific, artistic, cultural, etc. – when surely other options existed. If those other options didn’t stack up cost-wise, again, that’s an indicator that perhaps it’s the wrong project in the wrong location, not that the area’s existing heritage is expendable in the name of importing limited heritage objects from elsewhere and storing them in a new building.

#### Section 2.1.7, Flooding

**OBJECTION: The site floods frequently. This means that whilst it may be an OK site for a community hall or function hall that contains chairs and a bit of catering equipment, but not much of significant value, it’s simply not the place for a museum.**

The EIS cites no examples of significant museums that have been built in the past 50 years on sites known to flood regularly. I do not know that there are any. And if there aren’t, why take the risk of collection damage inherent in, “Let’s give it a go, should be right, mate!”, when there are alternative sites such as that of the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct, available? This is simply not a routine risk to take when selecting a site for a new museum.

Insufficient justification for this highly unusual, risky site was chosen for the project, has been given in the EIS and supporting paperwork given that there were alternative sites that could have been selected.

#### Section 2.2, Surrounding development

**OBJECTION a: Noise from evening “activation” of the precinct will disrupt nearby residences.**

There is a phenomenon that many Sydneysiders know all too well, of sound ricocheting back and forth across and up nearby tower blocks, that amplifies the sound as it travels upward. Although papers available from the data-dump at Parliament House indicate that most noise will be kept to the interior, the roof top and public plaza areas will be exposed to the environment.



**OBJECTION b: Also, the project's food and beverage outlets will add additional, likely excessive competition to the existing Church Street "Eat Street" precinct.**

Have the Eat Street restaurants been surveyed to see what they think of the viability of additional food and beverage service in the area, and the impact that they project it could have on their businesses?

**OBJECTION c: Willow Grove and St. George's Terrace are surrounding development the project doesn't care about.**

Yes, this submission is back to that again. Because RIGHT NOW, today, these structures count as "surrounding development." It is inappropriate to disregard them to the point of already having concluded they are completely irrelevant to the site context.

### Section 3.0, Consultation

**OBJECTION a: Consultation for the Parramatta Powerhouse project has been insufficient, partly but not entirely due to constraints placed on in-person meetings. I'm still waiting on information promised ~30 days ago during a Zoom consultation meeting.**

The EIS cites the "range" of community and stakeholder engagement activities that have occurred. Despite this, I and numerous others feel that consultation has been incomplete. The Zoom consultations, for example, allowed each participant to get in two questions per meeting. If you had more, too bad for you. You could follow up in email, but might or might not get a response, and if you got a response, it might not be to the question you asked.

During one of the consultations, I asked someone to do a floor-by-floor walkthrough of "function space" and show how it adds up to the oft-quoted 18,000 square metres of space they claim will be available for exhibits. My back of the envelope calculations based on an email I saw in the data dump at Parliament House told me that the individual numbers just don't add up to the 18,000. I subsequently re-iterated that request during the next Zoom consultation. Despite having asked for this twice, I'm still waiting for it – and unless they've changed the size of the buildings since that email was sent in early 2020, or the email inaccurately stated the sizes of areas on individual floors, it's still likely that it doesn't add up to 18,000 square metres of space.

The consultation summary in this section makes no mention of the fact that many, if the majority, of the consultations have been resoundingly negative toward the project as proposed in this EIS. That is an extremely troubling thing, as it is a significant environmental impact that the Parramatta community and the broader community of NSW ratepayers and residents just don't want state funds spent on this project.

In reading the detailed Community Consultation report, some items stood out to me:

**OBJECTION b: Given that that a certain "news" organisation is known for being the mouthpiece of the LNP, why was no effort made to reach community members whose online newsgathering preferences might involve different platforms such as Fairfax and the Guardian, and therefore might have a different approach to the provision of a cultural institution to Parramatta than that espoused by the LNP?**

It appears that the community consultations were advertised only to likely "friendly" parties, due to choice of advertising site (my bold below):

“Digital banner advertisements Digital banner advertisements were run across **News Corporation websites** and provided details on the consultation period and inviting feedback (Appendix B).The total impressions were 120,006.

Surely, a wider cross section of the community would have been reached by these consultation advertisements if the advertisements had not been restricted to just one media conglomerate’s online sites which, largely today, are only accessed by paid subscribers who feel that Murdoch-flavoured news is worth paying for.

**OBJECTION c: This report relates observation that are directly in conflict with an opposite comment made by Barney Glover in the Sydney Morning Herald.**

The consultation report states that, “We found that many people reported returning to the museum to see new temporary exhibits in addition to the permanent collection.” And that, “From the survey responses it was evident that visitors have enjoyed multiple visits to the museum over the years and have enjoyed the variety of exhibitions and programs on offer.”

These observations disagree with Barney Glover’s assertion that people visit the museum once per generation, available at <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/powerhouse-parramatta-will-be-bigger-and-better-than-before-20200629-p55775.html> (Sydney Morning Herald, “OPINION: Powerhouse Parramatta will be bigger and better than before”, 30 June, 2020.)

Section 4.1, Design Principles

**OBJECTION: This section makes no mention of safe, secure (to specific international museum standards) galleries to hold permanent exhibits, which are a key part of any museum.**

Please see my comments on section 1.3.

This is not a museum design. It is a community centre / community hub design that will have a few transient exhibits here and there.

The environmental impacts, including the loss of actual heritage buildings, and the waste of cultural dollars that could be put to better use development the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct, are too great just for the gain of a local community centre.

Section 4.3, Land use

**OBJECTION a: Most of the uses described do not involve core functions of a museum.**

This has been covered elsewhere in this submission, but bears repeating.

**OBJECTION b: Student dorm rooms, serviced apartments and a retail / dining precinct does not an iconic cultural institution make, no matter how glossy the brochure.**

This section talks about much use of the site that has nothing to do with a museum or, for that matter, an “iconic cultural institution” of any sort. “We have dorms for visiting students, on site!” is not a feature of significant value to an iconic cultural institution. Does the Sydney Opera House spruik its student dorms? The Louvre? How about Questacon? Nope.

Similarly, a food and beverage precinct, by nature of smells, pests, irregular heating, and increased risk of fire, is not typically associated with an “iconic cultural institution” that will contain irreplaceable historic objects.

#### Section 4.4, Built form and urban design

**OBJECTION: No floor space dimensions are provided in the diagrams illustrating the different spaces in the buildings, so the community cannot intelligently comment on space limitations.**

How can the community intelligently comment on the facilities, which we already suspect / know are much smaller than those in Ultimo, if numbers are not provided?

#### Section 4.7, Site operation

**OBJECTION: Again, this does not sound like a museum. It sounds like a commercialised community centre that might contain a bit of art or other artefacts, much like how some Westfields contain a bit of public art.**

My comments elsewhere adequately illustrate this.

#### Section 4.8, Parking, access and movement

**OBJECTION: Not factoring in parking, either on-site or at a dedicated or large new car park off site and connected via public transport to the Parramatta Powerhouse site, is a critical flaw in this project.**

Many people who are not local (if they visit at all, which is up for question) will prefer to drive, rather than endure an extreme, multi-modal commute to reach this site.

As it's claimed that this isn't just a local community centre, the needs of non-locals living or staying in locations not convenient to Parramatta by public transport should be catered for.

Of the car parks in Parramatta, I believe two (including the DJ's car park on this site) are scheduled for demolition, leaving just a couple for all visitors to Parramatta, including those visiting the Parramatta Powerhouse. This isn't sufficient.

I understand that you want to encourage the use of public transport and for the non-disabled, active transport, but what this will really do is discourage potential visitors who don't want to spend 2 hours each way to visit a few small exhibits, from visiting at all.

#### Section 5.5, Design excellence

**OBJECTION: The proposed building, by virtue of necessitating the demolition of two heritage structures on the site, and by virtue of featuring so much daylight, does not appear to represent "design excellence" for a museum building.**

There are many unknowns to this project.

The community would like to see the completed designs that were rejected, to best judge whether an "excellent" design (or just a cheap and cheerful, easily demolishable one) was selected. The project keeps saying that they'll be releasing them eventually, but we don't just need them "eventually", we need them now, before the project approval is finalised, to adequately evaluate this EIS.

The community would also like to see the architectural and structural details of the project, to better be able to evaluate whether the proposed structure is adequate for a museum. Immediately, many of us who are familiar with museum design have concerns around the excessive daylight penetration into the "function", "presentation", or "exhibit" (depending on who you're speaking with, and what day it is) spaces. That is not an appropriate environment for a museum, and designers have not explained how they're going to mitigate the light penetration given that many artefacts can be damaged by an excess of light / UV light.

Similarly, the community would like to see all materials sent out to the competing architects, so that we can judge for ourselves whether the government's assertion that they told potential design comp participants that designs that preserved Willow Grove and St. George's Terrace were strongly encouraged, is accurate, or just more of the PR-speak that has surrounded this project without being significantly based in fact.

#### Section 6.2.2, Post settlement heritage

**OBJECTION: The right site was not selected for this project, if it was impossible to "deliver on the design ambitions of the brief and deliver connectivity, whilst also retaining local heritage items.**

This section of the EIS hints at the importance of Willow Grove and St. George's Terrace to the community, and purports that it is fine to destroy them, because the project will undertake "mitigations" to this loss of heritage.

Videos do not replace the real thing.

Salvaged items and bric-a-brac do not replace a real building you can walk through, that lets you see those items in context.

#### Section 6.6, Social and economic impacts

**OBJECTION: Similar, and likely superior, benefits could be derived from alternative cultural projects in Parramatta.**

In particular, cultural development involving adaptive re-use in the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct would enhance, not destroy, heritage architecture.

#### Section 6.7.2, Construction

**OBJECTION: No mention here is made of NSW's favourite intrusive noise-maker, the vacuum truck, also called the "non destructive digger" or "sucker truck"**

This plant is extremely noisy, and there are "heinously noisy" and "just noisy" variants of it. Use of this plant should be required to be restricted – to the point of never being used outside of business hours, and only the quietest versions of it being used during business hours.

#### Conclusion

This project has significant flaws, and I recommend that the EIS be rejected and the project not proceed.