

## Submission on Powerhouse Parramatta Project

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. The recent news that the Ultimo site is to be kept as the original Powerhouse Museum is very welcome, and a victory for common sense. It is encouraging to see that decisions can be modified in light of rational debate and overwhelming public response. I trust this means that the collection of large industrial items and exhibits will remain intact, safe, and together at Ultimo – in the original Powerhouse setting.

Western Sydney certainly should have a new science and technology museum. But the chosen location in Parramatta is not ideal – it is a congested area, with limited parking and long public transport journeys from many parts of western Sydney. In fact, this museum is not really for all of “Western Sydney” as it is only easily accessible for those in close proximity to Parramatta. A better location for a new Western Sydney museum would be in the new growth areas of the Aerotropolis, where land is still available, and parking and more buildings could be accommodated.

So, perhaps a better option would be to plan for a third science museum? If this is the case, and the Ultimo site is kept as is, then perhaps then the Parramatta site could be limited to one building, and the historic Willow Grove property and St George’s Terrace could be retained? There are precious few remnants of our built history, and there are surely ways that these properties could be preserved, and even incorporated as part of the museum. It is not acceptable to destroy a significant part of our history when alternatives exist.

In addition, the site chosen in Parramatta is in a flood zone. It makes no sense to store museum worthy items in such a flood prone location. This also compromises the possible designs for the building – requiring large voids in the lower level. The presence and use of this space will be a challenge given the likelihood of flooding, and hopefully the use of this space would complement the museum, and not be used for sporting facilities for example, as has been reported.

This redevelopment is being promoted as a science/STEM museum, yet there is more emphasis on future arts exhibitions and cultural events than science and technology. There is no detail about permanent science or technology exhibits, and no provision for temperature and light controlled areas, conservation laboratories, or museum appropriate storage. Most of the area seems to be exhibition and performance space.

In fact, there is almost no mention of science or technology in the proposal - a simple search gives many more references for art, culture, and retail than for science and technology! There is no indication of laboratory or technology space for researchers. The museum is meant to be for Applied Arts and Sciences – but the science seems to be missing.

Why is precious museum space being used for residences and student accommodation? There are plenty of neighbouring residential buildings, some are immediately adjoining the site. The primary use of this building should be museum exhibition, education, and research

space. There should not be commercial tenancies and non-museum retail space, kitchens, film studios, 24/7 nightlife and other non-core activities.

The Powerhouse Parramatta is an opportunity to build a quality, purpose-built museum for the Applied Arts and Sciences. Instead this is a building of voids, subject to flooding, with little emphasis on the history of science and technology that the Powerhouse is known for. What is needed is a museum that inspires children and adults with an appreciation of the history of science, technology, and design, in a modern building that looks to the future.

There is an opportunity, now that the Ultimo site is to be retained, to rethink the Powerhouse Parramatta design, incorporate the historic buildings on the site instead of destroying them, and build a science and technology museum that the people of Parramatta can be proud of.

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