

MINUTES: POWERHOUSE MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS: ULTIMO BRIEFING – FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2020

ATTENDEES:

MUSEUM STAFF:

Lisa Havilah	Chris Lawrence	Monika Herfurth
Alex Bowen	Cate Purcell	

VOLUNTEERS:

Jason McLachlan	Jenny Marty	Ron Koenig
Maree Burnett	Catherine De Lorenzo	Alan Edwards
Maureen Gibson	Hette Mollema	Cierwen Jones
Tom Lockley	Ernie Mollenhaur	Andrew Grant
Gail Luthy	Beth Bailey	Phoebe Tsui
Judith Campbell	Joe Yiu	Christina Sumner
Dinah Hales	Denise Warren	Catherine Gibson
Garry Horvai	Isabel Navaro Marote	Trevor Oates
Matthew Lloyd	Mike Leslie	Paul Waite
Wayne Eagle	Mary Zarate	Yifei Chan
Robert Ryan	Cathie Griffith	Jon Comino
Susanne Hledik	Barbara Stokes	Marion Barker
Jay Ekers	Richard Pike	Lesley Cherry

MINUTES:

Lisa thanked the volunteers for coming and acknowledged that she would like to arrange a Powerhouse Museum meeting once a month for Volunteers and executive staff to connect.

Lisa Havilah gave an acknowledgement of country and presented to the volunteers an update on the Powerhouse Ultimo renewal and Business Case.

Lisa Havilah opened the forum to the Volunteers for questions:

- Judith Campbell noted the business case covers museum operations as well as the building and inquired if the opportunity to make the museum's permanent collection be admission free on a permanent basis would be considered. Lisa agreed that this will be advocated for within the submission.
- Robert Ryan noted a greater rotation of objects and permanent exhibitions at the museum would be beneficial and would reduce the amount of vacant spaces. Lisa Havilah advised she and the curatorial team are committed to the creation of more exhibitions using items from the museum collection.

- Susanne Hledik noted the Museum should capitalise on the collection which is currently held, showcasing its uniqueness and highlight to the public what the Powerhouse Museum is about. Susanne further promoted increasing the number of indigenous exhibitions and objects which the museum displays. It was noted that International exhibitions and objects remain an important part of the museum.
- Judith Campbell noted for the museum to be world class institution the programming will need to be broadly focused on multiple topics, not just local.
- Hette Mollemma noted that museum displays need to be more contemporary with the potential for more interaction with the objects in exhibitions, showing the progression from the past to the present and the role of volunteers within the exhibitions and activities.
- Jenny Marty suggested the use of key items within the exhibition to encourage guests to come to the museum.
- Mike Leslie suggested the potential use of the technology of today, the use of smart phones to learn more about the collection through 3D Tours and audio tours and the modernising of how people interact with the collection.
- Catherine De Lorenzo noted the museum's collection is incredibly diverse and rich and suggested the potential for the museum to be developed into a learning hub for the students that are in surrounding educational precincts and areas, encouraging students of all ages as well as guests to come to the museum to learn and encourage excitement to attend the museum.
- Christina Sumner worked with the museum as a curator and now as a volunteer, lovely to hear the passion among the volunteers. It was highlighted the many ways which the Ultimo site can be used and raised concerns about the site being reduced to a Fashion Museum and a Lyric Theatre. The collection is diverse, and the decorative arts covers many facets of which fashion is only one.
- Ernie Mollenhaur encouraged looking at attendance figures of other events and institutions across NSW, noting that people want a complete sensory experience including interaction, not simply a static display. Ernie noted he would like to see more interaction with exhibitions at the museum especially audio interaction. Lisa noted there were several questions related to the steam exhibition and the Boulton and Watt, it was confirmed that these objects will remain onsite and remain operational.
- Hette Mollemma encouraged the consultation of the volunteers, noting the wealth of knowledge they have collectively and have a close relationship with guests within the museum. Lisa noted once direction has been given by government in relation to the business case, there will be a design process the museum will undergo and the volunteers will be involved in this process.
- Maree Burnett enquired if the entire museum will accessible to all, Lisa advised the museum would be accessible to all.
- Future of the Harwood is subject to the Business Case and a decision made by Government. Lisa noted the team is focused on gaining input from community members and stakeholders which will help form the submission of the renewal of the Ultimo site.

- Andrew Grant inquired if there was a preferred option for the redevelopment of Ultimo and if the Harwood Building will be retained? Andrew advised the Harwood Building is required in its current capacity if there was to be an increase in collection display at the site as items for exhibition need a staging space, this cannot be done on the Museum floor. The function of the Harwood building is to be the 'mothership' for the collection ahead of display, and without the Harwood Building, the museum's functions are diminished. Lisa Havilah advised she will take onboard the concerns and feedback. Lisa is committed to ensuring the highly skilled and qualified staff of the museum are involved in the development of the business to ensure all issues are appropriately considered.
- Tom Lockley commended the consultation by museum staff.
- Judith Campbell encouraged the ongoing connection to power and associated transport within the collection as it is the Powerhouse Museum. It was noted that there is a niche for the exhibition of the decorative arts as nowhere else in Sydney has a focus on this.
- Garry Horvai enquired as to why it is called the Powerhouse Ultimo and not the Powerhouse Museum. Lisa Havilah noted that the Ultimo site is still the Powerhouse Museum and thanked Garry for the feedback.
- Tom Lockley noted three points:
 - The museum needs to reinforce its strengths in Transport and Science.
 - The need for a researched and scenically based development plan.
 - The volunteer's input is important, and they should be listened to.
- Andrew Grant spoke to a comment from the Inquiry made by Andrew Simpson with regard to NSW having a state-wide Museum Policy and how it would be beneficial in terms of planning as a whole. Nothing the potential development of the Goods Line to be a link for Ultimo with Eveleigh, connecting the museum with Educational precincts across Sydney. Lisa Havilah advised she is now a member of the Camperdown Ultimo collaboration Area where owners of precincts from South Eveleigh to Ultimo are working together to connect sites and stakeholders.
- Susanne Hledik would like to see development on the educational programs offered to school groups where students are involved in presentations and interactive programs. Representing the commitment to a vibrant learning environment for students of all ages.
- Isabel Navaro Marote would like to see the further development multicultural material available at the museum representing the diversity of languages and backgrounds across Australia.
- Christina Sumner endorsed previous comments contributed by Andrew Grant and other volunteers regarding the focus on science, however, would like to ensure the applied arts are not forgotten when it comes to programming.
- Andrew Grant would like to see the museum bring back social history at the museum. Lisa Havilah advised the museum is committed to reintegrating social history within the collection at the museum, with more information to be available in the coming months.

- Hette Mollemma noted design of displays has taken priority over the content of the exhibitions, an example given was the Redstone Rocket, and the layout of eco logic. Lisa Havilah advised that there needs to be a complete renewal of the Eco Logic exhibition.
- Joe Yiu asked if there a formal process for Volunteers to follow when asking about the ongoing curation of the museum. Lisa Havilah advised volunteers can email herself with their thoughts and these emails can be forwarded onto the appropriate people, as well as concerns and feedback provided at Monthly meetings.
- Garry Horvai raised concerns surrounding the Lyric Theatre being put into the Museum Boiler Hall, Lisa Havilah advised that to her knowledge this is not happening.
- Maree Burnett enquired if there is an employee at the museum who oversees the connections between exhibitions, e.g. the wiggles exhibition did not have signage that Emma Wiggle's wedding dress was being exhibited within another section of the museum.
- Lisa Havilah advised that with the commitment from Government that the museum will remain open, it will take some time for exhibitions to be renewed and refreshed.

Lisa Havilah thanked the volunteers for their time, feedback and engagement with the process and advised that if they had any queries or concerns, to get in touch via email.