

May 13

There was a meeting of PHM volunteers on Wednesday that principally was a briefing from Dolla Merelees the director and from Michael Parry, who is working full-time on the move to Parramatta. They made a big effort to explain what was happening and responded to all questions from the audience. For me the main points are as follow (very much oversimplified, I fear): *(My comments in italics)*.

From May to December the final business case would be prepared (by Michael Parry) to be carried into the 2017 state budget. *These dates give a good action time frame for us.*

- The Parramatta site is not purchased yet. The deeds to the present site are still in the hands of the trustees.
- Government Properties NSW, has been asked to examine possibilities. *I think this is a new body that deals with all land sales etc including for example Sydney Harbour Foreshores Authority.*
- The announced site was chosen over the alternative golf course site because of ease of access.
- Though the drawing released is an inaccurate artist's impression, the building at Parramatta will have the same space as the existing building including the presently used curatorial, office and / *presume* Library areas as the existing Ultimo buildings, with integrated parking. Parking areas are also available nearby.
- The matter of the likelihood of flood damage to the site had been assessed and was not a problem.
- Asked what finances would be available, Michael Parry and Dolla both said that that is a government decision over which they have no say. It was all under the aegis of Infrastructure NSW. *The politicians seem to be the only people who can change the idea of demolishing the museum.*
- No exhibits would be sold off to pay for the move.
- Dolla said that PHM is not a regional museum, but a state cultural institution, unique in Australia as an arts and science museum. And obviously this is what it would be at Parramatta.
- Timing: About 2020 for the opening of Parramatta.... 'We are at the very beginning of the journey' ******/ think this was a misunderstanding: about 2020 maybe for the move with opening 2022*******
- Staging of the transfer was being worked on, and would be as short as possible. But 'obviously the Catalina and the Boulton and Watt could not be in both places at the same time' so there would be some overlap and some downtimes.
- The greater efficiency of space would enable more items to be on show in comparison to the situation we now have where stuff is in Harwood and not seen. More examples of the 'recollect' display type would be available and 'permanent exhibits are not to be encouraged'.
- The matter of overseas and short-term visitors to Sydney having a less convenient venue was discussed with *to meno* convincing acknowledgement of this problem.
- The question of what would happen if there was a change of government was not satisfactorily answered *as I think nobody knows what would happen.*

An introductory video was shown that announced the concept to everyone. See for yourself at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9B9A3FgFA0> and make up your own mind. *To me it was a copy of the publicity videos created on ABC TV Utopia, 'up to the dot dot dot ...' In other words absolutely no substance.*

Overall, the bosses are to be commended in their attitude to this meeting. However it was obvious that they are working to government instructions to prepare the move, and had no say in the decision. They were enthusiastic about the opportunities provided by the new museum. One volunteer spoke favourably about the move.

We are working on what to do next. Ideas and suggestions are always welcome. After an email debate I hope to get something out next week.