

PHA NSW & ACT

Professional Historians Association
NEW SOUTH WALES AND AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



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The Hon. Dominic Perrottet, MP
NSW Minister for Finance
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Perrottet,

The Professional Historians Association in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, the professional association for independent public historians, views with grave concern the proposal to outsource the work currently undertaken by the stonemasons and associated tradesmen at the Alexandria stoneyard, which operates as part of the Public Works Department, as reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 2 August 2015, page 11, and elsewhere.

Some years ago members of PHA NSW & ACT visited the stoneyard and were fascinated to see the vital work undertaken there. For more than 25 years this enterprise has played an important role in ensuring that Sydney's beautiful sandstone heritage buildings are maintained at a reasonable cost to New South Wales taxpayers. Of great significance for the future of these iconic Sydney buildings is the stockpile of 'yellow gold' held there for use in restoration projects of our public heritage buildings.

Our members are often commissioned to research the history of such public buildings so it was truly impressive to see this work in the hands of such consummate artisans maintaining traditional skills and practices. At the time of our visit work was under way on completing a statue of colonial surveyor James Meehan that was to fill one of the vacant niches, originally intended for statues, in the Department of Lands building. These workers are both tradesmen and artists, and the skills they maintain are a part of our cultural heritage.

We look to the State to play its role in supporting such traditional skills. It would be a sad and costly loss to the people of New South Wales for this thriving public enterprise to be lost to public ownership and management. We therefore urge you as Minister for Heritage to do all in your power to ensure that this proposal does not become a reality.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Baskerville

CHAIR

Professional Historians' Association NSW & ACT

12 August 2015