

11 December 2014

The Hon. Richard Wynne
Minister for Planning
Level 7, 1 Spring Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

Dear Minister,

DRILL HALL PROPOSAL FROM THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister for Planning in the Andrews government.

The History Council of Victoria (HCV) is the peak advocacy body for history in Victoria.¹ We are a tenant of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) at the Drill Hall, a heritage-listed building on the corner of A'Beckett and William Streets, Melbourne.

The HCV was concerned at the short-term approach by the previous government to the leasing and management of this important building in the Flagstaff Gardens precinct of Victoria's capital city. I therefore write in full support of the proposal made to you by the RHSV, that it form a Committee of Management for the building in conjunction with a long-term (80-year) lease.

You will be familiar, through your involvement in local as well as state government, with the intrinsic importance of preserving heritage buildings as part of the layered fabric of a city. In the case of the Drill Hall, a viable use has been found and proven, over the last 15 years, through the work of the RHSV. Its

¹ Our membership includes representatives of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Heritage Council of Victoria, the History Teachers' Association of Victoria Ltd, Museum Victoria, the National Centre for History Education, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the Professional Historians Association (Vic) Inc, Public Record Office Victoria, the Royal Historical Society of Victoria Inc, the State Library of Victoria and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Our Constitution requires the Board to appoint as members at least three historians employed by Victorian universities and also encourages representation from Museums Australia (Victoria). We are funded by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to deliver the 'History Roadshow', a program that redresses regional disadvantage by taking academic and professional historians 'on the road' to speak with senior secondary students from non-metropolitan schools about their history studies.

library and other heritage collections are well used not only by members but also by students, professional historians and the general public; it has gained accreditation through the program administered by Museums Australia (Vic); it offers an energetic program of exhibitions, lectures and public programs; and it serves as the base for a number of active tenant organisations. The RHSV's use of the Drill Hall demonstrates the instrumental value of providing a home in the Melbourne CBD for history, heritage and culture.

I note that, prior to the recent State election, your party assured the RHSV of its commitment to continued government ownership of the Drill Hall and also to supporting long-term and sustainable tenancy arrangements for the RHSV and the other organisations located at this venue.

I urge you, in office, to act on that commitment by giving your serious and prompt attention to the RHSV's proposal to serve as a Committee of Management for the Drill Hall, with a long-term lease.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the HCV and its tenancy at the Drill Hall. I would also be pleased to meet you to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Judith Smart
ACTING CHAIR

Copies to:

Hon. Martin Foley, Minister for Creative Industries [c/- Arts Victoria, Level 6, 2 Kavanagh Street, Southbank Vic 3006]

Ms Ellen Sandell, Member for Melbourne [c/- Australian Greens Victoria, GPO Box 4589, Melbourne Vic 3001]

The Right Honourable Robert Doyle, Lord Mayor of Melbourne [GPO Box 1603, Melbourne Vic 3001]

Mr Russell Maunder, Coordinator Property, Planning Department [GPO Box 2392, Melbourne Vic 3001]

Dr Don Garden, President, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne Vic 3000