

**12 November, 2016**  
(Sydney Morning Herald)



The Lands building. *Photo: Edwina Pickles*

### **Another sell-off, another sell-out**

What a disgrace to see the Lands and Education buildings, two priceless pieces of Sydney's history, joining the long list of heritage assets flogged by the Baird Government ("[Another life for city's grand old dame](#)", November 11). Gone for just \$35m. There was no testing to see if these distinguished public buildings might have had another life as a design or history museum, two missing links in Sydney's cultural infrastructure, or an extension of the Art Gallery of NSW. Next on the block is the Powerhouse Museum and the nationally significant Fleet Street heritage precinct in Parramatta, which has been part of the government domain since 1788. No other global city with any cultural ambition or civic sensibility would be selling these irreplaceable heritage assets out of public ownership. What price heritage? Well now we know, and it's low, very low. The government is selling our heritage to developers for a pittance.

**Kylie Winkworth** Newtown

Perhaps as an attempt to justify the "sale" of yet another NSW government asset, this time the heritage-listed and prominent Sydney landmark, the Lands Building in Bridge Street, the spin doctors have spun the lie that the building was closed to the public since the 1880s. The building was purpose-built for the Lands Department, which occupied it from then until some years ago. For all that time the public had access to the building for business with that department and indeed there were public counters on the ground floor, which served as a shop front, open five days a week during business hours. I would suggest the Lands Building for most of its life had greater public access than most government offices of today. I worked in the building for over 14 years and in my role saw and interacted with countless members of the public. The alienation of this government-built and owned landmark to serve largely private interests is bad enough. To help justify it with an untruth is another matter.

**Michael Ockwell** Griffith (ACT) Former Deputy Director-General, NSW Department of Conservation and Land Management

A massive, beautiful, sandstone government-owned building in the centre of Sydney is leased for a 103 years for a miserable \$35 million to a hotel developer. Besides the madness of selling off another priceless state asset, the price seems absurdly low.

**Alan Morris** Eastlakes