

# Media Release

**The Hon Richard Wynne MP**  
Minister for Planning  
Minister for Housing



Monday, 25 May 2020

## HISTORY UNEARTHED IN THE HEART OF MELBOURNE

The remains of an nineteenth-century girls' school and thousands of artefacts that date back to the start of Melbourne's historic settlement have been uncovered at a construction site in the heart of the CBD.

The remarkable archaeological discovery was revealed during excavation works for the Aspire Melbourne development near the corner of La Trobe and King Streets.

Heritage Victoria had previously identified the site as having high archaeological potential and required the developer to conduct archaeological excavations before commencing construction.

The find triggered an eight-week archaeological dig which is now reaching its conclusion.

Among the discoveries are the ruins of a six-room sandstone cottage which was used as a school for young ladies.

A newspaper clipping from the Port Phillip Gazette dated April 1846 confirms the site was owned and occupied by a Mrs Bruford, who was advertising for pupils to enrol in her school for young ladies.

Artefacts found include jewellery, cosmetic items, brushes, needles and pins, likely to date back to the operation of the school in the years before and during the Gold Rush.

The remains of shops and warehouses that functioned as grain stores, grocers, stables, spirit merchants, and hay merchants have also been uncovered.

All of the significant artefacts will initially be kept and managed by Heritage Victoria at their Archaeology and Research Centre.

It's hoped a display of artefacts will be established on the site they were excavated on.

All historical archaeological sites are protected under the Heritage Act 2017. Heritage Victoria has identified more than 6500 historical archaeological sites across Victoria.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Planning Richard Wynne

*"This discovery highlights the value of Heritage Victoria's work in identifying these sites and making sure our city's history is preserved."*

*"This site is a unique window into life in early Melbourne. These artefacts and buildings will teach us things we can't learn from other historical sources."*

*"This find has uncovered a fascinating piece of our history and allows all Victorians to learn more about our city and state."*