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MHNSW

Museums eNews

May 2025

History.
Not as you
know it.

What's on at the Museum of Sydney



Seeing Sydney, Knowing Country

Open daily, 10am–5pm, free entry

Sydney is known for its iconic harbour, scenic foreshores, bushland reserves, and ever-growing urban and suburban areas. But how were its

landscapes experienced and understood in the past?

Seeing Sydney, Knowing Country explores the development of the NSW colony through a selection of significant historical maps, plans, sketches, artworks and objects from the Museums of History NSW and other institutional collections, alongside picturesque colonial landscape prints from the collection of Beat Knoblauch.

Inscribed over this colonial perspective is an innovative artistic intervention, led by Dharawal and Yuin artist and designer Alison Page, with input from the Sydney Coastal Aboriginal Women's Group, that layers First Nations understandings of Country. Traditional owners' knowledge of Country, developed over 60,000 years, offers a way to gain a deep appreciation of the landscapes we encounter in Sydney today.

Members get more: Members enjoy a 10% discount at the museum shop and This Way Canteen.

Plan your visit



***Let's party like it's 1815* by Joan Ross**

Open daily, 10am–5pm, free entry

Let's party like it's 1815 by Joan Ross is an eight-minute digital artwork on display at the Museum of Sydney that colourfully critiques the legacy of the colonisation of Australia.

Ross assembles what she calls 'a tableau of creed'. in which colonists

display their disregard for nature and self-assumed superiority by partying on land that they have claimed. She presents an insatiable culture of overconsumption, depicting Australian colonisation as 'a car crash'.

Members get more: Members enjoy a 10% discount at the museum shop and This Way Canteen.

[Learn more](#)



Symphony of the Dreaming

Friday 23 May – Saturday 14 June, nightly until 10pm, free entry

Step onto the Museum of Sydney's forecourt and immerse yourself in a breathtaking experience of light and sound that brings the ancient songlines of Country to life. This dynamic work by artists Alison Page and Charlie Chan is designed to transport audiences into the rhythms of nature, awakening the deep connections between land, sea and sky.

More than just an artwork, *Symphony of the Dreaming* is a living experience, one that invites you to step inside and become part of the story. Feel the pulse of Country, engage with its energies and help bring the symphony to life.

Symphony of the Dreaming is part of the official Vivid Sydney 2025 program. The artwork is on display nightly, from after dark until 10pm. During Vivid, opening hours at the Museum of Sydney are extended until 8pm.

Open...

Members get more: Members enjoy a 10% discount at the museum shop and This Way Canteen.

[Learn more](#)

What's on at the Hyde Park Barracks



***Hope* by Hiromi Tango**

On now, free entry

Hope is a dynamic digital projection artwork that uses the facade of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hyde Park Barracks as its canvas, absorbing the stories within and connecting them with visitors today. The work responds to the history of the Barracks as a place that provided refuge to people who, for various reasons, found themselves in vulnerable situations.

Accompanying the digital projection are five large-scale 'hope flowers' that welcome visitors through the gates, and *Hope garden*, a textile-based installation that will grow throughout the artwork display period.

Projection appears nightly until 10pm. Visit our website to see related workshops and events.

Members get more: Members enjoy a 10% discount on dining and

shopping at the Bullion Store, located next door at The Mint.

[Learn more](#)



Sound Bath with Peta Morris

*Thursday 15 and 29 May, 12 June,
6.30pm–7.30pm*

Sound bathing is a practice that harnesses the power of sound vibrations to promote wellbeing and relaxation.

Join award-winning multidisciplinary artist and vocalist Peta Morris for a meditative and immersive experience where participants will be ‘bathed’ in resonant sounds including voice and singing bowls, inspired by Hiromi Tango’s *Hope* installation.

General \$15, members \$12

[Book now](#)

[Members get more](#): Members enjoy a 20% discount on tickets.



Meditation with Rachael Coopes

*Thursday 8 and 22 May, 5 June,
6.30pm–7.30pm*

Join yoga and mindfulness educator and TV presenter Rachael Coopes for a meditation workshop that will help to improve your mindset, reduce stress, beat anxiety and even increase your energy levels. Rachael will guide you through a series of simple exercises and techniques that can bring about relaxation and a sense of calm that you can take into your daily life.

General \$15, members \$12

[Book now](#)

[Members get more](#): Members enjoy a 20% discount on tickets.



Yoga with Rachael Coopes

*Sunday 25 May and 1 June,
10.30am–11.30am*

Looking for a way to integrate stretching, movement and mindfulness into your busy daily life? Join Rachael Coopes for a very special yoga class in the grounds of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hyde Park Barracks.

Free, registration required

[Register now](#)

Sydney Open 2025



Be part of *Sydney Open 2025*: Building callout

We are seeking iconic and interesting buildings to open their doors for our major city-wide experience on Sunday 2 November



Sydney Open update

Sydney Open is the city's premier architectural event. We're excited to announce our expanded *Sydney Open* program for 2025.

Our monthly *Sydney Open Series* offers exclusive behind-the-scenes

experience on Sunday 2 November, as part of *Sydney Open*.

As a building partner, you will join a carefully curated program of buildings and spaces recognised for their significance in the city's architectural landscape, and welcome new audiences to your space.

Expressions of interest close Friday 9 May.

[Find out more](#)

curated tours, providing access to, and sharing stories of, unique places and spaces across the city.

On Sunday 2 November, we'll present a major city-wide experience, giving visitors access to more of Sydney's most exclusive buildings and places.

New in 2025 are the *Sydney Open Symposia* where you'll hear from leading industry experts.

[Learn more](#)

Sydney Open Series



Queering Macquarie Street

Hyde Park Barracks, Saturday 14 June, various times

For Pride Month (1–30 June), Museums of History NSW curator Dr Tuan Nguyen will lead a history walk down Macquarie Street, exploring stories of queer people who walked along the same path: from same-sex relationships between convicts at the Hyde Park Barracks, to the first female Mitchell Librarian, Ida Leeson (who was in a committed lesbian relationship with Florence Birch for over 50 years), and bushranger Andrew George Scott (aka Captain Moonlite), whose late-19th-century criminal

career involved The Mint and the Water Police Court – and many more.

Starting at the Hyde Park Barracks and finishing at the Justice & Police Museum, this 90-minute walking tour will examine what and how we know about these queer lives, often lived in secret and under the threat of persecution.

Members get more: Members enjoy pre-sale access and a 20% discount on tickets.

Book now



Parramatta Heritage Tour: Rosehill and Harris Park

Elizabeth Farm, Saturday 10 May, various times

Celebrate the Australian Heritage Festival with a guided tour of Elizabeth Farm, Hambledon Cottage and Experiment Farm Cottage. Join Museums of History NSW guides and special guests from the National Trust and Parramatta District Historical Society as you explore these iconic colonial homes. Discover stories of the families who shaped the region, admire beautiful 19th-century architecture, and learn about the impacts of colonisation.

Members get more: Members enjoy a 20% discount on tickets.

[Book now](#)

Annual Giving 2025



Sharing our stories

As trusted custodians and storytellers, Museums of History NSW preserves and presents the unique history of our state. This financial year, your support of our Annual Giving program will help us to preserve and share the stories of NSW through our places, collections, archives and programs.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation, as every dollar raised will help us to ensure that the history of NSW is accessible for current and future generations. Donations of \$500 or more will give you access to our Annual Giving program, where you will enjoy exclusive opportunities to engage with Museums of History NSW through a tailored program of events.

[Find out more](#)

What's on at Elizabeth Farm



A Night at the Macarthurs' at Elizabeth Farm

Saturday 3 May, 6pm–8pm

Spend a special evening at Elizabeth Farm. Begin with a hot drink around a small campfire in Tony Albert's *Healing land, remembering Country* installation. Then take an intimate, behind-the-scenes tour of Australia's oldest surviving homestead. Explore the original roof, colonial kitchen cellar, and restored servants quarters with our expert staff. Finish your night with drinks and canapés in the historic dining room.

[Book now](#)

[Members get more](#): Members enjoy a 20% discount on tickets.



Terrarium Workshop with Tammy Huynh

Saturday 24 May, 10.30am–12pm and 1pm–2.30pm

Discover the history and beauty of terrariums at Elizabeth Farm. Join Tammy Huynh from the ABC's *Gardening Australia* and Museums of History NSW Curator Dr Scott Hill for a hands-on workshop inspired by the Wardian case – an invention that revolutionised botany. Create your own terrarium to take home while learning about colonial innovation, plant design, and the secrets to keeping your indoor plants thriving.

[Book now](#)

[Members get more](#): Members enjoy a 20% discount on tickets.

What's on at Meroogal



Meroogal Women's Art Prize 2024

Closing soon, last day 24 May, 10am–4pm

Visit Meroogal in Nowra and see 38 thought-provoking artworks by finalists, displayed throughout the historic house to create a richly layered and textured exhibition. The works respond to Meroogal's stories, treasured collection of objects and enduring sense of place.

Free entry; bookings essential

[Plan your visit](#)



Mobile Making at Meroogal

Saturdays until 24 May, 10am–4pm

Loved and maintained by four generations of women from one local family, Meroogal still overflows with cherished belongings. Books, ornaments, furniture, photographs, diaries, recipes and receipts – all tell a multitude of stories about the pleasures and labours of daily life,



Curator-led tours of the Meroogal Women's Art Prize

Saturday 3 May, 11am–12pm and 2pm–3pm

Join Dr Jacqui Newling, curator of the Meroogal Women's Art Prize 2024, for a special guided tour of the exhibition at Meroogal, home to four generations of women from the 1880s to the 1980s.

the Meroogai women and the south coast community in which they lived.

Using simple materials, create your own mobile inspired by the everyday lives of these thrifty, resourceful and creative women.

Free entry; suitable for all ages

[Learn more](#)

Hear about the works on display and discover how the artists responded to the historic house and its former occupants.

Free entry; bookings essential

[Book now](#)

Collections Series



Community Policing, Policing a Community

Tuesday 24 June 6pm–7.30pm

Policing has two sides: the police and the policed. On the anniversary of the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (24 June 1978), join us for this special *Collections Series* event. This panel discussion between Garry Wotherspoon (78er and historian), George Savoulis (Curatorial Director, Qtopia Sydney) and Tuan Nguyen (Assistant Curator, Museums of History NSW) will consider the complex relationship between the LGBTQIA+ community and the police, within the walls of the former Water Police Court at the Justice & Police Museum.

The discussion will use the Darlinghurst Police Station – now the home of Qtopia Sydney, a centre for queer history and culture – as a point of

Queer Sydney, a centre for queer history and culture – as a point of reference, drawing upon photographs and plans from Museums of History NSW collections.

This event is part of the official [Sydney Pride](#) program.

[Members get more](#): Members enjoy a 20% discount on tickets.

[Book now](#)

Talks and tours



Wentworth Mausoleum Walking Tour

Saturday 17 May, 10.30am–12pm

Join us for a walking tour to the rarely opened Wentworth Mausoleum and learn about William Charles Wentworth's extravagant 1873 state funeral.

Your tour will start in the grand drawing room at Vaucluse House and journey to the mausoleum – Wentworth's final resting place. Hear stories about the funeral and discover how colonial newspapers reported the details of this great event.

You are welcome to explore the house and gardens before or after the tour.

[Members get more](#): Members enjoy a 20% discount on tickets.

[Book now](#)



Convict Sydney Walking Tour

Museum of Sydney, Wednesday 21 May, 10.30am–12.30pm

Join one of our knowledgeable guides for a tour of convict Sydney. Walk from the site of the first Government House, a place of important early contact between Aboriginal people and the British colonists, to the 'Rum Hospital' (now The Mint) and the Hyde Park Barracks, which housed male convicts and was the epicentre of the colony's convict system.

[Book now](#)



Volunteer Symposium

The Mint, Monday 28 and Tuesday 29 July

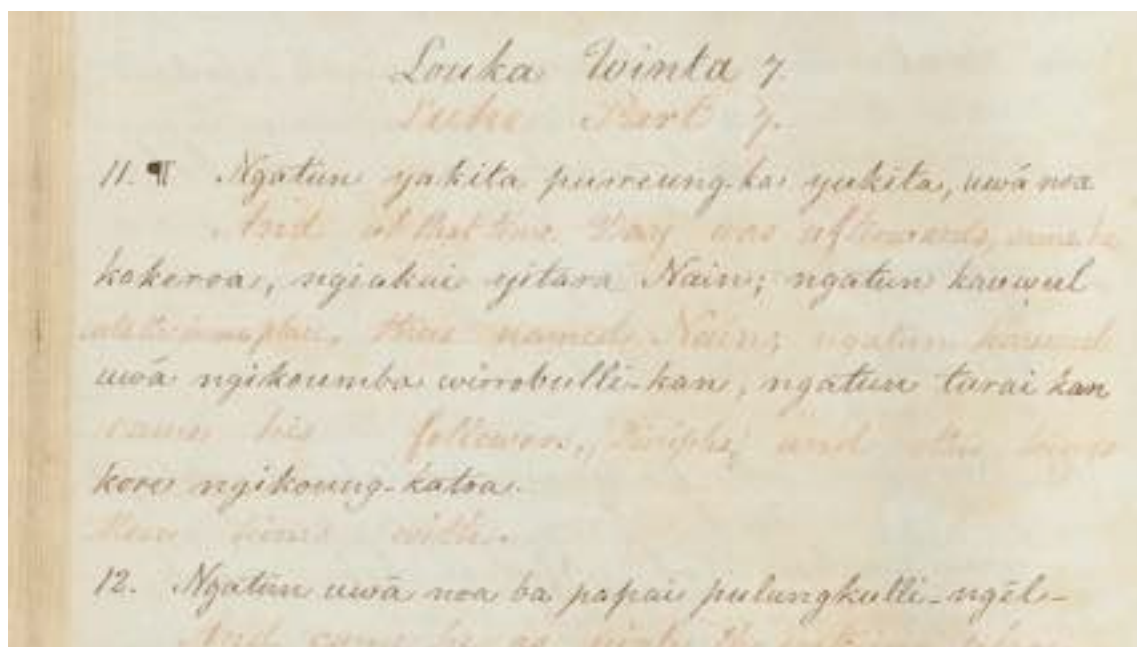
We're proud to launch the *Volunteer Symposium for NSW Regional and Community-Run Museums*. This event is designed especially for volunteers in small to medium-sized museums across regional NSW, as well as the workers who support them.

The program includes keynote sessions on strategies for volunteer-run museums, succession planning, First Nations engagement, and school learning programs in museums.

Presented in partnership with Museums & Galleries of NSW.

[Find out more](#)

Webinars



First Nations Community Access to Archives: Bridging Now to Next

Online, Friday 30 May, 10.30am–11.30am

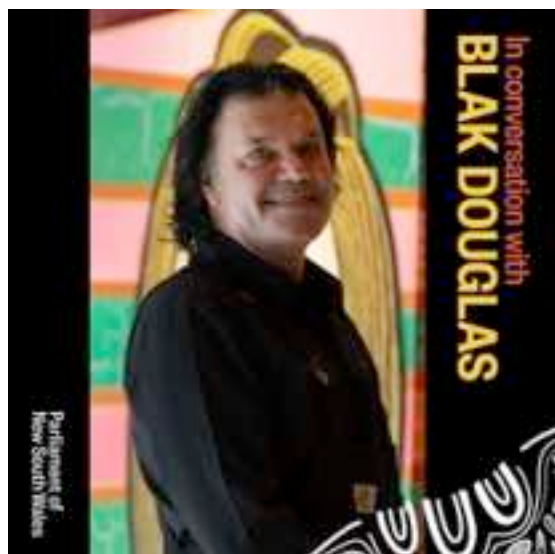
Reconciliation Week takes place every year from 27 May to 3 June. The theme this year is 'Bridging Now to Next'. Reflecting the ongoing connection between our past, present and future, this theme urges us to continue the journey of reconciliation together and move forward with the guidance of past lessons.

For this year's Reconciliation Week, the First Nations Community Access to Archives team at Museums of History NSW will host a free online event to discuss how improving access to archival material can support the revitalisation and reclamation of First Nations languages and cultures.

Free; registration required

[Book now](#)

From our friends



Blak Douglas – In Conversation

NSW Parliament House, Thursday
8 May, 6pm–7pm

Experience an intimate and thought-provoking discussion with Archibald Prize-winning artist Blak Douglas on creativity, community, culture and art. Hosted by Simon Marnie, iconic Australian broadcaster, the conversation will explore Blak's story of artistic expression and a career driven by community engagement and social change.

Can't make it in person? Join the livestream.

[Learn more](#)

1. *Panoramic views of Port Jackson* (detail), Major James Taylor, artist; R Havell & Sons, engraver; c1821. State Library of New South Wales: DL Pg 18; Image overlaid with *Tracks of the Ancestors* songline, Alison Page, 2024. Commissioned by MHNSW. Artwork © Alison Page; 2. *Terra nullius* (detail), Joan Ross, 2022, from *Possession* series. Image courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery. © Joan Ross; 3. *Symphony of the Dreaming* concept render. Image Kieran Larkin © MHNSW; 4. *Hope*, Hiromi Tango, 2025. Commissioned by MHNSW. Photo © Joshua Morris; 5. Image courtesy of Peta Morris; 6. Photo © James Horan for MHNSW; 7. Image courtesy of Rachael Coopes; 8 & 9. Photos © James Horan for MHNSW; 10. Immigration Barracks Sydney, August 1871. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-4481-4-44-[AF00194836]; 11–13. Photos © James Horan for MHNSW; 14. Image courtesy of Tammy Huynh; 15. *Childhood memories paper dress and shoes*, Nicola Dillon, 2024. Photo © Joshua Morris for MHNSW. Artwork © Nicola Dillon; 16. Cardboard box containing two small bisque dolls and a pair of pink knitted booties. Meroogal Collection, MHNSW. Photo © Jamie North; 17. *Kate's collars*, Lee Bethel, 2024. Photo © Joshua Morris for MHNSW. Artwork © Lee Bethel; 18. NSW Police capturers of the Andrew George Scott (alias Captain Moonlite) gang of bushrangers. 1870. Justice &

Andrew George Scott (alias Captain Moonlite), gang of bushrangers, 1870. Justice & Police Museum Collection, MHNSW; 19. Photo Grace Mathis © MHNSW; 20 & 21. Photos © Joshua Morris for MHNSW; 22. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-13705-1-[5/1123]; 23. Image courtesy of Department of Parliament of New South Wales

Museums of History NSW



Museums of History NSW cares for, and provides access to, significant historic places, collections and archives in NSW and is responsible for promoting knowledge and appreciation of history. It is a statutory body, principally funded by the NSW Government.

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10 Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000, on Gadigal Country