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Collections eNews

History.
Not as you
know it.

The latest events and information about Museums of History NSW collections, incorporating the State Archives Collection, the Caroline Simpson Library Collection and museum collections.

Collections on Tour



Archives for Everyone: No debt too small or petty

From missing wages to disputes between neighbours, the Courts of Petty Sessions (now known as the Local Court) were long a place where communities sought justice. From 1846, the courts settled claims for debts of up to £10, and their Small Debts Registers document countless cases.

As part of our *Archives for Everyone* project, we've partnered with NSW community groups to digitise and index these valuable records.

Now, the registers are on tour! Join us for a unique opportunity to view these original documents and gain insights from our archivists. Featuring material from Museums of History NSW's State Archives, Caroline Simpson Library and museum collections, this talk will uncover fascinating histories of local communities in NSW and the people who shaped them.

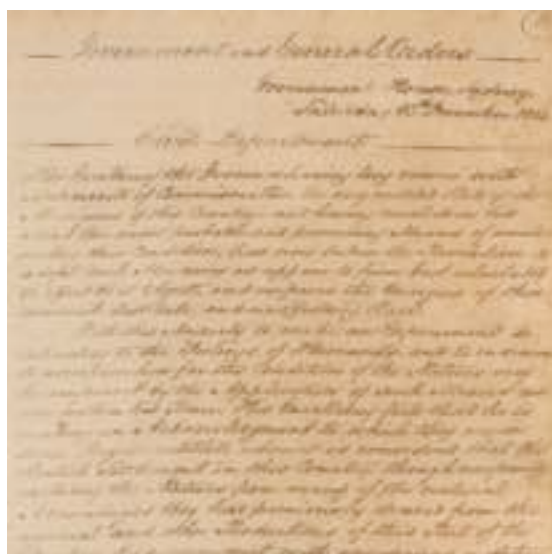
- Port Macquarie, 12 August
- Wagga Wagga, 16 September
- Armidale, 16 October

[Read more](#)

Across our collections



New index – Registers of Annointments



Grief in the archives: a Blak reflection on

[Civil Service Board], 1885–96

We're pleased to announce the release of the **Registers of Appointments [Civil Service Board] Index** containing over 15,000 entries, fully digitised and discoverable online through our website. The index has been created by our amazing volunteers.

The registers were created by the Civil Service Board from 1885 to 1896, when the Board's responsibilities included conducting qualifying examinations for the appointment and promotion of civil servants, presenting to the minister a list of qualified people for each vacant position, and serving as the central controlling authority of a large number of NSW Government departments.

Information recorded in the registers can include the date from which the appointment is effective, name, age, position, department, office, date of first appointment, details of transfers, salary, and date of notification of appointment and how notified, whether by Gazette notice (entered in black) or by departmental notification (entered in red).

The index is searchable by employee's first name, surname, department and date appointed.

[Search](#)

Sorry Day

In this article, Dylan Hoskins, Project Assistant on the First Nations Community Access to Archives project, reflects on the significance of National Sorry Day through his lived experience as an Aboriginal person.

The article critically examines the systemic removal of Aboriginal children through legislation such as the *Aborigines Protection Act 1909* (NSW) and its 1943 amendment and engages with the findings of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, outlined in the *Bringing them home* report, published in 1997. Drawing on the NSW State Archives Collection and his personal narrative, Dylan explores how colonial bureaucracy inflicted intergenerational trauma, and calls for genuine, reparative change beyond symbolic gestures.

Please be advised that this article contains language and images that depict frontier violence and the removal of children.

[Read more](#)



An immersive solution to preserving the past

An important part of Collections Care work at the Western Sydney Records Centre is to conserve records that have been requested by readers and assessed as 'requiring repair'.

Conservator Abigail Hundley has been preparing a box of signalmen's records (RNCG-6772-1-[A4382]) recently requested by a reader. An almanac and post office directory – a supplement to *The Sydney Morning Herald* from 1 January 1858 – in very poor condition was found within this box of records. The item had suffered extensive insect damage in the past. It could not be handled as the paper resembled lace from the damage and was incredibly brittle.

Find out how our conservation team stabilised and strengthened this record so that it can be handled for future access by the public.



A collection about Australian plants, gardens and gardening

Planning for the upcoming display *Scientific Splendour: The art of botanical illustration*, staff at the Caroline Simpson Library have been taking a deep dive into the [Richard Clough Collection](#).

In this, one of the library's most heavily used collections, researchers can discover more than 2,000 items spanning the history of publishing about Australian gardens and plants. The late Professor Richard Clough AM, architect, landscape architect and educator, was a discerning and wide-ranging collector, and his vision is now enjoyed by those exploring the history of Australian plants and gardens or seeking botanical design inspiration.

[Read more](#)

[Read more](#)

Webinar



Mental Health Patient Records

Online, Friday 27 June, 10.30am–11.30am

In 1811, Governor Macquarie ordered that several Parramatta Gaol inmates who were 'labouring under the affliction of mental derangement' be transferred to the former convict barracks at Castle Hill, establishing the first government asylum in NSW. By the end of the century, a total of 4,198 inmates were housed in government-run and -licensed institutions across NSW.

This webinar will explore the surviving patient records created by government mental health facilities that are held within the State Archives Collection, such as registers, admission papers, medical case books and case papers.

Learn how you can start searching and accessing these records yourself.

Free; registration required

[Register now](#)

Super series



Conditional purchase and lease registers

We're pleased to advise that the conditional purchase and conditional lease registers are now listed as items in our online catalogue and can be pre-ordered by researchers before their visit to the State Archives Reading Room.

These registers are a useful resource to start the process of learning about these types of land settlement.

[Search](#)



Department of Lands correspondence registers (various)

Many readers search for the correspondence records of various branches of the NSW Department of Lands, such as Miscellaneous Branch, Alienation Branch, and Road Branch, to understand the history of land ownership and use.

Readers can find these files by searching for **registers of letters received** by these branches.

Many of these registers are now listed as items in our online catalogue, and can be pre-ordered for your visit to our Reading Room.

[Search](#)

What's on



Seeing Sydney, Knowing Country

Museum of Sydney, open daily, 10am–5pm, free entry

Today, 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?

This exhibition depicts the development of the NSW colony through a selection of historical maps, plans, sketches, artworks and objects. 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.

Plan your visit





In conversation: Community Policing, Policing a Community

Justice & Police Museum, 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 reference, drawing upon photographs and plans from MHNSW collections.

General \$30, members \$24

[Book tickets](#)

Watch anytime



Webinar: Finding Resources About the History of a House

Property records can be complex and confusing, but very rewarding.



This webinar helps you discover and search key resources in the State Library of NSW collection and the State Archives Collection that contain information on the history of a house, including official state government records, published material and personal manuscript collections.

[Watch now](#)

1. 11 Addresses Presented to Lord Carrington Governor of New South Wales no 14, page 11, Address from the Magistrates of the Orange Bench, October 1890 (detail); Wagga Wagga Courthouse, undated; Small debts registers [Newcastle Court of Petty Sessions], 14 March 1892. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-20455-1-13-14-13; NRS-4346-1-[9/5879B]-1-30; NRS-3247-[34/2010]; **2.** Register of appointments, 1889, p74. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-767-1-[6/715]-6/715; **3.** Government order for the establishment of a school for Aboriginal children at Parramatta, 10 December 1814. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-1046; **4.** *The Herald Commercial Almanac, Post Office Directory*, 1858, after conservation treatment (RNCG-6772-1-[A4382]). Photo Lang Ngo and Abigail Hundley © MHNSW; **5.** A page from *Flora Australasica, or, a selection of handsome, or curious plants, natives of New Holland, and the South Sea Islands ...*, by Robert Sweet, illustrations by E D Smith, 1827–28. Caroline Simpson Library Collection, MHNSW; **6.** Mental Hospital Parramatta: patients' bedrooms, 1950. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-4481-3-[7/16141]-St38864; **7.** Mr. Guest, Lands Department, 1947 (detail). State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-4481-3-[7/16099]-St27905-2; **8.** Sample Miscellaneous Branch correspondence, 1892. State Archives Collection, MHNSW; **9.** *Panoramic views of Port Jackson* (detail), Major James Taylor, artist; R Havell & Sons, engraver, c1821. Reprinted by Tim McCormick from original copperplate held in the State Library of New South Wales; Image overlaid with *Tracks of the Ancestors* songline, Alison Page, 2024. Songline artwork © Alison Page, commissioned by MHNSW; **10.** Seven NSW Police capturers of the gang of bushrangers led by Andrew George Scott (alias Captain Moonlite), NSW, 1879. Justice & Police Museum Collection, MHNSW; **11.** Sydney Harbour Bridge Resumptions, Mr Purdue [Department of Public Works], 1925. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-4481-4-417-[AF00216133]

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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