

What's on in December

Celebrate the season



Festive celebrations at Vacluse House

Saturday 6 December, 10am–4pm

Join us for free workshops and tours at Vacluse House to get you in the holiday spirit. Learn to create handmade gifts and decorations, or master a traditional plum pudding or delicious cocktail recipe to impress your family and elevate your festive table.

Enjoy free drop-in family activities throughout the day. See the spectacular

decorated tree in the majestic drawing room and join a house tour to learn about Victorian Christmas traditions. Kids can make a Christmas garland inspired by objects on display, and you can bring a picnic to enjoy while listening to magical harp performances by Georgia Lowe in the historic grounds.

Free event.

[Find out more](#)



Festive celebrations at Elizabeth Farm

Saturday 13 December, 10am–4pm

Celebrate the festive season at beautiful Elizabeth Farm with a full day of activities, from craft and cooking demonstrations to live music in the historic grounds. Discover how colonial households prepared for festive occasions, join an introductory tour of the property, and create your own decorative garland or traditional pomander.

Enjoy festive workshops led by expert curators, stylists and bartenders, including demonstrations on setting the Macarthur family table, making a traditional plum pudding and mixing garden-inspired cocktails. Explore the house and gardens, and bring a picnic to enjoy while listening to live performances.

Free, registration required.

[Register now](#)

Coming soon to the Museum of Sydney



Unearthed – new exhibition

Museum of Sydney, opens Friday 5 December

Even the most ordinary object has many stories to tell, depending on how you look at it.

Between 1983 and 1991, archaeologists excavated one of the most contested blocks of land in Sydney – the site of Australia’s first Government House. They unearthed around 140,000 objects that had lain hidden beneath the city’s streets for almost 140 years.

Opening next week, *Unearthed* will display a fascinating selection of objects excavated from the site. The exhibition explores the tangible and intangible histories embodied in the finds and sheds light on the people who lived and worked at the house, and those whose lives were impacted by decisions made within its walls.

Unearthed also presents the people and stories behind the archaeological digs.

Find out more



***Dig It!* – new experience**

Museum of Sydney, opens Friday 5 December

This December, why not head to our dig site, grab your tools and become an archaeologist at the Museum of Sydney.

Dig It! is a rich, multisensory, family-friendly experience that invites you to discover the excitement and challenges of archaeological excavation for yourself. Unearth artefacts in a digitally simulated excavation with a 1980s video game vibe. Piece together fragments of artefacts and sketch your find on a discovery sheet that can be pinned to the gallery wall or taken home as a memento.

Find out more

What's on



‘Faces in Shadow’: Silhouettes from Our Collections

Caroline Simpson Library, The Mint, Monday 1 December, 6pm–7.30pm

There are scores of silhouettes in MHNSW collections, capturing everyone from governors’ children to society figures, soldiers and cherished pets, and even weathervanes.

Join Curator Dr Scott Hill to explore albums, framed works and catalogues that showcase these shadowy figures.

Members get more with a 20% discount on tickets.

Book now

Museum news



The Hyde Park Barracks is getting an audio upgrade

From Monday 1 to Sunday 14 December, the Hyde Park Barracks will temporarily close while we upgrade the immersive story-guide system used throughout the museum. Although the buildings will be closed, staff will be on site to assist with inquiries. We look forward to welcoming you back soon!



New guided tours at Susannah Place

Step inside Susannah Place and discover stories of the families who once called these modest terrace houses home. Through new intimate guided tours of the re-created interiors, visitors can explore how different generations of working-class residents lived, worked, and adapted to the changing city around them.

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

[Book now](#)

Creative Residency news



Caroline Simpson Library Creative Residency

Apply now for February 2026

Applications are open for a new non-residential creative residency. Spend 10 months in your own studio located at The Mint immersed in the Caroline Simpson Library Collection – an unparalleled resource on the history of houses, interiors, gardens and domestic life in Australia.

Applications for the residency close on 14 December.

[Apply now](#)



Meet our 2025 Vacluse House Creative and Cultural Residents

We're pleased to announce that the four creatives who will be participating in the inaugural Vacluse House Creative and Cultural Residency program are Diana Baker Smith, Henrietta Cheshire, Lucie Stevens and Philip Samartzis. The 12-month program gives these NSW-based creatives access to four light-filled studio spaces in the historic caretaker's cottage at Vacluse House.

[Learn more](#)

Special membership offer



Save 10% on a gift of history this year

Members get more history, experiences and benefits. A membership unlocks priority access to tickets to events such as *Sydney Open* and *Sydney Open Series*, exclusive access to our historic places as part of Members Hour, plus members-only discounts, offers and competitions.

For a limited time, save 10% on memberships. Use **MEMFLASH25** in the promo box.

Offer ends 8 December 2025. Not valid on automatic renewal memberships.

[Find out more](#)

Dine and shop



Newly renovated Vacluse House shop

Just in time for Christmas, the newly renovated Vacluse House shop has officially opened its doors!

Explore the refreshed space, browse a fabulous range of gifts and souvenirs, and spot design details inspired by the house's fascinating history.

Open Wednesday to Sunday, 10am–4pm.

Members get more with a 10% discount.

[Plan your visit](#)



Bridge Street Social x Heineken Bar

Museum of Sydney forecourt, Thursdays and Fridays, 4pm–8pm, DJs from 4pm

Looking for somewhere to enjoy your end-of-year drinks in the sun? Bridge Street Social x Heineken Bar is the perfect place to unwind with colleagues and friends this summer, with DJs from 4pm and plenty of space to relax.

Enjoy share plates from [This Way Canteen](#), paired wines, cocktails, and refreshing beers from our partner Heineken.

Members get more with a 10% discount on food and drinks.

[Find out more](#)

From our friends



Share in the magic of Noël! Noël!

Connect with the spirit of the season this December and join the Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir for their uplifting annual celebration.

Special offer: Use the promo code **FESTIVE20** when booking online for 20% off tickets to any 7.30pm performance of Noël! Noël! at City Recital Hall, Sydney. T&Cs apply.*

[Book now](#)

1 & 2. Photos © James Horan for MHNSW; 3. Montage of candid photographs from the 1983–84 and 1990–91 excavations at the first Government House site, captured by Anne Bickford, Shanda Kelly and Robyn Stocks. MHNSW; 4. Detail from the *Dig It!* experience. Junior Major and MHNSW; 5. Framed paper cut silhouette picture of a horse and a dog, Achille Corbari, c1875. Rouse Hill Estate Collection, MHNSW; 6 & 7. Photos © Katherine Lu for MHNSW; 8. Left to right: Textile length, 'Kaivo' design, Marimekko, 1965. Caroline Simpson Library Collection, MHNSW. Gift of Chee Soon & Fitzgerald; Lampshade. Photo © MHNSW; Kone chair, design by Roger McLay, c1940s. Caroline Simpson Library Collection, MHNSW. Gift of Chee Soon & Fitzgerald. Photo © Jamie North; *A room for Mr Peter Sculthorpe* by designers Marion Hall Best and Deirdre Broughton, 1971. Photo Michael Andrews. © Estate of Marion Hall Best; 9–11. Photos © James Horan for MHNSW; 12. Courtesy of This Way Canteen; 13. Courtesy Australian Brandenburg Orchestra.

* Share in the magic of Noël! Noël!

Expires at 12pm on the day of performance or when sold out. Offer excludes premium reserve seating.

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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