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History. Not as you know it.

Museums eNews

October 2024

Stories Donate Shop

Sydney Open 2024

An exciting and refreshed Sydney Open

Sunday 3 November

We're excited to announce a new format for *Sydney Open* – the city's leading event for architecture, design and the built environment.

We asked our visitors, members, volunteers and industry colleagues what they'd like to see for *Sydney Open*. What you'll discover is a new annual program of in-depth curated experiences and stories from the architects, designers and heritage experts connected to each site, held over several Sundays in 2024–25. Each event opens the doors to select buildings under key themes, beginning with Adaptive Reuse on Sunday 3 November.

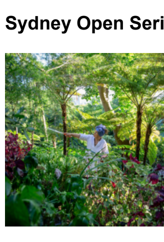
Learn more about this unmissable year-long calendar of events and changes to the *Sydney Open* program **here**.

Members pre-sale tickets live, Monday 30 September and general pre-sale tickets live, Tuesday 1 October.

Members get more: Enjoy pre-sale access to and a 20% discount on *Sydney Open* tickets, entry into the *Sydney Open* Members Competition and discounts on shopping and dining.

Sydney Open program

Sydney Open Series



Wendy Whiteley's Secret Garden Tours

Sunday 13 October, various times

Join us for a tour of Wendy Whiteley's Secret Garden and learn how a disused railway dump was transformed into a public garden oasis.

Led by Ian Curdie, a long-term volunteer gardener, participants will explore the garden and learn about its horticultural and artistic design, the story behind its creation, and the challenges of maintaining and protecting this unique public asset.

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

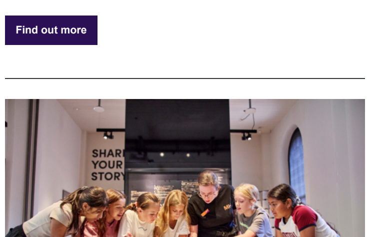
Book now

What's on these school holidays

These spring school holidays, enjoy free entry to all our museums and historic houses, with extended opening hours at select sites. Explore our exhibitions at the Museum of Sydney and take part in free drop-in activities. Discover **kids activity trails** and follow the clues at the Justice & Police Museum and the Hyde Park Barracks.

Visit **Elizabeth Farm** and **Vaucluse House** for *History Kids in the Garden*, where little adventurers can get hands-on in the garden and learn about how the traditional owners of the lands lived and how native plants were used. They'll dress up and experience life as it was 200 years ago, with a traditional treat to wrap up the adventure.

Find out more



Annual Giving: 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 five key pillars will help us to preserve and share the stories of NSW through our places, collections, archives and programs.

Heritage conservation – Conserving our unique and significant places.

Access to education – Subsidising transportation so that all NSW students can engage with history.

First Nations – Interpreting and presenting the complex histories of the site of Australia's first Government House.

Digitisation – Digitising the invaluable Small Debts Registers from NSW local courts dating back to 1846.

Fellowship – Developing content that offers fresh insights into and diverse perspectives on the history of NSW.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation. Every dollar raised will help to ensure that the history of NSW is protected and accessible for current and future generations.

Find out more

What's on at Vaucluse House

An Evening Visit to Vaucluse House

Thursday 3 October, 6pm–8pm

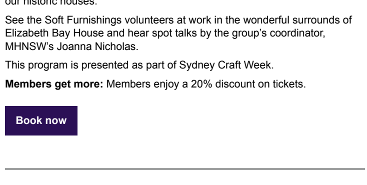
Join us for an exclusive and intimate tour of Vaucluse House and experience the Wentworths' picturesque estate and harbourside retreat in a whole new light.

As evening falls, explore the impressive and lavishly decorated drawing room, hear stories about the residents of this Gothic Revival mansion, and visit the private quarters of William Charles and Sarah Wentworth and their ten children.

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

Book now

What's on at Elizabeth Bay House



Sources of the Past

Monday 14 October, various times

Drawing from historical sources held in the Caroline Simpson Library, our Soft Furnishings volunteers create, re-create and maintain furnishings for our historic houses.

See the Soft Furnishings volunteers at work in the wonderful surrounds of Elizabeth Bay House and hear spot talks by the group's coordinator, MHNSW's Joanna Nicholas.

This program is presented as part of Sydney Craft Week.

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

Book now

What's on at Elizabeth Farm

The Art of Blending Tea with T Totaler

Saturday 26 October, various times

Join MHNSW Curator Dr Scott Hill and tea experts Paul and Amber Sunderland from T Totaler and discover the fascinating history of tea in colonial NSW.

Delve into the significance of tea in early Australian society in a guided tour before participating in a hands-on workshop where you'll learn the art of tea blending and create your own personalised blend to take home.

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

Book now

What's on at the Museum of Sydney

Coomaditchie: The Art of Place

Open daily, 10am–5pm, free entry

Experience community life by the ocean through the works of First Nations artists in *Coomaditchie: The Art of Place* at the Museum of Sydney. The loving and lyrical artworks featured in this exhibition, which include paintings, ceramics and screen-prints, speak of life in and around the settlement of Coomaditchie in the Illawarra region, its history, ecology and local Dreaming stories.

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation in 1993, the exhibition offers a glimpse into the political, social and artistic activities of a very special place.

Members get more: Enjoy a 10% discount at This Way Canteen.

Find out more

Cast in cast out

Open daily, 10am–5pm, free entry

Cast in cast out is a multifaceted artwork by Sydney-based Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay artist Dennis Golding. Inspired by his experiences and childhood memories of growing up in 'The Block' in the inner Sydney suburb of Redfern, the artwork 'recasts' Victorian-era ironwork panels – a distinctive feature of many 19th-century houses in the neighbourhood.

Members get more: Enjoy a 10% discount at This Way Canteen.

Find out more

Ngaya (I am)

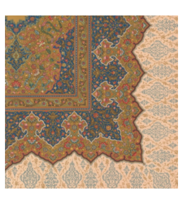
Open daily, 10am–5pm, free entry

Mixing images of people and landscape with song and dance – and humour – the compelling five-minute video installation *Ngaya (I am)* by Peter Waples-Crowe is a self-portrait of the artist as a queer Ngarigo person from the Snowy Mountains region of south-eastern NSW. The installation is accompanied by historical photographs of the Snowy Mountains region held in the State Archives Collection.

Members get more: Enjoy a 10% discount at This Way Canteen.

Find out more

What's on for Rare Book Week



A designer's inspiration: 19th-century ornament source books

Caroline Simpson Library, The Mint, Wednesday 23 October, 2.30pm–3.30pm

Where did 19th-century designers get their inspiration? For pattern or surface designers working on textiles, painted and papered walls, ceramics, timber or silver, they would most likely have used ornament source books.

Join us for a special Rare Book Week event where visitors will get an exclusive once-only viewing of the most famous ornament source book, *The grammar of ornament* (1856) by Owen Jones.

Free, register now

Lord Carrington's illuminated addresses

State Archives Reading Room, Thursday 24 October, 10.30am–12pm

Join us for a special Rare Book Week event showcasing the Carrington Albums, a jewel in the State Archives Collection, as well as a talk and a guided tour of the Western Sydney Records Centre.

These remarkable volumes, compiled during the tenure of Lord Carrington as Governor of NSW from 1885 to 1890, contain illuminated addresses, greetings and well-wishes from residents, towns and associations from across the state.

Free, register now

What's on at The Mint

Mrs Simpson's legacy – in conversation with Edward Simpson

Caroline Simpson Library, The Mint, Tuesday 29 October, 6pm–7.30pm

In 2004, the children of the late Mrs Caroline Simpson OAM gifted her remarkable collection of Australian colonial art, furniture and decorative arts to the Historic Houses Trust of NSW (now MHNSW). Two decades later, it stands as one of the largest and most valuable donations ever made to a cultural institution in Australia.

Join Kim Tao, MHNSW's Manager of Curatorial, to explore some of the highlights of this unique cultural gift and discover the story of the woman behind the collection, in conversation with Edward Simpson – Chairman of the James Fairfax Foundation, member of the Art Gallery of NSW Foundation Board of Trustees, former chair of the Sydney Living Museums Foundation and Caroline Simpson's son.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn about the stories behind the collection and its remarkable donor!

Book now

Out and about

Convict Sydney Walking Tour

Wednesday 16 October, 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.

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

Book now

Online talks

Raising the Farmer: Glass negatives taken for the Agricultural Gazette of NSW, 1890–1914

Webinar, Friday 25 October, 10.30am–11.30am

Join us for a webinar exploring the fascinating history captured in over 6,000 glass negatives from the *Agricultural Gazette of NSW*, first published on 1 July 1890. This digital collection provides a unique glimpse into rural life and agricultural practices of the time, showcasing the gazette's mission to educate and advise farmers and enthusiasts.

Register now

Dine & shop

Weekend museum plans?

Corner of Phillip and Bridge streets, Sydney

Pop over to This Way Canteen, right next door to the Museum of Sydney. Flash this email for a free hot drink when you spend $15 or more on a Saturday or Sunday. Offer is available until 31 December 2024. One per customer, per transaction.

Members get more: Enjoy a 10% discount at This Way Canteen.

Plan your visit

20% off store wide – online only

Shop online and save 20% on all merchandise for five days only.

Offer includes new stock as well as already reduced items.

Enter code **SHOP20** at checkout.

Shipping additional. Offer Ends to Monday 30 September 11.59pm AEST.

Shop now

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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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