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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.

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## Share with us





## State Archives Collection Customer Satisfaction Survey 2025

Every year we undertake a survey to gather customer feedback on the State Archives Collection services we provide.

The results of the 2024 survey showed a positive reaction to the services provided in the Reading Room, and through our inquiry and copying services. The results also indicated that people are keen to see more digitisation of records in the future and easier ways to locate them.

Last year over 90,000 digital images and 130,000 index entries were added to the catalogue, including [NRS-23159](#) and [NRS-23160](#) Liverpool State Hospital Admission cards, and [NRS-23523](#) Government Dockyard, Walsh Island (Newcastle) staff cards. Each series is searchable by name in the [catalogue](#).

To enhance our digitisation efforts, we have recently partnered with Family History Societies to digitise and index the Small Debts Registers from former Courts of Petty Sessions (now local courts).

The project involves digitising the registers and creating an index to ensure the digital content is accessible and discoverable over time. There are currently more than 43,800 entries in the index that are mapped to over 8,000 images that can be accessed online via [The Small Debts Registers Index](#).

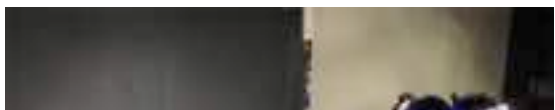
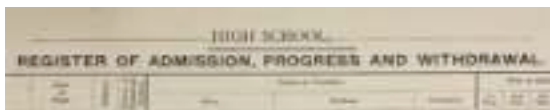
We welcome your input in this year's survey to help evaluate our services. [Click here](#) to take the survey. It should only take about 3 minutes.

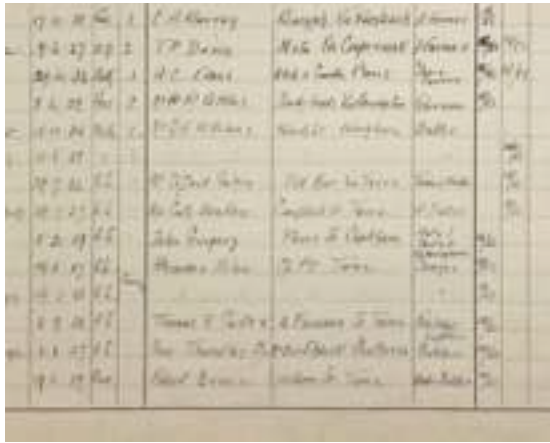
Your opinion is important, and we appreciate your time.

[Take the survey](#)

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## Across our collections





## School admission registers – new transfer

We recently received a large transfer of records from the Department of Education, so you can expect to see more school admission registers, punishment books and observation books appearing in our catalogue soon.

The records include admission registers from James Ruse Agricultural High School, Epping Boys High School and [Taree High School](#), which count Katrina Warren (TV presenter and veterinarian), Paul Murray (TV presenter), and poet Les Murray AO, the 'Bush Bard', among their alumni.

Search for these records by entering the name of the school in the [State Archives Catalogue](#).

Search



## Wallpaper printing rollers: from machine printing to 3D capture

In December 2022, Phyllis Murphy AM [generously donated](#) to the Caroline Simpson Library more than 3,000 wallpaper samples she had collected with her late husband, John Murphy (1920–2004), over almost 40 years.

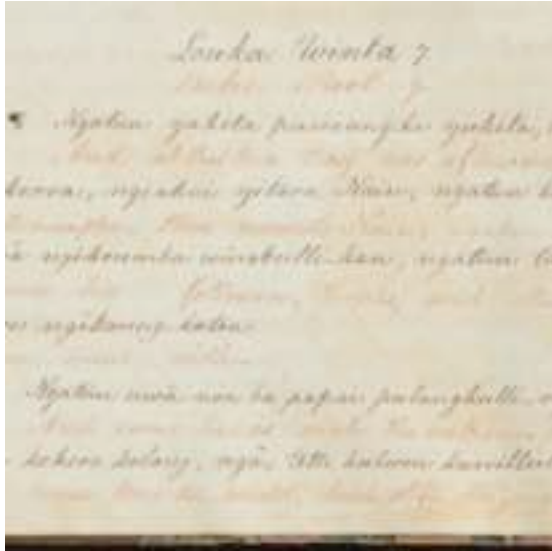
While the bulk of the donation consists of wallpaper rolls, lengths and sample books, the collection also includes two printing rollers used by Canadian Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd between 1927 and 1950.

The rollers may have stopped turning long ago, but thanks to 3D-capture and 3D-printing technology, their designs can now be seen again and appreciated in new ways.

Read more

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## 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 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



## Webinar: Soldier Settlement in NSW

*Online, Thursday 24 April,  
10.30am–11.30am*

The *Returned Soldier Settlement Act 1916* allowed the settlement of returned soldiers on Crown and Closer Settlement lands.

Soldier settlement repatriation schemes were promoted as a pathway for some of the 300,000 returned servicemen and women to secure land ownership and financial independence.

Although 40,000 men and women took up the offer of farming land through these schemes, fewer than half remain on the land 15 years later.

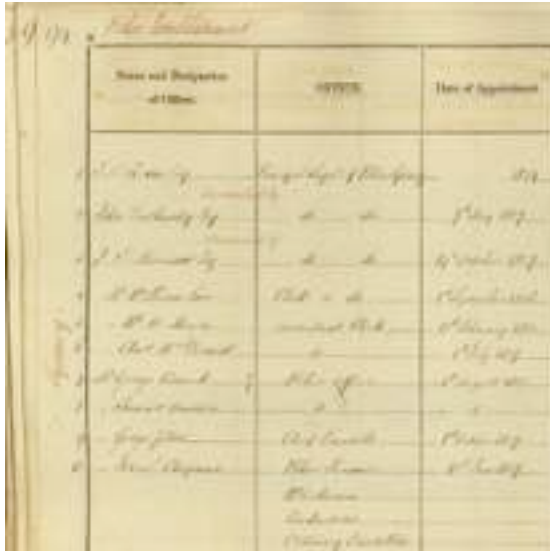
This webinar will explore records in the State Archives Collection that tell the stories of these soldier settlers. Learn more about the individuals who participated in the scheme, and how you can research these men and women in our collection.



Register now

Register now

## Super series



### Blue Books (Returns of the Colony) 1822–57

The Returns of the Colony, known as the 'Blue Books', are held in the State Archives Collection as series [NRS-1286](#).

They consist of sets of statistical returns of the NSW colony and of areas under its jurisdiction. They were compiled annually from 1822 to 1857 by the Colonial Secretary for transmission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in London.

The Blue Books include alphabetical lists of departmental officers, and names of military officers, church ministers, schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, landholders, pensioners, parliamentarians, and



### Registration files of medical practitioners

In 1957, the Medical Practitioners Act was amended to enable the licensing in NSW of medical practitioners who had received their qualifications in non-English speaking countries.

The amendment authorised the licensing of persons with medical qualifications and experience to practice in 'branches of medicine or surgery, State Hospitals, Mental Hospitals, public hospitals and other institutions approved by the Minister'.

After one year the licensee could undergo an oral examination by a committee and become eligible for licensing as a medical officer.

The 43 files in the series



even some students.

A list of the contents and microform copies is on our [website](#). These records have also been digitised and are available on the Ancestry.com website.

[Read more](#)

Registration Files of Medical Practitioners ([NRS-9875](#)) contain correspondence from applicants seeking to practice medicine in NSW. They usually contain the application form and supporting documentation such as university qualifications, references, testimonials and resumes.

[Search](#)

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## What's on



### ***Eora* by Michael Riley**

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

*Eora*, by the late Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi filmmaker and photographer Michael Riley (1960–2004), is a 20-minute digital film on display at the Museum of Sydney that tells the story of Sydney's First Nations people – before and after colonisation.

With scenes juxtaposed on three large screens, the work combines archival colonial imagery, natural landscapes and cityscapes, and artworks by many of Riley's contemporaries with an evocative soundscape that includes whispered words of local First Nations people

includes whispered words of local First Nations people.

The film, which has recently been digitised, was commissioned for the opening of the Museum of Sydney in 1995. The restaging of the work honours Riley's intent to celebrate First Nations beauty, cultures and survival despite the ongoing effects of colonisation.

The Museum of Sydney is proud to re-screen this important film in its 30th anniversary year.

[Plan your visit](#)



## Sonic Spaces

*Hyde Park Barracks, Friday 4 April, 8.30pm–9.30pm*

*Sonic Spaces* returns for 2025 with an exciting new series of music performances in one of the city's most unique spaces, the hammock room at the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hyde Park Barracks. Originally housing convicts, the hammock room is steeped in history and personal stories.

Immerse yourself in an audiovisual experience with atmospheric lighting, projected imagery and surround sound. From the comfort of a hammock, soak up the sounds of some of Sydney's most interesting and diverse artists exploring a range of genres.

The final performer in this series is Eric Avery, Kabi Marrawuy Mumbulla, a violinist, vocalist, dancer and composer from the Ngiyampaa, Yuin and Gumbandjeir people of NSW.

Gumbahgin people of NSW.

General \$55, members \$44

[Book now](#)

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## Up Close and Personal

*Museums Discovery Centre, Castle Hill, Saturday 5 April, various times*

Join Museums of History NSW Curator Anna Cossu and Collections Care Coordinator Sarah-Jane Rennie at the Museums Discovery Centre for a special behind-the-scenes look at the diverse Susannah Place Collection.

Discover the stories behind the objects – from remnants of linoleums and wallpapers to furniture, household items and personal mementos donated by previous tenants – and learn how they are stored and cared for at the Museums Discovery Centre.

After the tour you can explore the public displays of other collections held at the centre, which is open from 10am to 4pm. The onsite cafe is open 10am to 3pm.

[Book now](#)

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## Watch anytime



### Webinar: Settlers' Muster Book, 1800

Inscribed on the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register, the Settlers' Muster Book 1800 provides a snapshot of life during this pivotal period of early European settlement, approximately a decade after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.

This webinar, led by Dr Carol Liston AO, Adjunct Associate Professor in History at Western Sydney University, explores the Settlers' Muster Book 1800 and how it can provide some wonderful insights into the residents, and the early administrative and economic workings, of the colony.

Learn how to use our indexes and guides to search and explore the Settlers' Muster Book yourself.

[Watch now](#)

1. Industrial and Commercial Electrical Machines - SILLIAC Computer, The University of Sydney, photographer unknown, 21 November 1958. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-21243-2-2-1064; 2. School admission register from Taree High School, 1951–53. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-23429-1-7-SCH23/17252; 3. 3D capture of wallpaper roller using photogrammetry. Photo Dean Scott © MHNSW; 4. Translation of Luke. State Archives Collection, Museums of History NSW: NRS-13705-1-[5/1123]; 5. Batlow Soldier Settlement – a married settlers home, 1917. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-4481-3-[7/15904]-M5464; 6. Returns of the Colony, 1827 – police establishment, Sydney, p94 [detail].

State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-905, [4/255]; **7.** Doctor washing hands in operating room at the General Treatment Clinic for School Children, Sydney, undated. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-4881-1-[2/8567.19]-2/8567.19; **8.** *Eora* (film still), Michael Riley, 1995. © MHNSW; **9.** Photo © James Horan for MHNSW; **10.** Sewing pattern, Simplicity 5273, used by former Susannah Place resident, Ellen Marshall, 1972, paper Gift, Jenni Whitford and Family, 2023. Susannah Place Collection, Museums of History NSW. Photo © Joshua Morris; **11.** Cover of Settlers' Muster Book 1800. State Archives Collection, MHNSW: NRS-23979-1-1-[1].

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## Museums of History NSW

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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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