



Ben Franklin

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Regional Youth

MEDIA RELEASE

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ABORIGINAL CULTURAL SPACE TO HIGHLIGHT OUR HISTORY AT MUSEUM OF SYDNEY

A dedicated Aboriginal Cultural Space will be established at the Museum of Sydney, the site of First Government House in NSW.

The cultural space will feature voices, significant stories, truths and histories of Aboriginal culture and people.

Premier Dominic Perrottet said the initiative is part of the NSW Government's broader commitment to delivering symbolic and practical outcomes for Aboriginal people and the wider community across the state.

"The Aboriginal Cultural Space will be a place where the community can talk openly and constructively about history and culture," Mr Perrottet said.

"The decisions made and actions taken at the first Government House had profound and long-lasting impacts on Aboriginal people across this country and region.

"This site will create a place for these stories and perspectives to be shared, while celebrating the enduring living culture of Aboriginal people."

The Aboriginal Cultural Space will be established progressively by Sydney Living Museums in partnership with the Aboriginal Languages Trust. The development of the space will be informed by extensive consultation with the Aboriginal community, and a series of exhibitions, public programs and workshops that will take place on site.

The site's existing collection will be reinterpreted and contextualised to represent Aboriginal stories and perspectives until the entire space is dedicated to the culture and history of Aboriginal people.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts Ben Franklin said Australia should be a society that remembers, talks about and reconciles with its past.

"Our history matters and it is filled with moments both dark and delightful. To acknowledge our past effectively, we need spaces where difficult truths and uncomfortable perspectives are free to be expressed," Mr Franklin said.

“History is happening now and we will work tirelessly with partners and community to bring into being a place that will engage with the past with a mind for the future.”

Sydney Living Museums Head of First Nations Cultural Engagement Peter White said the space is a new model for cultural institutions, where Aboriginal people, places and perspectives are included.

“Sydney Living Museums cares for 12 of the most historically significant places in the country, including a world-heritage site, and NSW State Archives has one of the world’s best archival collections, with a cultural worth beyond measure,” Mr White said.

“Together, we hold unparalleled documentation of our past; what happened, where it happened, how it happened and why it happened.

“There’s an expectation from community to bridge the gap between institutions and community and we want to do as much as we can to make what we have as accessible, honest and relevant as we can.”

Aboriginal Languages Trust Chair Jason Behrendt said the partnership between the Aboriginal Languages Trust and Sydney Living Museums and State Archives and Records Authority is an important first step in building an enduring relationship based on mutual respect and understanding of our shared history.

“For Aboriginal people, languages are part of our living culture. It is a fundamental part of identity – a physical, intellectual and spiritual connection to culture, country and community,” Mr Behrendt said.

“This partnership will shine a spotlight on languages as living culture through expanding First Nations content, programming and services at First Government House in line with our statutory roles and strategic objectives.”

Today’s announcement coincides with the start of NAIDOC Week - reflecting the theme ‘Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!’.

MEDIA: Amber Muir | Premier | 0447 695 520
David Smith | Minister Franklin | 0499 844 154