



Mark Speakman

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Heritage
Assistant Minister for Planning

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 12 June 2015

UNLOCKING HERITAGE – MAKING IT ACCESSIBLE TO NSW SCHOOLS

Heritage Minister Mark Speakman today launched **Unlocking Heritage** a new two-year program aimed at allowing primary school children to experience the State's historic and cultural heritage.

The Unlocking Heritage program is available to more than 1,700 schools throughout the State enabling students to connect with Australia's heritage and experience first-hand some of the most significant historical sites in NSW.

The program is open to primary school students from low socio-economic backgrounds (i.e. from primary schools receiving Resource Allocation Model funding with a Family Occupation and Education Index score of more than 100) and regional and rural primary schools across NSW.

Mr Speakman said the NSW Government was committed to improving education and learning outcomes for all students. One of the most powerful moments for a child is experiencing our history and stories through our unique heritage places.

"The Government is providing more than \$1 million for Unlocking Heritage, a significant investment to assist participation by schools in curriculum-linked education programs and experiential learning opportunities," Mr Speakman said.

"From Mungo National Park to Elizabeth Farm to Goat Island and many more places in between, a school visit to one of these heritage sites is an opportunity to extend classroom learning," he said.

The program comprises two streams:

The **Unlocking Heritage: Travel Subsidy** commits \$20 per head for primary school students from low socio-economic backgrounds to attend one of more than 30 heritage, environment or history curriculum-linked education programs at eight Sydney Living Museums' (SLM) properties and nine National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) sites across NSW.

The **Unlocking Heritage: Convict Sleepover**, presented by SLM, will provide a fully subsidised immersive convict-themed sleepover at the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hyde Park Barracks Museum and a \$20 per head travel subsidy for primary schools in regional and rural NSW.

SLM Executive Director Mark Goggin said Hyde Park Barracks Museum was one of the most significant convict sites in the world. Students would be able to experience convict life and discover the stories of the tens of thousands of convicts who passed through its gates.

Mr Goggin said the Unlocking Heritage program will open access to some of the most important historic houses, gardens and museums in NSW.

“Our properties and their stories are at the heart of every education program we offer.”

“Students will discover the histories of our sites and the many people connected to them, from convicts and free settlers, Aboriginal clans and colonists, to troopers and bushrangers,” Mr Goggin said.

Deputy Chief Executive NPWS, Michael Wright, said the heritage sites in NSW’s national parks are great places for students to learn about both our ancient and more recent historic and cultural heritage.

“From the preserved buildings, tunnels and forts around Sydney Harbour to the ancient footprints and landscapes of the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area, NPWS is committed to inspiring and educating the new generation to want to visit our national parks and help to conserve the State’s natural, historic and cultural heritage.

“In our parks and reserves across the state, students can explore heritage buildings, ruins and landscapes to piece together evidence and stories from the past. At some sites this includes spending time with Aboriginal Discovery rangers to learn about the Aboriginal culture and history of these local places,” Mr Wright said.

Applications for Unlocking Heritage are now open for excursions taking place in Terms 3 and 4 of 2015. Find out more at www.unlockingheritage.com.au.