PORTRAITS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Heritage Council of NSW
We acknowledge that Aboriginal people are the traditional custodians of NSW and of the places listed on the State Heritage Register.

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Please note that this document contains images of deceased Aboriginal people.

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Front Cover:
A framed view of the Blue Mountains from a garden terrace, Everglades, Leura. Image credit: Liv Ellingsen, Flickr.

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MINISTER’S FOREWORD


Some items listed on the register are government owned properties—important items of heritage including courthouses, railway stations, iconic buildings such as the Sydney Opera House and national park landscapes.

Other items are the result of community nominations and campaigns and, in some cases, community discoveries. The M24 Japanese mini submarine, for example, was discovered by divers in waters off Newport Beach, Sydney.

Portraits of New South Wales provides a glimpse into the history of NSW presented through the places that we value and want to keep.

I want to thank the Heritage Council of NSW for managing the State Heritage Register and to congratulate them on this publication to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Heritage Act. I hope that as you are reading through, you will think about what is important to you from the past and what you would like protected for our future generations.

The Hon Gabrielle Upton MP
Minister for Environment and Heritage
Group of boys feeding calves at Scheyville Training Farm, 1926. Image credit: State Archives and Records Authority of NSW.
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IF I WERE TO PAINT A PORTRAIT OF NSW, I MIGHT START BY LOOKING AT THE PLACES, AND THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PLACES, LISTED ON OUR STATE HERITAGE REGISTER.

The Heritage Act has provided protection for our most significant heritage places and items for over 40 years. Under the Heritage Act, the Heritage Council of NSW is responsible for identifying and listing on the State Heritage Register items of importance to the people of NSW. These items paint a picture of our state—the narratives of success and failure, the firsts and the lasts, the common and the exceptional. They reflect the stories we want to tell and the stories we want to hear about ourselves.

The State Heritage Register concentrates on places that contribute to the historic, contemporary and lived experiences that shape our state.

A workshop building on Goat Island. Goat Island is one of the largest of the eight remaining islands in Sydney Harbour. The Island is known as Me Mel, or ‘the place from which to see far’, by the local Aboriginal people. Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.
The idea of listing places to protect them dates back to the seventeenth century in some European countries. In NSW, one of the earliest heritage lists was the 1957 Cumberland County Register of Historic Buildings compiled by the National Trust. The National Trust was established in Australia in 1945 and its 1957 Register became the basis for protecting, and eventually listing, items under the Heritage Act.

From the establishment of the National Trust, to the green bans in the 1970s, heritage protection has long been driven by community groups. This includes resident action groups, individuals and professional communities of architects, engineers and historians, who have compiled lists of places integral to the development of their professions.

State and federal government heritage listings and registers usually provide a level of legal protection reflecting the communities for which the places are important. For example, heritage places that are important to local communities may be included in Local Environmental Plans but do not necessarily meet the threshold for listing on the State Heritage Register. The National Heritage List only lists places of importance to Australia. The World Heritage List has places of Outstanding Universal Value inscribed on it.

What matters, and to whom it matters, changes over time. When I look back over the State Heritage Register listings I can see just how dynamic the State Heritage Register has been and still is. It reflects, and is responsive to, community attitudes and values.

While many of the early listings focused solely on architectural heritage, recent listings represent a more sophisticated and inclusive reflection of who we are. The Roxy Theatre and Peter’s Greek Café Complex in Bingara listed in 2017, for example, tells not only the story of Art Deco in Australia but also the story of migration. Bull Cave in Kentlyn is an important Aboriginal art site depicting the escape of the First Fleet cattle in the area which later became known as the Cowpastures. It was also listed in 2017 along with cultural landscapes, archaeological sites and harbour parklands.

The lively nature of the State Heritage Register begs the question: where to next? I encourage you to look through Portraits of New South Wales to see the fascinating picture it paints of our state and to think about what is important to you in our environment.

Stephen Davies
Chair, Heritage Council of NSW
WELCOME
FROM THE NSW ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tracings of Aboriginal artwork at Bull Cave.
Image credit: based on sketches by Jo McDonald.
Aboriginal people have a profound connection to the land, water, flora, fauna and built heritage of Australia. This connection is central to identity, spirituality, community and wellbeing.

Aboriginal places are everywhere and each place on the NSW State Heritage Register is valued by Aboriginal people. Some might be surprised to find that a place they know well, regularly visit and value in their local community has Aboriginal stories and associations too. For instance, the Queanbeyan Showground, the location of the annual Queanbeyan Show since 1893, was listed on the State Heritage Register in 2013 for its importance to Aboriginal people. Long before the showgrounds, Aboriginal people used the place for camping, gathering and ceremony, and it remains a place of cultural importance to Aboriginal people. It has also been the focus of one of the most important annual events for the whole local community.

The Ancient Aboriginal and Early Colonial Landscape listing in Parramatta recognises the dramatic transformation of the environment that came with urban development. In this case the Parramatta Sand Body now lies beneath a growing city but still cradles evidence of Aboriginal occupation around water sources, vegetated areas and camp sites.

The list also includes places associated with anguish. Places such as the Aboriginal children’s homes—the Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls’ Training Home and Kinchela Aboriginal Boys’ Training Home, for instance—reflect specific government policy towards Aboriginal people. It is important that the significance of these places is protected so that the people of NSW can acknowledge, remember and appreciate something of the experiences of Aboriginal people and the ongoing strength of our Aboriginal communities.

No list ever tells a complete story. The State Heritage Register is certainly no exception in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage places. The Register paints a partial portrait of Aboriginal people and places in NSW. It gives a hint of our deep and continuing association with this land and provides many opportunities for reflection on the different and shared values and meanings that people attach to places.

For thousands of years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been welcoming other people to Country. We invite you to read about the important places in the following pages, to reflect on why these historic places continue to have value to communities today and what the future of heritage protection might bring for you and your community, to your neighbours and to the Aboriginal custodians of this land. We hope that this 40th anniversary publication gets you thinking about what heritage means to you and reveals some hidden stories behind some of the places you might already know and love.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee to the Heritage Council of NSW
IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT ‘THE EYES ARE THE WINDOWS TO THE SOUL’. TYPICALLY, A PORTRAIT IS AN ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION THAT COMMUNICATES SOMETHING ABOUT AN INDIVIDUAL THROUGH THEIR APPEARANCE AND EXPRESSION. GREAT PORTRAITURE PROVIDES INSIGHT INTO THE INTERIOR WORLD OF THE SUBJECT. IT CAN TELL YOU THINGS ABOUT A PERSON THAT THEIR WORDS MIGHT NOT.

If we consider the NSW State Heritage Register as a series of portraits of New South Wales, what does it tell us about how we have lived our lives, and created and used places across the landscape through time? What does it reflect about our history and what we consider to be important? Perhaps, if we look at the State Heritage Register (SHR), we can see glimpses into our common humanity, our hard work and even what makes us laugh or cry. We can certainly see what we care about and what has made us who we are.

Across NSW, there are thousands of places that make up our cities, towns and communities. The SHR and this publication includes places that reveal a little of the extraordinary diversity of our everyday lives and cultures. Every place has stories that are kept alive in our hearts and these places play a defining role in shaping our communities, identity, and relationships. They reflect the rhythm of our everyday lives and the ways we have responded to the land, made our mark, and helped shape our society and state. Places reflect how we have lived, raised families, suffered and celebrated, spent our leisure time, and expressed our beliefs and convictions.

We can’t anticipate what future generations will consider to be important, but with the community’s support we can conserve those places which paint a portrait and reveal something of our deeper selves. Perhaps through the stories in this publication you will see a portrait of your own life that might become part of our future heritage.
Luna Park, the Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House in the distance.

Image credit: Julian Siu, 2015.
COUNTRY AND LAND ARE CENTRAL TO AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY. SOME OF OUR NATURAL PLACES DEFINE US IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD. WE LOVE THE GREAT OUTDOORS. WE RELISH THE BEACH, OUR PARKS, GARDENS, FORESTS, CAVE SYSTEMS AND ROLLING HILLS.

Ancient shell middens lining the shore of the Bass Point Reserve in Shellharbour take us into deep time and connect us to the continuing traditions of Aboriginal cultural life today. The rugged and steeply incised valleys of the Blue Mountains, with their hand-built network of Walking Tracks following traditional Aboriginal trails, take walkers deep into the eucalypt forests of the World Heritage inscribed national park. Bondi Beach is an iconic destination, famous around the globe for its surfers, lifeguards and locals vying with tourists for a place on the sand.

Some places such as the Gondwana Forests, in Gloucester, Dungog, Bellingen, Tenterfield and surrounds, or the Old Growth Forests that survive in the northern districts of NSW from Tenterfield out to Ballina, Byron Bay and the Tweed Valley, remain pristine, cool and ‘wild’. The Willandra Lakes Region in southwest NSW feels ancient and dramatic—this landscape holds evidence of human occupation dating back at least 50,000 years.

Out in the Pacific Ocean, Lord Howe Island is the remnant of a violent volcanic uprising, with rare examples of isolated plant and animal life not found elsewhere on earth. Its unique ecosystem and landscape saw it included on the World Heritage List.

Jenolan Caves and Cliefden Caves are two of the country’s largest and, in the case of Jenolan, best known accessible cave systems. Cliefden Caves, with evidence of human occupation 6000 years old, remains an important component of Wiradjuri cultural life. So too does the Ancient Aboriginal and Early Colonial Landscape, entirely hidden below the city of Parramatta, remain significant for the local Darug people. It conceals human occupation of pre-colonial Sydney and confirms what Aboriginal people already knew: they have been making their homes in the Sydney region for tens of thousands of years.

‘I love Parramatta... It is our mother’s country... I remember a dig in Parramatta near Charles Street one time where we uncovered layers of history in the sands along that ancient river. There, walking among the sand corridors towering above one could literally see the history of the country presented through the artefacts of our ancestors.’

“Sydney is herself again when surfing begins... The majority of our population run into the sea as inevitably as if they were rivers... That is one of the characteristics of our city that mark it out like no other city in the world.”

The small parcel of land granted to Colebee and Nurragingy by Governor Macquarie is a stark reminder of the dislocation and disruption to Aboriginal society in colonial NSW—and the resilience, determination and courage of those people in the face of it. The place remains one of the most poignant sites of colonial interrelations.

Click here and here for more information.
JENOLAN CAVES

THE LABYRINTH OF CAVES AND SUBTERRANEAN PASSAGES KNOWN AS JENOLAN CAVES HAS DRAWN VISITORS, ARTISTS AND EXPLORERS SINCE ‘DISCOVERED’ IN THE 1830S. FORMED DRIP BY DRIP OVER MILLENNIA, THE CAVES STILL ELICIT WONDER AND DELIGHT WITH THEIR MYRIAD OF FORMATIONS, DARK RECESSES AND TWINKLING REFLECTIONS.

Lake Mungo.
Image credit: (main image and inset) Mark Dunn, 2017.
WILLANDRA LAKES

THE LAKE BEDS AND DUNE LUNETTES OF WILLANDRA LAKES REMIND THE VISITOR OF THE ANCIENT AND COMPLEX NATURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN CONTINENT. SO OLD ARE THESE SPACES IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THEY WERE ONCE FLOURISHING WETLANDS AND GRASS PLAINS. THE DISCOVERY OF MUNGO LADY AND MUNGO MAN HERE NECESSITATED A COMPLETE RETHINK OF ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA AND CONFIRMED ITS ANCIENT AND DEEP CONNECTIONS TO COUNTRY.

Click here and here for more information.
MONDAY 21 JANUARY 1788: AS THE FIRST FLEET SAT AT ANCHOR IN BOTANY BAY, LIEUTENANT WILLIAM BRADLEY, ONBOARD THE HMAS SIRIUS, WATCHED GROUPS OF ABORIGINAL MEN IN THE EVENING LIGHT. AFTER THE BRITISH HAD RETURNED TO THEIR SHIPS, THE MEN CAME DOWN TO THE NORTH SHORE OF WHAT IS NOW KAMAY BOTANY BAY NATIONAL PARK AND RETURNED TO THEIR HUTS CLOSE BY. THEY WERE GOING HOME.

The desire for a home is universal and, not surprisingly, homes and houses are well represented on the SHR. The very first place protected by a Permanent Conservation Order, the forerunner to the SHR, was a home: Elizabeth Farm, built by pastoralists Elizabeth and John Macarthur in 1793.

Homes come in all shapes and sizes. There are grand mansions and homesteads of the colonial elite, like Neotsfield, home of surveyor Henry Dangar in the Hunter Valley, and Vaucluse House, built by William Wentworth in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. Other homes were humble. Simple slab cottages, like the wattle and daub Price Morris Cottage at St Albans on the fringes of Sydney, were built by ex-convicts. Me-Mel (Goat Island) in Sydney Harbour was Bennelong’s home, passed down from his father, a place where he and Barangaroo went often to feast and enjoy themselves.

Tightly packed suburbs like Millers Point and rural towns such as Braidwood are both full of homes of individuals and are considered as home by the collective. Some houses within those places stand out. A modest brick house with an iron roof and a small verandah in Bathurst, for example, once the home of prime minister Ben Chifley, is typical of a working-class home from the early decades of the twentieth century and symbolic of what can be achieved through hard work and determination.

Determination is also seen in the stories of migrants arriving and settling into a new country. The North Head Quarantine Station was, for many, the first port of call and served as a temporary home to over 13,000 people over nearly 150 years.

For those who arrived in Australia in the years following World War II, their first homes were the migrant camps that were hastily established. Tens of thousands of migrants arrived in NSW out of the refugee and displacement camps of Europe, and ex-military bases were converted to accommodate these ‘new Australians’. These are the places where postwar migrant workers endured the initial hardships of making life in a new land.

Migrant camps like those at Scheyville in Sydney’s west and Balgownie in Wollongong helped loosen the bonds of the White Australia Policy and introduce to NSW the idea of a multicultural future. Over 35,000 people passed through Balgownie during its 31 years of operation. Many met their future wife or husband in these camps before moving to new homes of their own.

‘As houses are often difficult to obtain on arrival in the colony, tents should be taken if possible. “Cottage tents” have side walls the height of a person and are especially useful in wet weather. It is possible to take prefabricated houses, but they are costly. One with a single room will cost £13 and a double £50. One particular model has a sitting room, three bedrooms, a fitted kitchen and a loft for stores. It is said they weigh no more than two tonnes and cost 100 guineas.’

– The Emigrant’s guide to Australia with a Memoir of Mrs Chisholm, Eneas Mackenzie, Clark, Beeton and Co, London, 1853.
SCHEYVILLE

SCHEYVILLE HOUSED NEWLY ARRIVING MIGRANTS FROM THE 1920S THROUGH TO THE 1960S, WITH A BREAK AS AN ARMY DEPOT IN BETWEEN. AS HOME TO BOTH THE 1920S DREADNOUGHT BOYS FROM BRITAIN AND THE POSTWAR MIGRANT FAMILIES LEAVING A BROKEN EUROPE, IT WAS ONE OF A NETWORK OF STAGING CAMPS FOR NEWLY ARRIVING MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES THAT HELPED TRANSFORM THE FACE OF NSW. THE GIANT SAAR HUTS THAT ONCE SERVED AS DINING HALLS FOR THE SCHEYVILLE MIGRANT CAMP REMAIN AS AN AUSTERE REMINDER OF THE STARTING POINT FOR MANY THOUSANDS OF THESE NEW ARRIVALS TO NSW.

Click here for more information.

‘My wife used to make cheese croquettes... and every Saturday night we would have competitions in scrabble, usually we had four to a table, so that’s sixty people there nibbling away on the cheese croquettes. We made many friends here that we still see regularly.’

NOW 225 YEARS OLD, ELIZABETH FARM, IN WESTERN SYDNEY, WAS HOME TO JOHN AND ELIZABETH MACARTHUR AND THE FIRST ITEM PLACED ON THE STATE HERITAGE REGISTER.

Click here for more information.

ELIZABETH FARM

Interior at Elizabeth Farm. Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.

Click here for more information.

NEOTSFIELD WHITTINGHAM


Click here for more information.
‘I landed in two places, one of which the people had just left, as there were small fires and fresh mussels broiling upon them...’

– Captain Cook, quoted in Maria Nugent, Captain Cook was here, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Botany Bay, painting by John Skinner, 1805-1876.
Image credit: National Library of Australia.
Sydney is famous as the home of one of the world’s most recognisable buildings—the Sydney Opera House. Known the world over and unmissable in its position at Bennelong Point, the Opera House is a twentieth-century architectural masterpiece, sculptural monument and technical wonder. It highlights the modernity of design practice in NSW, while reflecting a long history of design innovation.

Aboriginal people across NSW designed and refined the landscape to suit their needs for millennia. The Brewarrina Fish Traps, stretching 400 metres across the Barwon River, are considered one of the oldest surviving examples of human construction in Australia at an estimated 3000—possibly up to 9000—years old.

Mention ‘heritage’ though and most people think old buildings. Since 1816 the Government Architect’s Office has designed and built some of the state’s most impressive and functional buildings, shaping our cities and towns. Places from the Hay Post Office, designed by the Colonial Architect James Barnet, to the collection of fine Victorian era ‘Sydney Sandstones’ all speak to the optimism and civic pride in the progress and prosperity of the nation.

Monuments to the imagination of influential architects and engineers have continued to spread across the state and reflect the times in which they were built. Harry Seidler’s boldly designed Rose Seidler House, built for his mother, got people talking. His own house (Harry and Penelope Seidler House) exemplifies sophisticated modernity in design and detailing, and the design revolution that rocked domestic architecture in Sydney.

The creative possibilities when architects, clients and builders respond to the dramatic landscape of NSW are illustrated in the Woolley House, designed by Ken Woolley for the construction firm of Pettit & Sevitt. Woolley’s house was an early example of what became known as the Sydney School, a design philosophy that considered the natural landscape as a key to good architecture.

Functional industrial buildings and structures also display design excellence and have even attracted internationally renowned architects. The Torin building in Penrith, designed by Marcel Breuer—who had studied under Walter Gropius, a German-born architect and founder of the Bauhaus school of architecture—is one such example. Breuer’s Penrith factory was the last of nine designed around the world for the air-conditioning company Torin. The modernist design was the product of a long process of innovation and refinement.

Modernism is also on display at the Everglades garden in Leura—meticulously planned and designed by landscape architect Paul Sorensen. Sorensen’s work introduced new techniques to Australian landscape and garden design. Hyde Park on the other hand, in the centre of Sydney, is the result of a design competition, run to reinstate the park after the construction of Sydney’s underground railway in the 1920s.

Design excellence and practical purpose have driven our best architects, designers and engineers. All these qualities are exemplified in the Sydney Harbour Bridge. As iconic as the Opera House, when completed in 1932 the Bridge gave the harbour a more striking skyline and created a visual icon.
BREWARRINA FISH TRAPS

THESE FISH TRAPS SHOW A LEVEL OF DESIGN INGENUITY IN ABORIGINAL SOCIETY STRETCHING BACK THOUSANDS OF YEARS. TWELVE TEARDROP-SHAPED PONDS ARE FORMED THROUGH THE CAREFUL PLACEMENT OF ROCKS TO CREATE AN INTERLINKED TRAP SYSTEM THAT COULD BE OPENED AND CLOSED AS REQUIRED BY THE COMMUNITY.

Click here for more information.
EVERGLADES LEURA

The house and garden design of Paul Sorensen at Everglades is a pioneering example of modernist design. Set in a series of outdoor rooms and drystone walled terraces, the garden presents a heady mix of exotic trees and plantings, many imported specifically for Everglades, presenting a unique experience for anyone who visits.

ZIG ZAG RAILWAY

Zig-zagging down the western escarpment of the Blue Mountains, the Zig Zag Railway and its tunnels form one of the most unique engineering approaches to topography presented anywhere in NSW by the Government Railways. Splendid in both design and function, it remains as testimony to the inventiveness and ingenuity of the engineers who designed it and the workers who built it.
I will myself work from the office of Sir Henry Parkes, who was five times the Prime Minister of the Colony and Colonial Secretary. It remains much as he left it in 1891, with the original furniture.

— His Excellency the Hon Gordon Samuels from the ‘Swearing in Speech’ in The Governor’s Office, The Chief Secretary’s Building: A brief history and guide, Department of Public Works and Services and Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 1997.

The Australian Ballet Company at the Sydney Opera House with guests Dame Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev, by David Mist, c1966.

Image credit: David Mist ©.

Collection: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.
A competition to design the Opera House, attracting 222 entries from 45 countries, made the world aware of this building before it was even started. The design of Danish architect Jørn Utzon was strikingly different from the others, and from the architecture of 1950s Sydney generally. The graceful curves complemented the natural landscape while the gleaming white tiles glistened in the reflected glory of the harbour and brought the building to life. Arching in unison with the Harbour Bridge behind, it is the symbol of modern Sydney.

Click here for more information.
THE EUROPEAN HISTORY OF NSW IS ONE FOUND ON THE CONCEPT OF WORK. BETWEEN 1788 AND 1842, 80,000 MEN AND WOMEN WERE TRANSPORTED TO NSW AS CONVICTS, FORCED TO LABOUR UNDER PUNITIVE CONDITIONS ACROSS MULTIPLE JOBS AND TRADERS FROM DOMESTIC SERVICE TO CONSTRUCTION. HUNDREDS OF CONVICTS TOILED ON THE OLD GREAT NORTH ROAD BETWEEN WISEMANS FERRY AND THE HUNTER VALLEY. MANY MORE WORKED IN THE CONVICT LUMBER YARD IN NEWCASTLE, WHILE OTHERS LABOURED UNDERGROUND TO DIG BUSBY’S BORE, NOW SECRETED BENEATH SYDNEY STREETS.

Some of our first shepherds were convicts and they built an industry upon which Australia rode through decades of prosperity. Across NSW, woolsheds—such as Windy Station at Pine Ridge near Quirindi—stand like sentinels to the pastoral economy and seasonal Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal labour that gathered around them during shearing. Avoca Homestead near Wentworth bore witness to the dislocation of Aboriginal people in the 1840s, and later saw their integration into the pastoral industry.

The ambitions, duties and dreams of men and women who laboured in generations past are illustrated in former workplaces right across the state: as diverse as the Lithgow Valley Colliery and Pottery Works and Portland Cement Works, Davidson Whaling Station, Corowa Flour Mill, Port Stephens Lighthouse Group, and the Hammond and Wheatley Commercial Emporium in Bellingen.

Broken Hill is a frontier city built on sweat and hard work. Its Trades Hall is a symbol of its traditional trade unionism: of workers’ struggles and their fight for equitable pay and fair work conditions.

On the coast near Newcastle, Catherine Hill Bay was built as a company town to serve the mines of the Wallarah Coal Company. The cluster of workers’ cottages, the mine, railway and its sea jetty combine to form one of NSW’s most distinctive cultural and working landscapes.

Unpaid work is also part of the fabric of every community. The quilts made by Sarah Marshall and her daughters at Craigmoor in Hill End are such an example. Hand stitched, patched and re-patched, the quilts and bonnets show the thrift and skill of the Marshall women, with some of the quilts using men’s suiting.

Migrant communities created new labour markets and brought with them new tastes and traditions. Italian migrants on the North Coast clustered around the French vineyards of Phillipe Palis in such numbers that the area is remembered as Vineyard Haven, New Italy, while Chinese famers continue to work the soils of Arncliffe Market Gardens—a rare surviving example of these types of agricultural sites that were once common in Sydney and around NSW.

‘Those who are not fortunate enough to be selected for wives... are made hutkeepers; those who are not dignified with this office are set to make shorts, frocks, trousers etc for the men... occasionally to pick grass in the field and for a very slight offence are kept constantly at work the same as the men.’

– George Thompson, 1792, in Carol Liston, ‘Convict women in the female factories of New South Wales’ in Women Transported: Life in Australia’s Convict Female Factories, Parramatta Heritage Centre, 2008.
SINCE THE 1860S, CHINESE MARKET GARDENS AND MARKET GARDENERS HAVE BEEN A FEATURE OF FRESH FOOD PRODUCTION IN MANY NSW TOWNS AND CITIES. ARNCLIFFE IS ONE OF THE FEW TO REMAIN IN SYDNEY, PROVIDING A TANGIBLE—AND TASTY—LINK TO THE LONG HISTORY OF CHINESE WORKERS AND MIGRATION TO NSW.
Catherine Hill Bay

With a massive coal loader jetty, and in splendid isolation from the rest of the world, the little village of Catherine Hill Bay developed in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Accessible only by water until the 1920s, twin villages grew around the Wallarah coal mine, with a jetty, railway, sawmill and an electric power plant. It was the classic company town and remains a rare example of such development along the NSW coast.

Wallarah Jetty, Catherine Hill Bay, 1894. Image credit: State Archives and Records Authority of NSW.
KINCHEGA WOOLSHED STANDS AS TESTAMENT TO THE SCALE OF THE WOOL INDUSTRY IN NSW’S HISTORY. IT WAS BUILT IN 1875 AS THE WOOL BOOM SWEPT THROUGH NSW, WITH ITS 26 STANDS ALLOWING 64 SHEARERS TO WORK SIMULTANEOUSLY, SHEARING ALMOST 75,000 SHEEP IN A SEASON.

‘My first job was on a station property. I was a domestic and I looked after the family’s children. I didn’t really get wages. They only gave me money when they felt like it… I was thirteen at the time. My father was working out the back of their property and they had a camp down on the river, my mother and brother and sisters. I was allowed to go down and see the family, but they had strict rulings.’


Kinchega Woolshed.
Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.
WORK AND TRADE
PLACE PORTRAITS

THIS IMAGE OF HILL END, AT ITS PEAK IN THE 1870S GOLD RUSHES, IS A SNAPSHOT OF A GOLD MINING COMMUNITY CAUGHT AT ITS MOST PROSPEROUS. THE ACCOMPANYING PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF THE TOWN FROM THE PERIOD FILLS THE STREETS, HOUSES AND SHOPS WITH THE MINERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, NOW LONG GONE. THE PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN BY BEAUFROY MERLIN AND CHARLES BAYLISS AND COMMISSIONED BY BERNHARDT OTTO HOLTERMANN. THE HOLTERMANN COLLECTION WAS DISCOVERED IN A GARDEN SHED IN 1951. HILL END HAS A STRONG ARTISTIC HISTORY STARTING WITH THESE EARLY PHOTOGRAPHS AND CONTINUING TODAY WITH ONE OF AUSTRALIA’S MOST SOUGHT AFTER ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAMS.

HILL END HISTORIC SITE

Click here, here and here for more information.

‘Hill End’s way of life was not so much hand-to-mouth existence as capital-poor one, in which the obvious input of men’s heavy manual work was paralleled, augmented, and sustained by women’s unpaid labour, and anchored within a reciprocal network of stable families.’

Mason & Co Hall of Commerce, Hill End.
Image credit: Holtermann Collection,
State Library of New South Wales.
TEACH AND LEARN

SYDNEY’S ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS AND DOMAIN IS A LIVING CLASSROOM. THE TREES AND PLANTS PROVIDE RESPITE FROM THE CITY SURROUNDING THEM, LABELLED WITH THEIR BOTANICAL NAME AND PLACE OF ORIGIN. YOU CAN LEARN HERE WITHOUT EVEN REALISING YOU ARE DOING IT. FOR THOSE WHO WANT MORE, THE NSW HERBARIUM AT THE GARDENS HAS SPECIMENS OF PLANTS COLLECTED FROM ALL OVER AUSTRALIA, INCLUDING THOSE TAKEN ONBOARD BY CAPTAIN COOK AND JOSEPH BANKS. IT IS ONE OF AUSTRALIA’S MOST IMPORTANT SCIENTIFIC COLLECTIONS.

At the heart of this green space is an earlier place of learning: an initiation ground for young Aboriginal boys. A ceremony witnessed in 1795 by David Collins included men and boys from clan groups all over Sydney. It was a ceremony performed for countless generations prior to European contact in various guises for boys and for girls in all Aboriginal Country.

During Governor Macquarie’s tenure, Aboriginal children were coaxed in or removed to be taught European ways at the Blacktown Native Institute, the foundation site of the Stolen Generation to come. The opening of Tranby College in 1957 provided the first opportunity for many to be part of an education system run by Aboriginal people. This was strengthened further with the establishment of the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group in 1975. It was one of a range of Aboriginal run co-operatives that rose from a growing awareness about civil rights.

Teaching sites range from humble semi-rural schools like the Upper Castlereagh Public School to impressive edifices of education such as Crown Street Public School and the former King’s School at Parramatta. These sites collectively show the advance of public education, open to all in NSW from the mid-nineteenth century—a government initiative that was ahead of other countries in the world at the time.

Before 1866, schooling was via religious or private schools. For the working man, it was the Schools of Arts. The first was the Sydney Mechanics’ School of Arts (SMSA), opened in 1837. With its library, lecture halls and teachers, the SMSA spread scientific and trade education to the working-class mechanics of Sydney. The movement quickly moved beyond Sydney with study halls at Tenterfield and Carcoar, as well as more modest examples at Kendall, Laurieton and elsewhere. The movement eventually spawned colleges of technical education or TAFE, such as Albury Technical College.
TRANBY COLLEGE GLEBE

FOUNDED IN 1957, TRANBY IS THE OLDEST INDEPENDENT ABORIGINAL EDUCATION PROVIDER IN AUSTRALIA. IT WAS THE FIRST RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE TO PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR AND BY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND REMAINS A VITAL COMPONENT OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SOLIDARITY IN NSW.

Click here for more information.

Charles Perkins AO, Aboriginal community activist and Australian soccer player, on the bus home after a visit to Tranby, Glebe, c1965. Image credit: Photograph by Robert McFarlane. Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery.

‘I have just returned from the most beautiful spot I ever saw—the Botanical Gardens of Sydney. It was literally a walk through Paradise; the only difference betwixt it and Eden being, that here EVERY tree was forbidden, and death and destruction awarded, by man-traps and other means, to those that touched their fruit. These Botanical Gardens in position are the finest in the world. The situation is a beautiful slope down to a “lovely peaceful bay”, and is surrounded by the domain encircling the government house on one side, and by Nature in her wildest aspect, on the other—the Bush.’

IT WAS HERE ON THE NIGHT OF 24 OCTOBER 1889 THAT THE IDEA OF A FEDERATED NATION, AN AUSTRALIA, WAS FIRST PUBLICLY PRESENTED IN THE ‘TENTERFIELD ORATION’ BY SIR HENRY PARKES. TEN YEARS LATER IN 1899 EDMUND BARTON ALSO GAVE AN ADDRESS ON FEDERATION AT TENTERFIELD. ON 1 JANUARY 1901, THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA WAS PROCLAIMED IN CENTENNIAL PARK, SYDNEY, AND EDMUND BARTON BECAME THE FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA.

‘The great question which we have to consider is, whether the time has not now arisen for the creation on this Australian continent of an Australian government and an Australian parliament... Surely what the Americans have done by war, Australians can bring about in peace’

– Extract from the Tenterfield Oration by Henry Parkes 1889, from National Museum of Australia.
WHO DOESN’T ENJOY THE WOODCHOPPING, SHOW JUMPING, AMUSEMENTS, CATTLE PARADES AND THE CAKES? AS THEY HAVE FOR OVER 150 YEARS, AGRICULTURAL SHOWS CONTINUE TO SHOWCASE PRODUCE AND PRODUCTS, TALENT AND CREATIVITY ACROSS NSW COMMUNITIES. THEY’RE MARKED ON CALENDARS FROM THE BIGGEST CITIES TO THE SMALLEST TOWNS, WITH MANY FINE SHOWGROUNDS AND PAVILIONS STANDING TESTIMONY TO THEIR POPULARITY AND IMPORTANCE.

The Queanbeyan Showground is one such example. Set aside as a recreational reserve in 1862, it’s one of regional NSW’s most significant showgrounds. Buildings, racetracks and memorials underscore the place’s central role in the town and wider community, having hosted the annual show since 1893. But there is a much longer history of recreational and ceremonial use by Aboriginal people who camped on the reserve. Corroborees were regularly held here into the 1860s, with hundreds of Aboriginal people from the district and beyond attending.

As well as a showground, almost every town has at least one public park—big or small. One champion of public parklands was the aptly named Sir Henry Parkes. In the 1870s, he envisioned one of the largest of these, Sydney’s ‘people’s park’: Centennial Park.

Centennial Park is a grand Victorian landscape as popular with city dwellers now as when it was established in 1888. As the focus for both the centenary celebrations and the Federation of Australia in 1901, Centennial Park is unique among urban parks around the nation, and remains the largest Victorian-era park in Australia.

McQuade Park at Windsor predates Centennial Park by over 70 years. Set aside by Governor Macquarie in 1811, it is one of NSW’s oldest regional parks and the forerunner to parks and gardens all over the state.

As much as we love the passive relaxation offered by town parks, Australians are equally passionate about sport. The Bradman Oval in Bowral, where Don Bradman played cricket as a young man, plays a continuing role in the history of cricket and the nation’s undiminished pride in the Don’s achievements.

After cricket, swimming defines summer—at beaches, pools, rivers and rugged waterholes alike. In Newcastle, the Bogey Hole was carved out by convicts in 1819 so commandant James Morisset could swim at leisure. This swimming hole is the earliest purpose-built ocean pool on the NSW coast and the forerunner to 60 others that thousands of people enjoy every day.

While outdoor leisure and play is a big part of life, we have a lot of fun indoors too. In the 1920s and 1930s, grand picture palaces sprang up across regional NSW, as well as in the larger cities and suburbs, bringing the glamour of Hollywood and the style of Art Deco to otherwise quiet towns. The small Art Deco Amusu Theatre in Manildra has been screening movies since 1936, replacing an earlier movie house from 1910.

Opening the year before the Amusu Theatre, Luna Park was an instant hit with the people of Sydney. Its motto ‘Just for Fun’ encouraged a population weary of economic hardship and the troubling rumble of approaching war to let go and enjoy themselves, if only for a few hours. Eighty years later its giant, illuminated face is still enticing us to do the same.
TEARING DOWN THE GIANT SLIDE OR ROCKETING FROM THE DEVIL’S DROP ON A HESSIAN MAT HAS BEEN PART OF THE FUN SINCE LUNA PARK OPENED IN 1935.

Two women enjoying the slides in Coney Island, Luna Park, Milsons Point by Ted Hopkins, c1950s. Image credit: North Sydney Heritage Centre, Stanton Library.
As the first ocean pool built in NSW, the Bogey Hole has provided Novocastrians and visitors alike with a place to cool off since the 1820s. Its name, changed from the Commandant’s Baths, is taken from the Aboriginal word for bathing. Lie back in the calm waters and reflect on the convicts who carved out this swimming hole for Commandant James Morisset’s personal use. Little did they know that they were beginning the great swimming enterprise of Australia’s ocean pools.

Click here for more information.
"THE DON" MADE HIS CRICKETING DEBUT FOR AUSTRALIA IN 1928 AND FINISHED HIS CRICKET CAREER AT "THE OVAL" IN ENGLAND IN 1948.

Click here for more information.
Cricket and chess—just two of the popular activities in Hyde Park.

Left: Hyde Park—the old days of merry Cricket Club matches, by Thomas H Lewis, c1870. Image credit: Tyrrell Collection, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.

ROXY THEATRE AND PETER’S GREEK CAFÉ BINGARA

BUILT IN 1936, THE ROXY THEATRE AND PETER’S GREEK CAFÉ AT BINGARA SHOWS ALL THE EXUBERANCE OF THE ART DECO PERIOD. MOULDED STUCCO PLASTER DECORATIONS, CHROME FITTINGS AND TERRAZZO FLOORS DAZZLED WITH HOLLYWOOD SPLENDOUR, WHILE THE GREEK CAFÉ SERVED MIXED GRILLS AND MILKSHAKES TO HUNGRY PATRONS.

Click here for more information.
HYDE PARK HAS BEEN USED BY SYDNEYSIDERS, VISITORS, PROTESTERS, ENTERTAINERS, LOVERS AND SWEETHEARTS SINCE GOVERNOR MACQUARIE SET IT ASIDE FOR PUBLIC USE IN 1810. THEN ON THE EDGE OF A FLEDGLING TOWN, HYDE PARK BECAME EVER MORE IMPORTANT TO THE CITY AS IT GREW. IT IS AUSTRALIA’S OLDEST PUBLIC PARK, HOME TO SOME OF NSW’S MOST IMPORTANT MEMORIAL SPACES, AND THE GREEN LUNGS OF THE CITY CENTRE.

Click here for more information.
IN THE HUNTER VALLEY, BAIAME CAVE SHELTERS A COMPELLING ANCIENT PORTRAIT. WITH ARMS OUTSTRETCHED, APPEARING TO EMBRACE HIS COUNTRY, THE LARGE PAINTING OF THE SPIRIT-BEING BAIAME IS A REMINDER OF THE BELIEFS AND LIVES OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE ACROSS NSW AND THEIR ENDURING CONNECTION TO THE LAND.

Not all places of faith are so dramatic. At La Perouse, a humble weatherboard church tells us about Aboriginal Christianity and the missionary movement. The La Perouse Mission Church was built in the 1890s to promote evangelical Christianity to the Aboriginal community. When the mission was slated to move in 1900, the local people refused to go.

Recalling a connection to that Country stretching back thousands of years, they stayed and a new community grew around them. Emma Timbery, a long-term resident, summed it up in 1900 by saying, “There’s no more suitable place than this …and as we do no harm to anyone they ought to let us stop here ’ere we’ve been all our lives …”

Churches and religious buildings are landmarks in many NSW cities, towns and villages. They are often among the earliest built structures in their communities, their towers and spires still visible in the skyline. Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle, can be seen from any point as you move around the city. The same can be said about St Mary & St Joseph Catholic Cathedral, Armidale, with its 47-metre-tall needle spire making it a striking feature of this regional centre.

Temples, mosques and synagogues speak to the diversity of faith that waves of immigrants have brought with them. Broken Hill Mosque (1887), the first mosque built in NSW, and the Sze Yup Temple (1904) in Glebe, one of only two such temples in Sydney, embody the spiritual beliefs of communities who made such a vast contribution to nineteenth-century Australia.

Belief is powerful and expressed in other realms beyond the religious. In Gilgandra, St Ambrose Church remembers the men who enlisted in World War I, starting with those of the Coo-ee march that began in the town. The ‘Gilgandra Snowball’ started with 20 or so men marching from Gilgandra to enlist in Sydney. Their numbers reached around 300 by the time they were welcomed to Sydney by thousands who had lined the streets. This action inspired others to take to the streets and enlist in NSW and Queensland.

The church was built after the war with funds donated by St Ambrose Church in Bournemouth, England, as a thanks-giving gift to Gilgandra for its residents’ service.
NESTLED AMONGST THE SUBURBAN HOMES OF GLEBE, THE SZE YUP TEMPLE IS A REMINDER OF THE LONG HISTORY OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN SYDNEY AND NSW. OPENED IN 1904, THE BUILDING WAS FUNDED BY SYDNEY PEOPLE FROM SZE YUP IN CANTON AND DEDICATED TO THE GOD KWAN KUNG, SYMBOLISING LOYALTY, BROTHERHOOD AND MUTUAL SUPPORT—TRAITS THAT HAVE HELPED THE CHINESE-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY PROSPER.

Click here for more information.
BELIEVE
PLACE PORTRAITS

BAIAME
CAVE

‘The Homeland of the Wonnarua, not only held physical human and animal life, but was also home to the many Creation Spirits, who came to earth with Baiame after he created the Giver of all life, the Sun.

These Creation Spirits worked to beautify Wonnarua Homelands, adding vibrant colours to the sky and all the animate and inanimate life, already created by Baiame.’

– Laurie Perry.

Click here and here for more information.
Perched on top of the hill behind Newcastle, Christ Church Cathedral has looked down over the city since the first church on the site opened in 1817.
Corrugated iron exterior of the mosque.
Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.

THE MOSQUE AT BROKEN HILL, MADE OF CORRUGATED IRON AND PAINTED RUST RED LIKE SO MUCH IN BROKEN HILL, IS A REMINDER OF THE LONG HISTORY OF MUSLIM AUSTRALIA. AFGHAN CAMELEERS, INSTRUMENTAL IN OPENING UP CENTRAL AUSTRALIA, BUILT THIS SMALL MOSQUE IN 1887, THE FIRST IN NSW.

Click here for more information.
Camel wagon wheels on display outside the mosque. Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.

Inside the mosque is the Mihrab, a niche in the wall indicating the qibla, the direction of Mecca and direction of prayer. Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.
EVEN THOUGH TODAY WE MIGHT MOAN ABOUT THE TRAFFIC, WE SHOULD SPARE A THOUGHT FOR THOSE THAT TRIED TO GET AROUND THE STATE BEFORE US, BY STEAMSHIP, HORSEBACK OR COBB & CO COACH.

Beyond the megapolis of Sydney–Newcastle–Wollongong, the population of NSW thins, spreading up and down the coast before scattering west across wide open plains. A web of roads, rail lines, tracks, pathways, air routes and rivers connect us.

Built with convict labour and set down over Aboriginal tracks and pathways, the Cox’s Road, from Emu Plains over the Blue Mountains towards Bathurst, is one of the earliest pieces of European roadway west of Sydney. Under the orders of Governor Macquarie, the road opened up the west and released a wave of settlers that swept into the ‘gentleman’s park’ of Aboriginal Country beyond.

Before the railroads, sailing was often the go-to option for travel. A vast network of sea, coastal and river routes fed the colonial economy and brought immigrants to shore. The wreck of the convict ship Hive, buried under the sandy beaches of the aptly named Wreck Bay, demonstrate just how dangerous getting to NSW could be.

The advent of the railways in the 1850s changed everything. No longer dependent on the weather or the state of the roads, rail got people and goods moving. At the heart of the network is Sydney’s Central Railway Station. The station is a marvel of civic architecture and railway engineering, with its magnificent sandstone station building, prominent landmark clock tower and a spaghetti of tracks, platforms, subways and tunnels radiating beyond. For decades it has served as one of Australia’s busiest commuter and traveller hubs.

As they spread out from Sydney, the railways were confronted with obstacles in the land. Steep ravines, wide rivers and high mountains were all in the way. Necessity and clever design overcame all in a network of bridges, tunnels and cuttings.

Railway truss bridges, both timber and steel, show the combined design prowess of the NSW Railways and the dynamic scale of the system. The Albury Railway Bridge, a rare wrought iron lattice bridge from the 1880s, carries both the NSW and Victorian gauge rails, a physical reminder of the competing colonial systems prior to federation—a legacy that continues today.

Not everywhere could be accessed with a bridge. Outside Junee, the 360° Bethungra Spiral allows train engines to negotiate the daunting slope, too steep for a direct descent into the town. The spiral is one of the most ingenious engineering solutions on the entire rail network.

Like the railways, the construction of our roads faced significant obstacles and demanded engineering expertise. Gladesville Bridge spanning the Parramatta River was one of the first bridges on earth to be designed using a computer. Sydney Harbour Bridge, the largest single span arched steel bridge in the world when completed, linked the two halves of the city together and has become an international symbol of Australia. In contrast, a small stone bridge at Towrang Convict Stockade illustrates the skill of convict labour and the endurance of fine quality workmanship.
'During the whole of Thursday, the Hive it appears, kept within sight of land, and it is said, passed the Royal Sovereign; in the night it blew pretty fresh, and a dense fog came on. Our informants here leave us in the dark, as well as the ship, and we next hear of the vessel being stranded on the Coast near the Pigeon House, within 10 miles of Cape George. All hands were immediately called up, and the boats lowered, one of which was stove in the attempt, and the persons capsized—one of whom reached the land, by whose exertions a hawser from the ship was made fast ashore. This enabled the Captain and crew to lower the rest of the ship's boats, lines being made fast stem and stern, when as soon as one boat was filled with the persons on board, those on shore dragged the boat towards them, and they were landed. By this means the whole of the men, women, and children, were discharged from the ship, which was done without the least confusion. On the morning of Friday, Ensign Kelly, of the 17th Regiment, by the assistance of some blacks, found his way to the station of John Lamb, Esq., to whom he reported the circumstance.'

- The Sydney Herald, 17 December 1835.
CENTRAL STATION


Click here and here for more information.
Sydney Harbour Bridge

'Across Sydney Harbour has been thrown the greatest arch bridge of the age, a commanding structure with stately towers that stands like the Pillars of Hercules bestriding the tide. The Bridge is finished. And, by no matter what standards of comparison we measure it, its place is assured as one of the greatest of its age, throughout the world.'

— Sydney Morning Herald, 20 March 1932 (supplement).

Click here and here for more information.
POWER CAN BE EXPRESSED THROUGH THE LOCATION, FORM AND SIZE OF BUILDINGS. IT MANIFESTS ITSELF IN PLACES BUILT, SOME OF WHICH ARE OUR MOST IMPOSING HERITAGE PLACES. POWER IS ALSO DEMONSTRATED THROUGH THE ACTS OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES.

The First Government House site in Sydney and Old Government House, Parramatta, were the epicentres of colonial power. The decisions made there rippled out across the entire colony. Both buildings were constructed in commanding locations. Each house served as the colonial government’s seat of power and played central roles in the dynamics between the colonial governors and the Aboriginal people of Sydney and Parramatta. Bennelong, Barangaroo, Colebee and other Aboriginal leaders were regular visitors and guests as cross-cultural relationships were brokered.

Also strategically positioned were the harbour defences. As a vulnerable colonial outpost, NSW bristled nervously with guns and forts throughout the nineteenth century. Prominent headlands and harbour locations were fortified with bunkers and gun emplacements, ever vigilant for an enemy that never came. Fort Denison in Sydney Harbour was one of a network of defences around the harbour and Botany Bay. The approach of World War II saw a flurry of upgrades and the construction of new defensive positions like Fort Tomaree at Wollongong.

Law enforcement is central to state power. Places like Goulburn Courthouse were often the centrepiece of planned civic precincts that displayed a growing confidence in nineteenth-century NSW. The courthouse at Goulburn was also the climax of the work of the Government Architect’s Office under James Barnet.

Power can also come from strength, love and endurance. A small, rundown weatherboard cottage on the beach at Coffs Harbour stands as a modest reminder of the power of individuals and individual action. Ferguson’s Cottage was built early in the twentieth century as a temporary site office for Public Works while the Coffs Harbour breakwater was being built. It became the home of Evelyn ‘Nanny’ Ferguson, a role model in the reconciliation process within Coffs Harbour in the 1950s and 1960s. Her home was a safe haven for Aboriginal people travelling up the coast and she is recognised today for the role she played in caring for Aboriginal children, fighting against racism and promoting reconciliation in Coffs Harbour.
FORT DENISON

FORT DENISON—TRADITIONALLY NAMED MATTEWAI AND FAMILIARLY KNOWN AS PINCHGUT BY CONVICTS IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE COLONY—WAS CALLED ROCK ISLAND BY GOVERNOR PHILLIP. THE SITE IS LAYERED WITH MEANING. THE 16 GUNS OF THE SQUAT, STONE FORT, BUILT TO PROTECT THE ANCHORAGE AT SYDNEY COVE, WERE NEVER FIRED.

Click here for more information.

Fort Denison today with the iconic Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge in the background. Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.
‘The first foundations which were found in the excavation were part of the back wall of Phillip’s house. They consist of two parallel fired bricks mortared by plain white pipe clay. The way they were constructed indicated that we had come upon the original foundations of Phillip’s Government House...

One of the unusual things about directing this excavation was that I never knew what the future of the site was going to be. As the dig progressed there were demonstrations involving many people to try and allow enough time for the excavation to be completed before the office tower went ahead.’

CHOW HAYES, ARTHUR ‘NEDDY’ SMITH, IVAN MILAT AND DARCY DUGAN ARE JUST SOME OF THE NOTORIOUS CRIMINALS WHO SPENT TIME BEHIND THE BARS OF MAITLAND GAOL. OPENED IN 1848, IT WAS OPEN FOR 150 YEARS, HOLDING MEN AND WOMEN IN ITS WINGS.

WORLD WAR II CAME CLOSE IN 1942, WITH JAPANESE SUBMARINE ATTACKS ON SYDNEY AND NEWCASTLE. THE M24 JAPANESE MIDGET SUBMARINE WRECK OFF SYDNEY’S COAST IS A SILENT TESTIMONY TO THOSE TIMES.

Click here for more information.

The M24 mini-submarine submerged off the coast of Newport.
WITH POWER ALSO COMES PROTEST.

In an unassuming building in Elizabeth Street, Sydney, the modern Aboriginal resistance movement took shape. It’s a salient reminder of Aboriginal resistance and of frontier conflict. On Australia Day 1938, 150 years after the arrival of the First Fleet, a group of Aboriginal men and women gathered for a Day of Mourning. A meeting was held at Australian Hall, now known as the Cyprus-Hellene Club. The Day of Mourning was the culmination of 150 years of protest and resistance.

Isolated on the road between Bathurst and Sofala is the Grave of Windradyne. It’s a salient reminder of the frontier conflict that swept across the Bathurst Plains. Windradyne was buried according to traditional ceremony with his weapons and possum skin coat. His grave was tended and protected by the Suttor family for generations and today symbolises courage, hope and reconciliation.

Other places on the SHR were saved by conservation protest movements. Kelly’s Bush in leafy Hunters Hill, for example, survives thanks to a determined stand against development by a group of local women who formed an unlikely alliance with the Builders Labourers Federation in 1971. Their fight for a small stand of bush sparked the green bans movement which in turn saved hundreds of individual places from destruction. In all, around 40 bans were put on developments in NSW in the 1970s. The improved protection for historic sites that came from the bans benefitted not only Sydney, but all of NSW. A small terrace of semi-detached cottages in Howick Street, Bathurst, slated for demolition in 1981 was saved through the efforts of locals and the new provisions of Permanent Conservation Orders and heritage grants.

Perhaps one of the most poignant sites of protest is the house of Juanita Nielsen at 202 Victoria Street, Potts Point. Nielsen, a journalist and activist, lived here from 1968 until her disappearance in 1975. During that time, she had produced the alternative local newspaper NOW, which started as a review of restaurants and goings-on but became increasingly concerned with the campaign to save Victoria Street from developers. The protest was violent and protracted, more so than other green ban sites. On 4 July 1975, Nielsen disappeared after a meeting in Kings Cross and her body has never been found. Her legacy lives on through the protection afforded those sites in Victoria Street that she passionately defended.
I felt that it had to be preserved for the children... It didn’t make sense to destroy acres of bushland in close proximity to a growing city for 25 luxury houses.


Click here and here for more information.
WINDRADYNE LED THE ABORIGINAL RESISTANCE AROUND BATHURST IN THE 1820S AND BROKERED ATTEMPTS AT PEACE—MARCHING HIS WARRIORS TO SYDNEY TO NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH THE GOVERNOR.

GRAVE OF WINDRADYNE

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST JACK PATTEN READ THE RESOLUTION ON CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS IN 1938, CONSIDERED BY MANY AS THE START OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA.

Click here and here for more information.

CYPRUS-HELLENE CLUB

Juanita Nielsen was a champion of the inner city and Victoria Street, Potts Point, fighting against the demolition of heritage houses and the eviction of residents. She was an active member of the ‘Save Victoria Street’, ‘Save Woolloomooloo’ and ‘Save the Rocks’ action groups. The mystery of her disappearance in 1975 has never been solved.
COMMUNITY SPIRIT HAS PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN OUR HERITAGE. COUNTLESS PLACES HAVE BEEN SAVED AND CARED FOR BY LOCAL COMMUNITIES. OTHERS BRING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO DISCOVER AND LEARN ABOUT THEIR PAST.

In the middle of The Rocks, Sydney, lies The Big Dig Site, a place that transformed the way the convict story of Sydney was told. Over months of digging, hundreds of community volunteers—some distant relatives of the convict residents—joined a team of archaeologists and historians to uncover this lost neighbourhood. Trowels and buckets in hand, the team unearthed the remains of post holes, laneways, cesspits, at least 46 buildings and three quarters of a million artefacts, re-connecting with their (sometimes literal) forebears along the way.

Other towns and villages have survived as intact landscapes. Hill End in the Central West and Braidwood in the state’s south are two such examples, as is the tin mining town of Tingha, in the Northern Tablelands, which boomed in the 1870s. A large Chinese community flocked to the area, at one time forming almost a quarter of the population. Wing Hing Long & Co Store is a reminder of that time.

At Rosewood, the community rallied in the 1980s to save the Coppabella Blacksmith Shop, a small 1870s smithy that had been the centre of a once thriving rural community. Whether at bygone smithies, cherished museums or the check-out of the local store, community is defined not only by the iconic and historic but also the humble, everyday spaces we frequent in our daily life.

Yet sometimes one-off, spontaneous events—the stuff of news headlines and history books—say more about a place than bricks and mortar could. Take the people of Albury, for instance, who rallied to great acclaim in the 1930s. During the MacRobertson International Centenary Air Race of 1934, 20 aeroplanes competed in a race from London to Melbourne to determine the viability of a European air route to Australia. The Dutch plane Uiver, the only one in the race carrying any passengers, got lost in a heavy storm and was in danger of crashing. After midnight, as the plane circled overhead, quick-thinking Albury residents rushed to help. Using Morse code, they contacted the plane, and then flashed the street lights to spell ‘ALBURY’ to the pilot. A posse of cars was assembled at the local racecourse and with all their headlights turned on the plane managed to see them and land safely. Community spirit in action.
In 1881, a Chinese merchant named Ah Ling established a general store at Tingha. This was taken over by Wing Hing Long in around 1895 and traded under different owners until 1997. Such was the regard for the store and its place in the community that when it closed it was purchased by the local council to open once more as a community-run shop museum.

The Wing Hing Long & Co Store, Tingha.
Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.

The Wing Hing Long & Co Store, c1900.
Image credit: University of New England and Regional Archives.

The Lowe family, who operated the store between 1914 and 1998.
Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.

WING HING LONG & CO STORE
23–24 OCTOBER 1934: MILLIONS AROUND THE WORLD LISTENED IN AS A LOCAL RADIO STATION DESCRIBED THE UNFOLDING DRAMA WHEN A DUTCH PASSENGER PLANE ON ROUTE TO MELBOURNE GOT CAUGHT IN A STORM AND LOST RADIO CONTACT. HEROIC AND QUICK-THINKING ACTION BY THE TOWN OF ALBURY, LED BY LOCAL BUTCHER AND MAYOR ALFRED WAUGH, WON THE HEARTS OF THE DUTCH NATION, AND WAUGH WAS INVESTED AS AN OFFICER IN THE ORDER OF ORANJE-NASSAU BY QUEEN WILHELMINA FOR HIS TROUBLES. COMMUNITY ACTION AT WORK.

The plane, landed safely but bogged in muddy ground and surrounded by the local community, 1934. Image credit: Albury City Collection.

This pencil and plate are just some of the artefacts from the Uiver Collection associated within the successful emergency landing of the Dutch plane in 1934. Image credit: Albury City Collection.

Local men pictured with one of the bogged wheels of the plane, 1934. Image credit: Albury City Collection.
The Big Dig site at 100 Cumberland Street, The Rocks, was excavated from 1994 and was one of the largest urban excavations in Australia, covering two city blocks. About 90 former individual inhabitants of the site were identified through historical and archaeological research. The site is now part of the Sydney Harbour YHA.

Click here for more information.
REMEMBER MEMORIES CONNECT PEOPLE TO PLACES AND TO THE PAST. THESE MEMORIES ARE EVOKED WHEN WE VISIT AN OLD BUILDING OR MEMORIAL OR A PLACE FROM OUR CHILDHOOD. MEMORIES BRING US CLOSER TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF OUR HISTORY AND TO THE MEANING OF OUR DAILY LIVES—WHETHER CHERISHED, BITTERSWEET OR TROUBLING IN NATURE.

One such place is the Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial Site: a confronting place, its story distressing. In a brutal and horrific few hours, entire Aboriginal families were tortured and murdered on a remote farm, the violence enough to shock the colonial administration into action. Seven of the perpetrators were hanged in Sydney. These are hard memories to face, but it is important to remember the frontier and the Wirrayaraay and Gamilaroi people who survived.

Suffering of a different kind is remembered in every NSW city, town and village with a memorial to the world wars. In Sydney, the ANZAC Memorial and the Cenotaph embody the state’s collective grief. The masterful design of these places expresses the profound sacrifice of the nation in the Great War. In contrast, Dangarsleigh War Memorial outside Armidale was erected by a father to honour and remember his fallen son—a very public expression of private anguish and loss.

On a similarly personal level, cemeteries evoke memories like perhaps no other public space. Colonial and nineteenth-century cemeteries were designed as places for a reflective ramble as much as a place to intern your dearly departed. Cemeteries abound with grand monuments, fine sculpture, statuary, and epitaphs recalling exemplary deeds, notable residents and virtuous locals—or even notorious ones such as the Grave of Ben Hall in Forbes.

Some cemeteries—like Rookwood Cemetery and Necropolis, with its city-sized population one million strong, or Waverley Cemetery with its sweeping vistas and clustered monuments—are places that people explore with interest and curiosity. Their carefully landscaped settings are havens for wildlife and remnant native plants and provide paradoxically soothing places to wander and contemplate.

The SHR is an invitation to discover and imagine the experiences and stories connected to some of the places that have shaped and defined our history. It marks what we have considered important through time and what we seek to keep alive in our collective memory. It shows us that as we change, so too does what we value and want to protect for the future.
Rookwood Necropolis is the elaborate pinnacle of Gothic Romance in Sydney, providing acceptable burials for all classes in a landscaped public space that fused recreation with moral contemplation.

DANGARSLEIGH WAR MEMORIAL

BUILT BY ALFRED HAROLDSTON PERROTT—WHOSE ELDEST SON AND NAMESAKE WAS KILLED AT PASCHENDALE RIDGE, BELGIUM, IN WORLD WAR I—THE MEMORIAL IS ADJACENT TO ALFRED’S OWN GRAVESITE AND THOSE OF OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS.

Click [here](#) and [here](#) for more information.

‘Lest we forget’ inscribed on the Dangarsleigh War Memorial.
Image credit: Office of Environment and Heritage.
### Message from the Chair of the Heritage Council

Roxy Theatre and Peter’s Greek Café Complex 01990
Bull Cave 01993

### Welcome from ACHAC

Bull Cave 01993
Queanbeyan Showground 01890
Ancient Aboriginal and Early Colonial Landscape 01863
Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls’ Training Home 01873
Kinchela Aboriginal Boys’ Training Home 01875

### Environments and Landscape

Bass Point Reserve 01896
Blue Mountains Walking tracks 00980
Bondi Beach Cultural Landscape 01786
Gondwana Rainforests of Australia 01002
High Conservation Value Old Growth Forest 01487
Willandra Lakes 01010
Lord Howe Island Group 00970
Jenolan Caves Reserve 01698
Cliefden Caves Area - Natural and Cultural Landscape 01996
Ancient Aboriginal and Early Colonial Landscape 01863
Colebee and Narraginy Land Grant 01877

### Build and Design

Sydney Opera House 01685
Brewarrina Aboriginal Fish Traps / Baiame’s Ngunnghu 01413
Hay Post Office 01441
Sydney Sandstones 00261
Chief Secretary’s Building 00766
Lands Department Building 00744
Department of Education Building 00726
Rose Seidler House 00261
Harry and Penelope Seidler House 01793
Woolley House 01514
Torin Building 01796
Everglades 01498
Sydney Harbour Bridge, approaches and viaducts (road and rail) 00781
Great Zig Zag Railway and Reserves 00542
Hyde Park 01871
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<tr>
<td>Convict Lumber Yard or Stockade Site</td>
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<td>Busby’s Bore</td>
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The State Heritage Register is an invitation to discover and imagine the experiences and stories connected to some of the places that have shaped and defined our history. It marks what we have considered important through time and what we seek to keep alive in our collective memory. It shows us that as we change, so too does what we value and want to protect for the future.