



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## A New Year's Eve welcome to Gadigal land

Australia's Indigenous cultures will be showcased on a global stage with a New Year's Eve Welcome to Country that will call for inclusion, representation and celebration.

Curated by First Nations artist Blak Douglas, Welcome to Country features animated projections, including the silhouettes of Gomeroi and Magani dancers, totems, and black and white portraits of distinguished local First Nations custodians – all beamed onto the Sydney Harbour Bridge pylons.

The ceremony officially welcomes everyone to Gadigal land and begins with a smoking ceremony on Sydney Harbour by the Tribal Warrior Association.

Starting with the sounds of bird-calls and yidakis, the ceremony is complemented by a specially created soundtrack with mainland and Torres Strait Islander music motifs, as part of the 9pm Welcome to Country fireworks.

Designed to evoke the spirit of a uniquely Australian gathering, the fireworks display will have an 'earth pastel colour theme' including sunflower shells and ochre coloured willow shells, as well as appearances of boomerangs, eels and whales.

"I've taken this immeasurably honourable opportunity to pay my respects – respect to the very First Nations peoples who've helped model my career journey," Blak Douglas said.

"Elders, music and performance mentors and local grassroots community members.

"We culminate with a contemporary extravaganza that shall be a phenomenal historic first."

Welcome to Country will also be part of the live ABC TV New Year's Eve broadcast and outdoor concert at the Sydney Opera House. The broadcast will also feature a live performance by hip hop artists Dobby and Barkaa and Indigenous drag Queen Nana Miss Koori, who will present a symbolic message stick to the Lord Mayor – a handcrafted rainbow coloured stick representing inclusion and change.

"Our Welcome to Country performance will be a specially created celebration to proudly acknowledge First Nations People," the Lord Mayor Clover Moore said.

"Blak Douglas has designed a beautiful ceremony to celebrate the custodians of the land on which we celebrate New Year's Eve, accompanied by fireworks, lighting and pylon projections set to a unique soundtrack.

“It will be a great honour to accept a message stick on behalf of Sydney as we share Indigenous heritage and culture with the world.”

For full event details visit [sydneynewyearseve.com](http://sydneynewyearseve.com)

For media inquiries or images, contact Elaine Kelly.

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For interviews with Lord Mayor Jack Begbie.

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For New Year’s event information, visit the [Sydney New Year’s Eve website](http://Sydney New Year’s Eve website).