



## Media Release

# A time to change the way we reflect and respect this Australia Day – 50-day countdown

[Link here](#) – Images and Footage – Include B-Roll and Images

Wednesday, 7 December 2022

Australia Day 2023 in NSW will inspire the nation with an inclusive and respectful program that brings people together through truth-telling and storytelling as we reflect on who we are as a nation.

The NSW Government and Australia Day Council of NSW are pleased to announce the Australia Day 2023 events program will return to its full scale with an abundance of inspiring Australian stories to share and to bring communities together in Sydney and across NSW.

All Australians are encouraged to reflect, respect and honour the history of our nation and mark the day in a way that is meaningful to them. It is a time to consider our highs and lows and use the day to continue to address historical tensions, and celebrate our state, our nation, its people, and our shared future.

**Premier Dominic Perrottet** said with so many NSW communities having faced challenges in the past year particularly through successive flood disasters, it is essential people can find hope, unite and enjoy Australia Day events.

“We recognise that Australia Day means different things to different people and, in particular for many First Nations people, it can be a challenging and distressing day.

“Our state is enriched by the cultures, knowledge and contributions of First Nations people who have occupied and cared for this country for more than 65,000 years. We acknowledge their experiences, centuries of resilience, and ongoing contributions as culture is passed down to the next generation.

Australia Day is an opportunity to have conversations about our history and continue to work towards reconciliation and healing. The Australia Day in NSW program will provide opportunities to reflect with optimism on our people and culture, our successful multicultural society and a bright future for NSW,” Mr Perrottet said.

In 50 days, the Australia Day events program will champion the vibrant and diverse state of NSW and reignite the glorious harbour as it takes centre stage for an inspirational national day from dawn to dusk.

As the sun rises on 26 January, a reflective moment will take place to honour the nation’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians as the Sydney Opera House sails are illuminated with First Nations’ artwork. The Dawn Reflection coincides with the Australian National Flag and Australian Aboriginal Flag being raised together on the Sydney Harbour Bridge in a symbol of unity, recognition and inclusion – a symbol that became permanent in July this year.

This will be followed by the **WugulOra Morning Ceremony**, marking its 20th anniversary in 2023. WugulOra, meaning ‘one mob’ is a moving event at Barangaroo that invites everyone to come together to embrace and recognise the importance of the world’s oldest continual living culture.

Throughout the day and into the evening, Sydney Harbour and the foreshore is in the spotlight with iconic harbour favourites, including the **Harbour Parade**, the **Ferrython**, the **Tall Ships Race**, **Salute to Australia** and **aerial Defence Force displays** plus plenty of family entertainment around the city.

As the sun sets, the dazzling **Australia Day Live** at the Sydney Opera House Forecourt and spanning Circular Quay will showcase our nation’s best musical stars combined with a simultaneously produced fireworks and maritime show. The Opera House sails will light up with inspirational images that encapsulate our nation. Free tickets for this event will be released in mid-January and Australia Day Live will be broadcast nationally on ABC TV and ABC iview.

The NSW Government and Australia Day Council of NSW continue to be committed to evolving the program in consultation with First Nations representatives who offer guidance with programming to ensure it is respectful and reflects modern Australia.

**Yvonne Weldon AM, Deputy Chair of Australia Day Council of NSW, and Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council** said Australia Day is a time to commemorate and honour the survival of First Nations culture and to use the day to bring the conversation to the forefront: “Let’s have truthful conversations with each other about our history, and in moving forward we can walk together. The 26<sup>th</sup> of January is a date that impacts First Nations people. It is a continual reminder of the pain and heartbreak of the changes that have taken place for all First Nations people. The date is about others having the recognition and ownership of the full flow-on effect of our history.

“I encourage everyone to attend the WugulOra Morning Ceremony which marks 20 years of this important event. We pay our respects to our ancestors and acknowledge a First Nations perspective of Australia Day. It’s a ceremony that challenges our thinking and brings together people from different backgrounds to listen to local Elders speak of the strength and resilience of the world’s oldest living culture,” said Ms Weldon.

**Australia Day Council of NSW Chair Andrew Parker** said the Australia Day NSW program takes great pride in being inclusive bringing diverse communities together to take part in festivities.

“It’s wonderful to have the Australia Day in NSW program back in full swing right across the state. It’s been a tough 12 months for many communities and Australia Day events provide the opportunity to come together. The day and the NSW program are designed to respect, reflect but also celebrate and find common ground and a sense of optimism.

“More than 110 Australia Day Ambassadors will travel to local council events for Australia Day festivities. Events on Australia Day 2023 encapsulate our diverse and multicultural landscape from the annual sheep shearing festival in Bombala and watermelon eating competition in Narromine to the wildlife breakfast in Blacktown,” said Mr Parker.

For the event program visit [australiaday.com.au](https://australiaday.com.au). More Australia Day 2023 event details, artist line-up, ticketing and attendance information will be updated in mid-January.

**MEDIA: DPC Media | [media@dpc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:media@dpc.nsw.gov.au) | 0436 684 129**