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## Vivid Sydney 2023 lights up its greatest festival yet

*2023 program announcement video content and images are available [here](#).  
Tickets through [vivid Sydney.com](https://vivid Sydney.com)*

Vivid Sydney has kicked off its 13<sup>th</sup> year with a spectacular opening night that included a powerful Welcome to Country, fireworks, beams across the harbour, drones and a very poignant Lighting of the Sails at the Sydney Opera House.

The Welcome to Country curated by Vivid Sydney's First Nations Advisor, Rhoda Roberts AO – First Light - incorporated a call-in country performance from artists representing many First Nations across different language groups including Yothu Yindi, Tenzin Choegyal, Chantel Cofie, and African drum and dance ensemble Wontanara.

This special ceremony marked the official opening of Vivid Sydney and featured a surprise drone show by Australian Traffic Network to count down the seconds to when the night sky above Sydney's glittering harbour, iconic landmarks and skyline were illuminated by explosions of technicolour brilliance. Simultaneously, the Sydney Opera House's sails were illuminated to feature the artworks of the late great Australian artist John Olsen.

Australia's largest event and the pioneer of light-based art and culture festivals in the Asia-Pacific will run for the next 23 days. The festival will feature more than 300 activations and events along with the world's most innovative artists, talented musicians and thought leaders as part of its 2023 line-up, whose theme this year, 'Vivid Sydney, Naturally,' is inspired by the master of all creators, Mother Nature.

Minister for Jobs and Tourism John Graham said Vivid Sydney was much more than a light festival and has expanded into a world class program shining a light on all cultural aspects of the city and this year we are proud to once again host world leading creative talent.

"Fourteen years ago Vivid Sydney launched for the first time. Vivid Sydney was a chance to be mesmerised by light shows, music and a cultural story about this place. This festival, now the largest in Australia, was ahead of its time. In that first year, an incredible 225,000 people came to see the show. Last year, 2.6 million people experienced Vivid Sydney," Mr Graham said.

"I am looking forward especially to Vivid Music – seeing our venues come alive with some incredible artists – it is one of the best programs to date. This year, we add Vivid Food- a smorgasbord of tasting and dining events building on one of Sydney's great strengths, its food and beverage culture. Above all – between the lights, the music, the ideas, the food – I hope you enjoy what is at the heart of this festival – Australia's biggest – a chance to celebrate together as a community."

Vivid Sydney Festival Director Gill Minervini said Vivid Sydney 2023 was the biggest program in the festival's history and the opening night was just a taste of what's to come over the 23 nights.





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"Vivid Sydney is the original festival of light, art and culture. This year is the 13<sup>th</sup> time it has been staged and tonight's spectacular opening is representative of a festival that has come of age and evolved to meet the needs of its audience in 2023," Ms Minervini said.

"We are truly proud of this year's program. We have raised the bar on the size and scale of the events and activated new parts of the city. Our line-up features more diverse talent across more industries. There are world-firsts and festival-firsts, and both free and ticketed events to make the festival accessible to everyone.

"I think tonight has shown why audiences should be prepared to be blown away by the calibre of talent this year and a program that has been inspired by the beauty and diversity of nature. You do not want to miss Vivid Sydney 2023!"

Staged across Sydney's city centre, Vivid Sydney festival locations include Circular Quay, the Sydney Opera House, The Rocks, Walsh Bay, Barangaroo, King Street Wharf, Darling Harbour, Darling Quarter, Darling Square, The Goods Line, Central Station, the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, Wynyard Tunnels, Carriageworks, Taronga Zoo and more.

For more information and tickets visit [vivid Sydney.com](https://vivid Sydney.com).

### **VIVID SYDNEY HIGHLIGHTS BY PILLAR**

#### **VIVID FOOD**

- Vivid Residence will be a two-week residency for New York chef **Daniel Humm** of three Michelin-starred Eleven Madison Park at **Matt Moran's Aria**. Humm will bring both his team and his visionary approach to cuisine to one of Sydney's most celebrated restaurants from 6–17 June.
- Vivid Chef Series welcomes more of the world's most exciting chefs as they join forces with some of Sydney's best restaurants, including **Kiln, Nel** and **Yellow**, to create exclusive and never-before-tasted menus.
- **Vivid Sydney Dinner** will return to The Ivy Ballroom, in partnership with hospitality group Merivale, for a fully immersive and unforgettable night fusing light, music, ideas and cuisine into a special feast for the senses featuring esteemed Sydney chefs **Ben Greeno** and **Danielle Alvarez**.
- **The Vivid Fire Kitchen** at The Cutaway at Barangaroo brings together the world's hottest dining concepts, curated drinks and entertainment for three weeks of flame-fuelled festivities.

#### **VIVID LIGHT**

When the sun sets, Sydney will transform with more than 57 lustrous light installations, 3D projection artworks and ticketed events for visitors to lose themselves in the hypnotising wonderland of light and colour.

- Vivid Sydney has partnered with **Cinewav**, enabling visitors to listen to the soundtracks to select projection artworks wherever they are on the Light Walk.





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- **Lighting of the Sails** at the Sydney Opera House will see the vibrant works of one of Australia's most famed artists, the late John Olsen, brought to life as a spectacular celebration of his illustrious artistic career of more than 60 years. Through images selected by curator Dr. Deborah Hart (Henry Dalrymple Head Curator, Australian Art, National Gallery of Australia) and animated by creative technologists **Curious, Life Enlivened (2023)** celebrates the propulsive power of Olsen's painterly brush to envision the natural world anew.
- In a world-first, Vivid Sydney will break new ground with the premiere of **Dark Spectrum** in Sydney's Wynyard Tunnels.
- For the very first time, the internationally acclaimed multi-sensory experience of light, colour and sound, **Lightscape**, is coming to The Royal Botanic Garden Sydney.
- The Vivid Sydney 2023 drone show **Written in the Stars** will feature more than 1,000 drones over six shows for what will be one of the biggest drone shows in the Southern Hemisphere to date.
- The waters at Cockle Bay in Darling Harbour will dance with the showstopping **Elemental**, featuring spectacular 80-metre water shooters, flames, projections and pyrotechnics for the largest water show in Australian history.

**VIVID IDEAS**

More than 60 intriguing talks and workshops, exploring community, authenticity, respect, love and lessons learnt from the natural world will be part of the program in 2023.

- Creator, writer and director of *The White Lotus* **Mike White** will join forces with star of the series **Jennifer Coolidge** for a deep dive into the power of storytelling, satire and friendship in **Mike White and Jennifer Coolidge in Conversation** This exhilarating and unmissable event – moderated by Benjamin Law – will uncover insightful and hilarious anecdotes from decades of working in Hollywood.
- British author, “master of her material” and “best living writer in this language” **Jeanette Winterson** joins Vivid Ideas for **LIFE AND MARS: The Future of Human** and will prod, provoke and challenge your ideas of nature, all while making you laugh as you fall in love with her unique and fascinating way of seeing the world.
- **NOCTURNE**, from Melbourne-based artists **one step at a time like this**, takes audiences on a one-of-a-kind-experience with an immersive, sonic journey through the hidden streets and laneways of The Rocks.
- The **Vivid Ideas Exchange** will feature more than 20 cutting-edge discussions and thought-provoking workshops at the world-leading technology precinct, Telstra Customer Insights Centre.

**VIVID MUSIC**

With a spotlight on First Nations artists, whatever your musical taste, the Vivid Music program will cater to it.

- **A Bend in the River: A Tribute to Archie Roach AC** will celebrate the legacy of the late **Archie Roach AC**. Sydney Town Hall will be transformed in a night of tribute performances featuring long-time friends, collaborators and his contemporaries, including **Paul Kelly, Emma Donovan, Dan**





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**Sultan, Kutcha Edwards, Sally Dastey, Becca Hatch, Dobby, Deline Briscoe, Radical Son, Tenzin Choegyial and Tamala Shelton**, with appearances from members of Archie's family.

- On Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights of the festival, Tumbalong Park in Darling Harbour will become the Vivid Sydney go-to for free and eclectic contemporary music right in the heart of the Light Walk for **Tumbalong Nights**. The 12-night line-up features artists from Africa to Arnhem Land, including **Yothu Yindi, Ziggy Ramo, Dan Sultan, Esa's Afro Synth Band with Kamazu and Mim Suleiman, Emma Donovan**, cult Japanese musician **Cornelius** and more, plus DJs and kids programming on Saturday nights all free of charge.
- Drag extraordinaire and beloved star of stage and screen **Trevor Ashley** will transform Mary's Underground into an intimate cabaret lounge for the **Vivid Sydney Supper Club** featuring live performances from headliners **Christine Anu, Rhys Nicholson, David Campbell** and more each Friday and Saturday from 9pm to 1am during the festival.
- Diverse and multi-sensory experiences at **Carriageworks**, with an electrifying line-up including South African artist **Desire Marea, Floodlights, Molchat Doma, SOFT CENTRE** and many more.
- The Vivid LIVE at Sydney Opera House line-up will feature more than 40 Australian and international artists. **José González, Yaeji, Hiatus Kaiyote and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Cat Power**, and many more will take to the stages of the world-famous building in a program curated by Sydney Opera House's Head of Contemporary Music **Ben Marshall**.

#### VIVID SYDNEY PARTNERS

Vivid Sydney thanks its Partners for their support of Vivid Sydney 2023.

Kia returns as major partner for a second year, presenting two visually immersive activations on the Vivid Sydney Light Walk – [Kia Air](#) and [Kia Helix](#). Designed to emulate the natural beauty of the Australian landscape, the installations will showcase the brand's new halo EV range.

Australian Traffic Network (ATN) will partner with Vivid Sydney for the first time to deliver the **Written in the Stars** drone shows, with six shows planned to light up the sky during the festival.

Sony Music presents two ticketed immersive light events, **Dark Spectrum**, at the Wynyard Tunnels with Mandylights and Culture Creative, and **Lightscape** at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, in collaboration with Culture Creative.

LG will partner with Vivid Sydney for the first time in the heart of Circular Quay for **MoodUP by LG**, providing festivalgoers with a personalised augmented reality-guided map through the Light Walk based entirely on their mood.

Supporting Partners include City of Sydney, Commonwealth Bank, Crown Sydney, and Nova 96.9.

Collaborators include Cinewav, Event Engineering, Mandylights, Technical Direction Company and Kennards Hire.

The Local Business Program Partner is Experience Oz Australia.





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WWF Australia has been selected as Vivid Sydney 2023's official charity partner.

For more information and to keep updated about the program, go to [vividssydney.com](https://vividssydney.com).

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

Visit the Vivid Sydney News Room to download the full 2023 Vivid Sydney Lights On content package including a VNR with grabs from Minister for Jobs and Tourism John Graham, Vivid Sydney Festival Director Gill Minervini and Vivid Sydney artists, as well as high-res imagery and broadcast-quality b-roll video footage: [www.vividssydney.com/news-room](https://www.vividssydney.com/news-room).

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**ABOUT VIVID SYDNEY**

Vivid Sydney is Australia's largest festival celebrating creativity, innovation and technology, and transforms Sydney into a kaleidoscope of colour and events for 23 nights. Staged for its 13<sup>th</sup> edition in 2023, Vivid Sydney will bring together mesmerising displays from the world's brightest light artists, exhilarating live music performances, deep-dive discussions with thought leaders, and innovative experiences from food creatives. Vivid Sydney is owned, managed and produced by Destination NSW, the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency.

