

MEDIA RELEASE

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CANBERRA SHOWCASES AUSTRALIA'S RICH INDIGENOUS HISTORY YEAR-ROUND, AND PREPARES FOR RECONCILIATION WEEK AND THE NATION'S FIRST RECONCILIATION DAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY

As Canberra prepares for Australia's first Reconciliation Day public holiday on 28 May 2018, Canberra's attractions showcase their rich and cultural indigenous offerings year-round – some of which are among the largest collections of Australian Indigenous art, history and culture in the world.

While Canberrans will recognise the day itself with *Reconciliation in the Park* events, visitors to the Canberra region can learn, share and participate in indigenous experiences most days of the year.

According to the National Museum of Australia's Senior Curator (Indigenous) Margo Neale, the Australian capital's attractions highlight the rich and diverse history through its collections.

"Canberra is fortunate to be able to offer visitors a whole range of attractions that tell the story of Indigenous Australia, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia, and history, story, customs and our amazing contribution to the Australian heritage," said Ms. Neale.

"The National Museum of Australia shows and tells 60,000 plus years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, in fact a continuous culture on this continent for that period of time. And we do it from artefact to art, from protocols to politics. We do it through every kind of object and story that is conceivable.

"We have a very powerful presence and a credible history in engaging with Indigenous Australians. Over a third of our exhibition spaces are devoted to Indigenous," Ms. Neale continued.

The National Gallery of Australia's Head of Programs and Education Katie Russell revealed more about the institutions' commitment to Indigenous culture.

"Canberra's Indigenous offering is an incredibly rich one. With over 7,500 Indigenous works, the National Gallery of Australia holds the most comprehensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection in the world," said Ms. Russell.

"People come from far and wide to experience and connect with Country through the diverse stories that lie behind every painting, artefact and sculpture," Ms Russell continued.

"With the launch of the Indigenous Cultural Tours on Reconciliation Day, that connection is deepened. We even take visitors on a bush tucker experience through our Sculpture Garden, explaining the uses of our native flora and fauna in food and medicine, but also as symbols in Indigenous art."

Highlights of Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences available year-round include:

The National Gallery of Australia

The [National Gallery of Australia](#) (NGA) is launching a new *Indigenous Cultural Tour* on Reconciliation Day. The 90-minute experience will take visitors on a journey through the picturesque gardens of the

NGA with a local Aboriginal tour guide, sharing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through welcome to country, bush tucker foraging, smoking ceremony, didgeridoo performance, and art and craft participatory practice.

Visitors to Canberra can also view the world's largest [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art collection](#) at the NGA, including comprehensive collections of works by many of the most significant indigenous artists in the world.

The National Museum of Australia

The [National Museum of Australia](#) showcases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history on a permanent basis through the [First Australians: Gallery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#) gallery, the largest gallery at the Museum.

The Museum has also recently launched a *First Australians Indigenous Tour*, where visitors can take a guided journey through the First Australians gallery and be welcomed by the local Ngunawal, Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples. Using digital interactives and sensory displays, visitors will hear stories of the local landscape and appreciate the diversity of communities and the enduring attachments to the country. The tour is run daily at 3pm year-round.

The Museum of Australian Democracy

The [Museum of Australian Democracy](#) features a permanent exhibition launched in 2017 to mark the anniversary of the 1967 referendum. The [Yes: The Ongoing Story of the 1967 Referendum](#) exhibition provides context around the significance of the referendum throughout history, and what it means to Australians today.

Dharwra Aboriginal Cultural Tours

To experience indigenous culture and history in the outdoors, [Dharwra Aboriginal Cultural Tours](#) run a range of tours including two-hour tours to Mount Majura, Mount Taylor, Black Mountain or Yass, as well as half day tours of the Canberra region and seasonal (September to March) full day tours of Flea Creek and Namadgi National Park. Highlights include Aboriginal interpretation of surrounding landscape, bush food, artefacts of traditional tools and native wildlife.

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

Nature lovers and culture enthusiasts alike will rejoice as they explore Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve's various [walking trails](#) and connect to country on an [Aboriginal Ranger guided activity](#), discovering native plants and fauna and Aboriginal culture and heritage.

Reconciliation in the Park, inaugural Reconciliation Day event

To mark Canberra's historic first Reconciliation Day public holiday and in addition to the above year-round experiences, an inaugural event [Reconciliation in the Park](#) will be held from 10am until 2pm in Glebe Park in Canberra on Monday 28 May 2018. For more information on the free community event see events.act.gov.au/reconciliationday

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