



## Ben Franklin

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Minister for the Arts

Minister for Regional Youth

### MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 5 August 2022

## RECORD ATTENDANCE AT NSW ART AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The state's cultural institutions have enjoyed record attendances as families and young people take up the opportunity of the NSW Government's \$5.9 million commitment to free admission to museums and galleries.

The NSW Government is helping address rising cost of living pressures by extending free entry to Australian Museum and Sydney Living Museum sites for the next 12 months as part of the 2022-23 Budget.

During the July school holidays, hundreds of thousands of families and young people flocked to State cultural institutions for free, immersing themselves in what the sites had to offer.

State cultural institutions data released by the NSW Government shows unprecedented visitation over the two-week holiday period including:

- 100,000 people attending the Australian Museum
- 40,000 children and their families attending the Art Gallery of New South Wales
- 49,100 people attending the Powerhouse Museum
- 21,000 people attending the State Library

Minister for the Arts Ben Franklin said he is proud the NSW Government was alleviating cost of living pressures for families during the school holidays.

"The NSW Government champions and invests in creative experiences that enrich people's lives, supporting a range of activities across the arts, museums and library sector – from theatre, music, reading and dance, to digital arts and screen programs," Mr Franklin said.

"As cost of living pressures rise across the country, the NSW Government is committed to ensuring free or subsidised access to arts and cultural experiences for families to enjoy while delivering an economic dividend to neighbouring businesses.

"These results are significant and immediate, demonstrating the communities' enthusiastic support for this important cost of living initiative."

Compared with the same period in 2019, Sydney Living Museum's general admissions are up by 72 per cent, increasing by over 11,000 visitors these July school holidays.

Australian Museum Director and CEO Kim McKay AO said the record visitation the Australian Museum experienced during the July school holidays can be attributed to a combination of free general entry and blockbuster exhibitions.

"I'm delighted that the NSW Government's recent budget announcement to extend free general entry at the Australian Museum has seen incredible visitation numbers over the recent July school holidays," Ms McKay said.

"Thanks to the support of the NSW Government, the Australian Museum has maxed out floor space even without international tourists."

Western Sydney resident Roy Halabi said having free admission to museums and galleries had encouraged him to bring his family to discover what the sites had to offer.

"Museums and galleries are inspirational and motivational for our children and many families we know; keeping them accessible and free will ensure they are regularly visited for years to come," Mr Halabi said.

"We are a family of six and visiting museums and galleries has been a highlight for us and our children this school holidays."

*\*\*\* Spokespeople available to talk to media upon request.*

**MEDIA: Ben Ingram | 0499 565 629**