

## MEDIA RELEASE

18 April 2023

### HISTORY, HERITAGE AND HEADSTONES - DISCOVER CEMETERIES AT 2023 HERITAGE FESTIVAL

The rich local history of a number of significant Crown cemeteries will be proudly on display until 26 May, as part of the 2023 Australian Heritage Festival in NSW, with a range of events and displays showcasing and celebrating this year's theme of Shared Stories.

Cemeteries participating in this year's Festival include: Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park at Matraville, Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery, Macquarie Park Cemetery, Rookwood General Cemetery and Woronora Memorial Park at Sutherland.

Each cemetery will host a range of events and activities as part of the festival, including audio, guided and/or self-guided walking tours, exhibitions, displays and video documentaries.

**Woronora Memorial Park**, in partnership with Sutherland Shire Citizens' Heritage Festival, is hosting the [Heritage Festival Discovery Day](#) on Saturday, 22 April, from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm.

All are welcome to this free community event to step back in time and explore the park's newly renovated Art-Deco chapel, old crematorium and historical artefacts, with hourly bus tours, self-guided walks, original historic photographs and artifacts. Graves of famous locals and notables will be marked with QR codes, for all to discover the varied history of the person who is buried.

At the **Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park** at Matraville, local historians from Cape Banks Family History Society reveal the fascinating history of Pioneer Park located within the grounds of the cemetery, which boasts headstones transported from the early burial grounds of two of Sydney's oldest cemeteries - Town Hall Cemetery and the Sydney Burial Ground, also known as the Devonshire Street Cemetery.

There is much to learn about the stories behind these historic graves and the people that they belonged to, with guided walking tours from 10.00am on 4, 11 and 18 May, from the cemetery's Captain Cook Memorial statue, located within Pioneer Park, [bookings recommended](#).

The final resting place of many accomplished individuals in Australian history, **Macquarie Park Cemetery**, in Sydney's North-West will hold guided tours from the on-site cafe, with local historian, Tom Sweeney from 10.00am on 28 April, 5, 11 and 18 May. [Bookings are recommended through Eventbrite](#).

The cemetery will also display a series of videos, featuring footage of recorded interviews and historical photos of some of the notables buried at the cemetery, including Johnny O'Keefe, Kathleen Butler, Lottie Lyell and Sir John Kerr.

Visitors to the largest and one of the oldest cemeteries in NSW, **Rookwood General Cemetery**, will journey back 150 years with a Rookwood Cemetery walking tour on 28 April and 26 May, discovering the cemetery's intriguing history and visiting significant areas and notable graves - [bookings recommended](#).

**Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery** is one of the oldest and largest remaining cemeteries on Sydney's North Shore, dating from 1868. Friends of Gore Hill recently held a guided [Heritage Week tour](#), unearthing and sharing stories from this heritage cemetery.

Ms Lee Shearer, Administrator, OneCrown Group of Cemeteries, said participating in one of largest annual community-driven heritage festivals, affords everyone a rare insight into the unique heritage of cemeteries.

"Cemeteries are incredible spaces to experience the history of a local community," Ms Shearer said.

"I encourage everyone to visit our cemeteries during this year's Heritage Festival, to learn about the history and stories of those who lived and died in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. How their stories shape Sydney's past, present and future."

Ends

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