

## Prized Australian history heads to western NSW

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Rare Indigenous word lists, a convict letter and the world's smallest English dictionary are among the extraordinary items from the State Library's world-renowned collection heading to primary schools in western NSW from 25 to 27 May 2015.

According to NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive Alex Byrne, this will be the first time these prized Australian historical items from the State Library's collection will be shown in western NSW as part of the Library's valuable *FAR Out! Treasures to the Bush* initiative.

"Over the past two years 243 schools have enjoyed the Library's popular *FAR Out!* regional outreach program, and I'm thrilled primary students from seven more schools will get to experience amazing items related to some of the earliest recorded experiences of our continent and nation," said Dr Byrne.

Over 410 students and teachers will be among the first in their region to view the actual handwritten letters of Mary Reibey, extraordinary Indigenous artwork and Indigenous word lists from the local area.

The tour to Narromine, Trangie, Warren and Gilgandra in western NSW will be the State Library's 24th *FAR Out!* tour. This is just one of the unique learning services the Library offers students and teachers, with extensive online services and learning resources available to all on the Library's website at <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning>

"We're adding more and more riches to our website every day, and providing remote access to our extensive heritage material through digitisation, online resources and video conferencing, but actually seeing these original and unique historic items has a special appeal!" said Dr Byrne.

"The State Library is committed to giving regional and remote communities of NSW the opportunity to experience some of the original documents of our nation, and hopefully inspire their interest in Australian history."

From 25 to 27 May 2015, the State Library's Learning team will run fun and interactive activities with students and teachers around a selection of landmark Australian treasures including:

- a letter written from Sydney in 1792 by convict Mary Reibey who became Australia's first business woman;
- a painting of European women by Indigenous artist Johnny Kangatong, from 1855;
- a local Indigenous word list; and
- the smallest English dictionary in the world, published in 1883 and housed in a metal locket with an inbuilt magnifying glass

# Media Release



“The State Library is the home of Australia's history and taking artefacts and manuscripts to schools in rural and regional NSW allows students and teachers to connect with our past in a very real way,” said Megan Perry, State Library Manager of Learning.

The State Library holds significant materials relating to the history of Indigenous Australian people and communities, including collections related to Indigenous languages.

According to Kirsten Thorpe, the State Library's Indigenous Services Manager, the *FAR Out!* tour will give students the chance to experience historical artefacts relating to Indigenous culture first hand.

“This is a great opportunity for all students to connect to our shared history and to gain an understanding of the rich collections relating to Indigenous people held at the Library,” said Ms Thorpe.

The State Library has developed learning resources for the NSW Syllabus for the Australian curriculum. Some of the historic items we're taking to western NSW will be part of our contribution to that national initiative, demonstrating the significance of the Library to understanding our national story,” said Ms Perry.

For more information about *FAR Out! Treasures to the Bush*, please contact Learning Services, State Library of NSW, on (02) 9273 1778 or [learning.library@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:learning.library@sl.nsw.gov.au).

**For interviews and publicity images, please contact:**

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