

Media Release



\$4.2 million revitalisation of the State Library of NSW

30/7/2012

The newly completed \$4.2 million transformation of the State Library of NSW Macquarie Street building has helped to cement the Library's place among the world's best, Minister for the Arts, George Souris, announced at the official launch event today.

"The major revitalisation project, funded by the NSW Government, has produced an open and welcoming library and a contemporary 21st century cultural destination for the people of NSW and local and overseas visitors," Minister Souris said.

"The State Library of NSW offers vibrant public spaces, and remains a vital resource for our education and research communities, the creative industries, students, lifelong learners, family historians, business people and tourists.

"The newly completed renovations ensure the Library can meet the needs of library clients and visitors and the ever-changing demands in information service delivery, both in the physical and online environment."

The major building project included the May 2011 launch by Minister Souris of the Library's new Glasshouse Learning Space, a dynamic centre where the latest technologies are used to connect NSW students and teachers with the State Library' premier \$2.2 billion cultural collection.

The second phase saw the opening of a new look State Reference Library in September 2011, with dedicated study rooms, more informal work spaces and more computers. The modern layout includes separate areas for HSC students, Family History and the Legal Information Access Centre.

According to NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive, Alex Byrne: "A real triumph of this second phase is the Verandah, a popular public 'lounge' offering free express internet and casual seating that takes on different configurations each day, depending on how our clients want to use the space," said Dr Byrne.

"The success of the Verandah has exposed a real community need for more public areas in Sydney, and we're thrilled that the freshly renovated Macquarie Street foyer, along with our new cafe and book shop, offers welcoming spaces to anyone who walks through our doors. "It's wonderful to see more and more new faces in these spaces every day."

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A highlight of the Library's Macquarie Street foyer is a stunning art installation by State Library designers Jemima Woo and Dominic Hon which offers a fresh perspective on the intriguing world of the printed word and provides a vehicle to showcase current exhibitions.

The Metcalfe Auditorium has also been transformed with raked seating and a modern public entrance from the State Library concourse.

The completion of the State Library's major renovations comes soon after the NSW Government's further commitment of \$32.6 million to the Library over the next four years to support a major digitisation program and to upgrade its digital infrastructure.

"With NSW Government support, the State Library will progressively generate 12 million digitised images or page views over the next decade, substantially increasing community access to the Library's unique collection, and providing enormous benefits to regional areas and the creative industries in particular," Mr Souris said.

According to Dr Byrne: "We have just completed the physical makeover of the Library's Macquarie Wing and this welcome new funding from the NSW Government will substantially contribute to a much-needed digital makeover."

"In addition to the digitisation, we will be upgrading our IT infrastructure to improve discoverability on our website and across the Internet. Advanced features will enable schools, universities, family historians and many others to better access and use our wonderful materials," Dr Byrne said.

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