

New photographic displays celebrate families of Aboriginal nations living in NSW

6/6/2016

A selection of powerful black and white portraits captured in a makeshift outdoor studio in country NSW by Michael Riley, one of Australia's leading Indigenous artists, are now on display at the State Library of NSW.

A Common Place: Portraits of Moree Murries 1990 features 15 portraits of friends, family and community members who opted to be photographed by the late artist when he returned to his home town of Moree in 1990.

Riley used a plain backdrop set up against a tree where people from two missions would sit and pose however they wanted. He has said: "It's important because it was a record of a community at that time, and a few of those people have died now, passed away."

According to NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive, Alex Byrne, "The State Library is passionate about documenting the voices, stories and experiences of Indigenous peoples and communities of NSW for current and future generations, and I'm thrilled these dramatic portraits by Michael Riley are now part of the Library's rich collections."

"We have also just acquired an important series of images and oral histories of Aboriginal families living in South-West Sydney by award-winning photographer Jagath Dheerasekara, which will be shared as part of a new display," says Dr Byrne.

Opening on 11 June, *Family Keeps Us Going* features 20 deeply personal family portraits captured by Dheerasekara in 2014/15, reflecting the diversity of families and their connections to Country across Australia.

Family Keeps Us Going is a long-term collaborative project between storytellers from families of Aboriginal nations from Sydney South West and Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation's Waranwarin Child and Family Centre. This project used photography and oral histories to express belonging, identity, memory, culture and land.

A Common Place: Portraits of Moree Murries 1990 and *Family Keeps Us Going* are on display at the State Library of NSW until 28 August 2016.

PLEASE NOTE: The State Library will launch its new Indigenous Collecting Strategy during NAIDOC Week (3 – 10 July) on Wednesday 6 July 2016. For more information, email info.koori@sl.nsw.gov.au

For more information, interviews and images, please contact:

Vanessa Bond, Media & Communications Manager, State Library of NSW
(02) 9273 1566, 0411 259 898, vanessa.bond@sl.nsw.gov.au