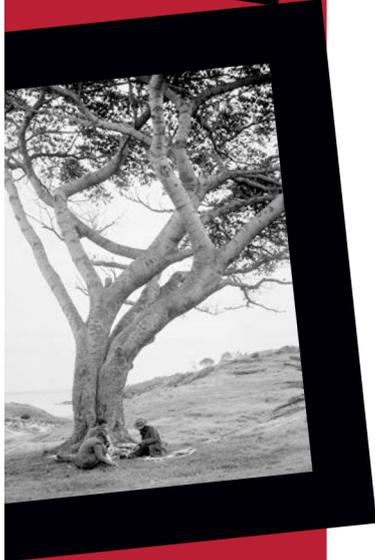


SYDNEY
ELDERS

NEW
ONLINE
EXHIBITION



Media Release



“Sydney’s most important story” revealed for all the world to see

9/08/2021

To mark World Indigenous Peoples Day today [**Monday 9 August**], “Sydney’s most important story” will be released to the world for the first time when the State Library of NSW launches an evocative online version of Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi artist Jonathan Jones’ celebrated project, *Sydney Elders*.

“Each Elder represents different clans that have survived in Sydney,” says Jonathan. “Together, they tell Sydney’s most important story, its Aboriginal story, and how they have continued the legacy of their ancestors by actively contributing to and creating Sydney.”

Based on one of the Library’s most popular exhibitions, *Sydney Elders: Continuing Aboriginal Stories*, the new online edition tells a personal story of Aboriginal Sydney through four of its traditional owners — Uncle Dennis Foley, Aunty Esme Timbery, Uncle Charles ‘Chicka’ Madden and Aunty Sandra Lee.

Online visitors to the site will meet:

Uncle Charles ‘Chicka’ Madden, from Gadigal country, spent most of his life in the construction industry, working on landmark projects such as Qantas House, Gladesville Bridge, the Eastern Suburbs Railway and Carriageworks. He is an active member of the Redfern community and an artist.

Aunty Esme Timbery is a celebrated Bidjigal and Dharawal artist and Elder from the Aboriginal community of La Perouse. Like her ancestors, she is a renowned shellwork artist whose work has been widely collected.

Uncle Dennis Foley, a Gai-mariagal man from northern Sydney, has a distinguished career as an educator, researcher and author, particularly in the areas of Indigenous culture, enterprise and entrepreneurship. His book *Repossession of Our Spirit* reflects on the traditional owners of his country, northern Sydney.

Aunty Sandra Lee, a Dharug Elder from Blacktown, is an active member of the Western Sydney Aboriginal community who is constantly pushing for recognition of Dharug people.

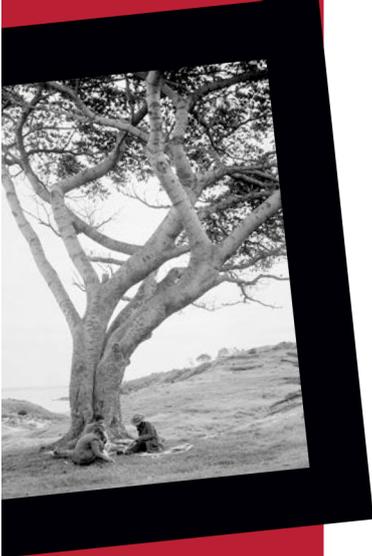
Visitors are immersed in the stories of these four Elders and encouraged to contemplate the complex histories of the city.

Sydney Elders features a series of filmed conversations with the four elders, giving visitors the feeling of sitting down and having a yarn with them. The online exhibition also has additional digital content like photos and extended captions to give audiences a rich and layered experience.

According to the State Library’s Manager of Indigenous Engagement Damien Webb: “Translating Jonathan Jones’ intimate and powerful installation to an online format has been a wonderful challenge, and the online experience recreates that sense of intimacy very effectively — from the horizontal scrolling to the beautiful, embedded sounds of different parts of the city.”

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“At an unprecedented time when so many people are forcibly disconnected from the outside world and nature, I hope people are able to better relate to the histories of our First Nations peoples who spent so long under government control and away from their families,” says Mr Webb.

Visit *Sydney Elders: Continuing Aboriginal Stories*: sydneyelders.sl.nsw.gov.au

For more information, interviews and publicity images, please contact:

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