

Media Release



Artist Wendy Sharpe to record landmark transformation of Sydney's historic Mitchell building

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Award-winning Australian artist Wendy Sharpe is set to record the \$15 million transformation of the State Library of NSW's historic Mitchell Building – the first major building work in over 50 years.

Extensive new galleries and a learning centre will be created in the eastern wing of the Mitchell building, made possible through the strong support of Michael Crouch AC and John B Fairfax AO respectively. Work is already underway following Heritage Council and City of Sydney approval.

NSW State Librarian, Dr John Vallance said "I am delighted to announce that one of Australia's best-loved artists will embark on a long-term residency with us. It couldn't come at a better time as we turn the eastern wing of the Mitchell Building – previously not open to the public – into beautiful new galleries and informal spaces for the enjoyment of the hundreds of thousands of people who visit us every year."

Wendy Sharpe is excited to be among only a handful of artists to date to be given exclusive back-of-house access to the 107 year-old Mitchell Building, which has not undergone any major work since 1964.

"The State Library has always been a place close to my heart," said Wendy. "I used to come here with my father historian Alan Sharpe while he was researching various historic texts and photographs. I have also spent time here researching the endlessly fascinating collection for various projects," Wendy said.

She plans to draw and paint – mostly in gouache (opaque watercolour) – a range of subjects and views from the rooftop right down to the floors below street level, depicting the major changes that are taking place.

The new John B Fairfax Learning Centre and the Michael Crouch Galleries – to be located on the ground floor and level 1, respectively, of the Mitchell building will be opened in mid-2018.

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Plans in hand for further development include a rooftop restaurant and an underground auditorium.

The Library has been working closely with the Heritage Council of NSW and expert heritage consultants to ensure the Mitchell building's heritage features are preserved and restored.

Dr Vallance was keen to stress that current facilities for readers in the Mitchell Building would also be improved.

Wendy Sharpe is available for interviews.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact:

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