

19 October 2026



Past, present and future: MoAD marks a century of democracy at Old Parliament House

MoAD, the Museum of Australian Democracy will mark the Centenary of Old Parliament House in 2027, with a year-long program of events and activities. Featuring exhibitions, community celebrations, digital and educational initiatives as well as a Special Sitting of Federal Parliament, the Centenary will invite all Australians to reflect on our shared history. It will celebrate the values that underpin our democracy while encouraging conversations about the future of civic participation and democracy in Australia.

Chair of the Board at Old Parliament House, and former Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery President, Barrie Cassidy, says the Centenary is a moment to reflect on the building's enduring role in Australia's democratic story, and its continued importance as MoAD.

"Old Parliament House is one of the most significant sites in Australia's political life. For more than six decades, it was at the centre of national decision-making, debate and reform." Mr Cassidy says.

“The Centenary is an opportunity to look back at the events that shaped the nation within these walls and consider the kind of democracy we want for our future.”

To mark this occasion, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced a Special Sitting of Federal Parliament would take place at Old Parliament House in April, bringing current parliamentarians together in the historic chambers, recognising the building’s legacy as the home of the Federal Parliament from 1927 to 1988.

As part of the Centenary program, MoAD will host a community day on 9 May 2027, marking 100 years to the day of the building’s opening. Visitors from across the country are invited to take part in this one-day festival, which focuses on participation, community and connection, and will include free activities and events.

In 2027, MoAD will also open two major, permanent exhibitions:

- ***Feeding the House – main kitchen preservation and exhibition***, opening the original main kitchen spaces to the public for the first time.
- ***Exhibition on First Nations stories and democracy.***

In addition, a special display in King’s Hall will commemorate the opening day in 1927 and will include stories such as the formal opening of parliament by the Duke and Duchess of York and the Sovereign Walk of Wiradjuri Elders Nangar (Jimmy Clements) and Ooloogan (George John Noble), who walked more than 150 kilometres from near Tumut NSW as an act of sovereignty.

The OPH Board has established a First Nations Advisory Committee to help shape the Centenary program and provide guidance on sharing First Nations stories.

MoAD Director Stephanie Bull said the Centenary program aims to encourage audiences to explore diverse perspectives, deepen their connection to the building, and reflect on their own experiences of democracy in Australia.

“As the home of the Museum of Australian Democracy, Old Parliament House creates space for conversation, connection and belonging, and to help people see themselves and their voices as part of Australia’s ongoing democratic story,” Ms Bull says.

“We’re using this milestone to reflect on the different stories connected to Old Parliament House, and welcome more people through the doors, encouraging them to build community and help shape the future of our democracy.”

The Centenary will be supported through a fundraising campaign, raising funds to support MoAD’s *Democracy in a Box* education program and support delivery of the *Feeding the House* main kitchen preservation and exhibition. These initiatives aim to ensure future generations of Australians can engage with and understand the systems, stories and responsibilities that underpin democratic life.

The Centenary program of events and initiatives is made possible with funding from the Australian Government, including an additional \$3 million allocated in the Federal Budget, which will support the year-long program of events.

Further details about the Special Sitting, community day and Centenary program will be announced closer to the events.

KEY INFO

Old Parliament House Centenary Program

Special Sitting and program marking 100 years of Old Parliament House

Community Day:

9 May 2027

Location:

Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) at Old Parliament House

Centenary exhibitions and activities:

- *Many Hands: the making of Old Parliament House* exhibition – opening late 2026
- *1927 Opening Day* display – opening in April 2027
- *Feeding the House* exhibition – opening in May 2027
- *Exhibition on First Nations stories and democracy* – opening second half 2027
- *Building illuminations projected onto OPH* – May 2027
- *Social media campaign focusing on enhancing public understanding of Australia's democratic history and encouraging participation and community connection* – second half 2027
- *Video interviews with people who were present at the opening day as children in 1927*
- *MoAD will deliver and dedicate a memorial to honour Flying Officer Francis Ewen, a New Zealander serving with the Royal Australian Air Force, who tragically lost his life on 9 May 1927 when his aircraft crashed near Old Parliament House as he was taking part in a fly-past during the military review.*

Centenary Appeal:

Supporting *Democracy in a Box* and the *Main Kitchen* exhibition

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Images

Available on request

Image caption: The Museum of Australian Democracy will mark the Centenary of Old Parliament House in 2027.