

MEDIA RELEASE: 17 APRIL 2026

## DEMOCRACY COMES TO LIFE AT NSW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

**More than 2,200 people filled NSW Parliament House with wonder and curiosity today, as families from across the state took part in the Festival of Democracy.**

*[Images: Credit Mark Bond](#)*

The free, all-day event transformed Australia's oldest parliament into a lively space for learning, play and participation during the autumn school holidays.

Families stepped back in time with Queen Eleanor, King John and the barons in an interactive reenactment of the signing of the Magna Carta, explored the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council chambers, took part in creative workshops, learned how voting works and had their say in a mock committee role play.

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Greg Piper MP, said the event showed the value of opening the Parliament of NSW to families in an engaging way.

"The Festival of Democracy is a powerful way for children to experience Parliament; through hands-on learning that is engaging, accessible and fun," Mr Piper said.

The President of the Legislative Council, the Hon. Ben Franklin MLC, said the festival helped young people connect with democratic principles in a meaningful setting.

"By bringing families into NSW Parliament House, the Festival of Democracy helps young people understand the history, values and processes that underpin our democratic system," Mr Franklin said.

Among the crowd were three Year 7 students from Baulkham Hills, long-time friends now attending high school together, who travelled into the city on the metro to take part in the free school holiday event.

"It was really funny watching the play about the Magna Carta, but at the same time gave me knowledge about the importance of giving equal rights to everyone," Miraya Achwal said.

Her mother, Radhika Achwal, who has lived in Sydney for 25 years but had never previously visited Parliament House, said the experience exceeded expectations.

"I'm really glad to be here – it's beautiful. The experience has been great and everything is really well organised and set up," Ms Achwal said. "I really liked the agenda, especially the mock hearings and learning about the Magna Carta. The event is really well done."

The Festival of Democracy is part of the Parliament of NSW's ongoing commitment to education, civic engagement and community access, encouraging young people to connect with democracy.

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