



DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

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DISCOVER SYDNEY'S SECRET HISTORY THIS SOLSTICE

Visitors to NSW Parliament House can discover the building's rich convict-era history as part of the NSW Parliament's 'House Talks' series this June.

President of the NSW Legislative Council Matthew Mason-Cox said the event, in association with Destination NSW's new 'Sydney Solstice' winter initiative, is the perfect opportunity for people to learn about the historic landmark's previous life as a surgeons' quarters, part of Sydney's first hospital.

"The building was one of Governor Lachlan Macquarie's first construction projects on arrival in the colony," said Mr Mason-Cox.

"This talk provides a fascinating glimpse into life back then and how the hospital eventually became what is today NSW Parliament House."

Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly Jonathan O'Dea said the talk lends a historical note to the Sydney Solstice program celebrating the city's world-class food, music, entertainment, arts and culture.

In a nod to the evening's 'rum hospital' theme, attendees will enjoy 19th-century-inspired delicacies and a nip of hot buttered rum to finish.

"Many people may not know this beautiful building had a completely different past, let alone that the 19th Century rum trade played a pivotal role in its construction," Mr O'Dea said.

"What better way to delve into the hidden history of Australia's oldest parliament?"

From 'Rum Hospital' to Parliament on Tuesday 8 June is presented by Paul Brunton, Emeritus Curator of the State Library of New South Wales.

"It is the story of a people's house and a building which, while always on the brink of physical collapse, has survived longer than most colonial buildings," Mr Brunton said.

"Being Sydney, the history features rum, rogues and some very far-sighted people."

To find out more or to book, visit the [NSW Parliament website](#).

About Sydney Solstice

Sydney Solstice showcases the best of Sydney's hospitality, music, arts and culture within four precincts across the city in June. Bringing together Sydney's best venues, chefs, artists and musicians, Sydney Solstice takes locals and visitors from urban laneways to city landmarks, inside hidden bars to glittering harbourside locations. Sydney Solstice is a NSW Government initiative managed by its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW.

About House Talks

House Talks is a series of virtual and live events highlighting a range of historical and cultural topics that relate to the functions of the NSW Parliament and Legislature.