



DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

Media Release

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NSW PARLIAMENT LAUNCHES FESTIVAL OF DEMOCRACY

More than 600 young visitors will discover democracy firsthand today when NSW Parliament throws open its doors for the inaugural 'Festival of Democracy' open day.

Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly Jonathan O'Dea said the interactive event for children up to 12 years will promote their understanding of voting and parliamentary processes in the rooms of Australia's oldest Parliament.

"Through fun and creative activities, we're encouraging children to experience what it means to be an active citizen," said Mr O'Dea.

"You're never too young to learn about our history, the foundations of our society, and realise you can play a role in shaping our future.

"After all, the ongoing strength and health of our democracy will rest with the youth of today."

Activities on the day will include democracy hopscotch, children's craft, interactive entertainment and "Vote for Me", a role-play game where children can make their pitch for election in the Legislative Assembly.

History will be brought to life by an actor playing former NSW Premier Henry Parkes, known as "the Father of Federation", engaging children in conversation by sharing his vision for Australia in the 1880s.

Children will also have the opportunity to 'vote' in both the Lower and Upper Houses in a mock ballot run by the NSW Electoral Commission. Specially designed ballot papers will help them to understand 'above the line' and 'below the line' voting by swapping politicians and political parties for favourite foods and colours.

Mr O'Dea said that demystifying the process of voting will help young people know what to expect when it comes time for them to enter a ballot booth.

"We want people across NSW to know the Parliament is *their* Parliament, that it's open to everyone, and it's ready to be discovered."

The Festival includes four 20-minute activity sessions throughout NSW Parliament House, including the historic Jubilee Room, modern 'Fountain Court' and Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly chambers.

This school holiday event complements NSW Parliament's popular annual 'Family Fun Day' held in October each year. NSW Parliament also runs tours for the general public and for school groups.

To learn more about NSW Parliament programs and events, visit www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/visit or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).