



THE STATE OF THE COLONY

People, Place & Politics in 1823

A special two-day conference exploring key figures, surprising stories & critical events in the early history of NSW

8 - 9 SEPTEMBER 2022
NSW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

WE'RE SO PLEASED YOU COULD JOIN US...

Over two fascinating days, we will be taking a special journey back in time with *The State of the Colony: People, Place & Politics in 1823*.

Featuring sessions with some of the most respected academics and experts in their fields, we will be reflecting on key figures and events in the early colony; the experiences of the Aboriginal community; the perspectives of women and the media of the time; and much more.

Many of the stories and circumstances we will be delving into were preludes to the development of the Legislative Council as Australia's first legislative body. The Council was established by the British Parliament's *NSW Act of 1823*, and its small number of appointed members met for the first time in 1824 – an anniversary we will be marking very soon. In fact, *The State of the Colony* conference forms part of a full program of activities commemorating the Bicentenary of the NSW Legislative Council, celebrating 200 years of evolving democracy in Australia. Learn more: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bicentenary.

Thank you for being part of the Bicentenary by attending *The State of the Colony*. I hope you come away from the event with a new appreciation for our rich history, an insight into the different experiences and perspectives within the colony and Aboriginal community, and a desire to learn more – because with the Bicentenary, there is much more in store.



Matthew Mason-Cox

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President of the NSW Legislative Council

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As an official 2022 History Week event, expect to be completely immersed in another time with *The State of the Colony*. As well as enjoying our expert sessions, we hope you'll join in our Q&A discussions, seize the opportunity to speak with our presenters and fellow history-hungry guests during breaks, and perhaps join us for a tour of Parliament and its historical rooms on one of the conference evenings.

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DAVID BLUNT

Clerk of the Parliaments



SESSION RECORDINGS & PAPERS

After the conference, you'll find recordings of most sessions, as well as related research papers, at www.bit.ly/SOTC1823

SESSIONS & PRESENTERS

SESSION 1

Reading of Country

with Dr Danièle Hromek

This special Reading of Country is a 'visual verbal essay' providing a preliminary understanding of Country, and the relationships and responses Aboriginal communities have to Country as those who originated from and remain part of it. The Reading considers the larger cultural landscape while also reflecting the specifics of the site the session is delivered from (did you know, for example, that the land on which the NSW Parliament sits borders a ceremonial meeting place?). The Reading includes deeper time narratives plus more recent understandings from contemporary community members.



ABOUT DANIÈLE

Dr Danièle Hromek is a Saltwater woman of the Budawang tribe of the Yuin nation, with French and Czech heritage. Danièle is a spatial designer and Country-centred designer, and the first Indigenous person in Australia to achieve a PhD in spatial disciplines. Her research and experience contributed to the Connecting with Country framework and Designing with Country discussion piece by the Government Architect NSW. Danièle is Director of Djinjama, with her work as a researcher, educator and cultural advisor bringing Country, culture and community to the built environment, and creating spaces to substantially affect Indigenous rights and culture. Danièle is also working with the University of Sydney as a Professor of Practice to bring Indigenous knowledges and values gained through her experience working in the profession to the curriculum.

SESSION 2

Hidden in Plain View with Dr Paul Irish & Ray Ingrey

Aboriginal people from coastal Sydney were astute politicians before Europeans arrived, and quickly worked out who held the power in the early colony. They developed relationships with the early governors, and with politicians once the Parliament was formed, which had a great influence on their lives throughout the 19th century. By the early 20th century though, parliamentarians had little contact with Aboriginal people and had passed laws to segregate them and split up their families, the legacy of which is still being felt today. Dr Paul Irish and Ray Ingrey will explore these themes.

ABOUT PAUL

Dr Paul Irish is a historian and archaeologist, and Director of Sydney firm Coast History & Heritage. For 15 years he has been piecing together the Aboriginal history of coastal Sydney with researchers from the La Perouse Aboriginal community, including through the 2015 NSW History Fellowship exhibition *This is Where They Travelled: Historical Aboriginal Lives in Sydney* and his book *Hidden in Plain View: The Aboriginal people of Coastal Sydney* (NewSouth, 2017), which won the NSW Premier's History Award for Regional and Community History.



ABOUT RAY

Ray Ingrey is a Dharawal person from the La Perouse Aboriginal community. He holds a number of leadership roles within his community - including Chairman of the Gujaga Foundation, which is an organisation leading language, cultural and research activities within the local area. Among these activities has been research tracing the ancient and unbroken roots of local Aboriginal families to the coastal Sydney region. Ray believes it's important "our young ones grow up with a solid cultural foundation and become strong with who they are and where they belong".



SESSION 3

The Bigge Inquiry

*with Prof Kirsten McKenzie, A/Prof David Roberts,
Prof Lisa Ford & Dr Matthew Allen*

While the 1819 to 1823 'Commission of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of NSW' led by John Thomas Bigge is widely regarded as a transformative moment in Australia's history, it was in fact designed to control change rather than unleash it. This session examines that paradox – exploring the context, mechanics and legacies of the 'Bigge Inquiry'.



ABOUT KIRSTEN

Kirsten McKenzie is Professor of History at The University of Sydney. Her sole-authored books include *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town, 1820 - 1850* (Melbourne University Publishing, 2004), *A Swindler's Progress: Nobles and Convicts in the Age of Liberty* (UNSW Press and Harvard, 2009 and 2010) and *Imperial Underworld: An Escaped Convict and the transformation of the British Colonial Order* (Cambridge, 2016). She is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Royal Historical Society. Her current work on imperial commissions of inquiry is funded by the collaborative Australian Research Council project 'Inquiring into Empire: Remaking the British world after 1815', led by Professor Lisa Ford. ***Kirsten is also presenting during our fourth session, Politics and People: Interpersonal Politics, the Courts and the Press.***



ABOUT DAVID

David Andrew Roberts is an Associate Professor of History at the University of New England, where he researches Australia's early history and edits the *Journal of Australian Colonial History*. He is best known for his work on the history and legacy of Australia's convict past. His research is also currently funded by an Australian Research Council grant for the project 'Inquiring into Empire: Remaking the British world after 1815'.

ABOUT LISA

Professor Lisa Ford is a legal historian whose prize-winning work explores ideas and practice of order in the British Empire and the Early National United States from 1763 to 1850. Her work is notable for recovering the role of quotidian colonial contests in shaping national, imperial and international law. Lisa has published three monographs: *The King's Peace* (Harvard, 2021), *Rage for Order* (Harvard, 2016), co-authored with Professor Lauren Benton, and *Settler Sovereignty* (Harvard, 2010). She has also co-edited two significant collections, *Between Indigenous and Settler Governance* (Routledge, 2013), with Tim Rowse, and the forthcoming *Cambridge Legal History of Australia*, with Peter Cane and Mark McMillan. Lisa's work has been supported by multiple Australian Research Council grants. She is currently an ARC Future Fellow.



ABOUT MATTHEW

Dr Matthew Allen is a Senior Lecturer in Historical Criminology at the University of New England. His diverse research is focused on understanding the unique and extraordinary transition of NSW from penal colony to responsible democracy, and the way that this process was shaped by the conflict between liberal ideals and authoritarian controls within the British world. His work on the history of alcohol, policing, summary justice and surveillance has been published in *Australian Historical Studies*, *History Australia*, the *Journal of Religious History*, and the *ANZ Journal of Criminology*, and he is currently writing a monograph for McGill-Queens University Press, entitled *Drink and Democracy: Alcohol, Politics and Government in Colonial Australia, 1788-1856*.



SESSION 4

Politics and People: Interpersonal Politics, the Courts and the Press

with Prof Kirsten McKenzie, Prof Emerita Penny Russell & Dr James Dunk

When the Council was formed in 1823, what was the relationship between formal politics and the informal politics of everyday life? This panel explores lesser-known scandals and darker stories that were amplified by those who lay closer to the new constitutional politics, to become public struggles over reputation and power. In the rhetoric of the day, what was at stake was the moral fibre of the colony itself. Who protected the morals, and what ultimately happened to the powerless individuals whose stories were so effectively weaponised in the public domain?



ABOUT PENNY

Penny Russell, FAHA is a historian of gender, class, race and culture in 19th-century Australia, with a particular interest in families, intimacy and colonial encounters. Her recent books include *Honourable Intentions? Violence and Virtue in Australian and Cape Colonies, c. 1750 to 1850* (Routledge, 2016), with Nigel Worden, and the award-winning *Savage or Civilised? Manners in Colonial Australia* (NewSouth, 2010). Penny is Professor Emerita at The University of Sydney, where from 1990 to 2021 she taught Australian and gender history. In 2022 she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Australian Historical Association.



ABOUT JAMES

Dr James Dunk is a Research Fellow in the School of Humanities and the Sydney Environment Institute at The University of Sydney. His research joins histories of health and medicine and the environmental humanities. His first book, *Bedlam at Botany Bay* (NewSouth, 2019) won the Australian History Prize at the 2020 NSW Premier's History Awards and was shortlisted for several other prizes. He is currently President of the ANZ Society of the History of Medicine. His articles have been published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *History of Psychology*, *Rethinking History* and other journals, and his literary writing appears in various magazines.

+ See the details of session three to learn about Kirsten.

SESSION 5

Executive Power: Unrestrained & Restrained *with Rev Dr John Harris & Caleb Cugley*

Governor Lachlan Macquarie was given almost unlimited power over the colony of NSW. He tried to wield that power with justice and mercy. That he would sometimes fail was inevitable. As this session will explore, the fault lay less with him personally than with the differing priorities of the Parliament which appointed him and would finally judge him.

ABOUT JOHN

Rev Dr John Harris has spent much of his life involved with Aboriginal people as a child, a teacher, a linguist and an advocate. John has a particular interest in Aboriginal people and early colonial history. The author of numerous books and papers, John holds a PhD in Aboriginal languages, a ThD in theology, and a DD from the Archbishop of Canterbury and H.M. Queen Elizabeth.



ABOUT CALEB

Caleb Cugley currently teaches English and History to secondary students at St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens. He graduated from the St Philip's Teaching School in conjunction with Alphacrucis University College with a Bachelor of Education (Secondary). Caleb loves bringing history to life and found a particular love of early Australian colonial history while working on the Reacting Education event 'Judging the Macquaries'. Caleb created character profiles of key participants in Governor Macquarie's time in Australia and undertook further study to ensure his own performance in the event was as accurate as possible.



SESSION 6

Money Changes Everything: The Bigge Reports, Currency and Banking in the Colony *with Kim Eberhard*

They say money changes everything – and when it came to the early colony, it certainly did. This session will consider the role of Governor Lachlan Macquarie as the architect of the now-famous holey dollars and dumps, bringing Australia's very first currency to the colony.



ABOUT KIM

Westpac Group Archivist and Historian Kim Eberhard is a passionate advocate of records, archives and the stories they hold. She contributed to the book and major exhibition produced for the Bank's 200th anniversary, and also arranged for the listing of the Bank's earliest records – dating from 1816 – on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. Kim's 25-year career has been spent principally in the private sector and she holds a Bachelor degree in Communications, a Master of Information Management, and is about to start a doctorate examining the life and contribution of former BNSW CEO Sir Alfred Davidson to Australia's economic history. A former President of the Australian Society of Archivists (2006 -2008) and member of the Executive Board of the International Council on Archives (2009 - 2012), Kim was one of the authors of the Universal Declaration on Archives, which was adopted by UNESCO in 2011. She has also written a number of award-winning publications, including the centenary history of North Sydney Boys' High School, and *In Good Faith: Waverley College and the Great War*. She also writes for the profession, with a number of journal articles and industry-standard textbooks to her credit.

SESSION 7

HerStory: Extraordinary Women in Early Colonial NSW

with Jessica North

With beautiful images to accompany her talk, in this session Jessica North will tell the true stories of some remarkable women from early colonial NSW. They include the first woman who managed a large agricultural estate (and it wasn't Elizabeth Macarthur); the subject of the first civil law case; the instigator of the first prenuptial agreement; and the child of convicts who became a society queen, promoting Australia to the world.

ABOUT JESSICA

Jessica North has worked at the Australian Research Institute for Environment and Sustainability at Macquarie University for the past 15 years, including five as its Director. She has also spent the past 10 years researching the lives of some fascinating colonial women. Her books are published by Allen & Unwin and have been top sellers in Amazon's 'History of Australia' category. Dr Catie Gilchrist from the University of Sydney has described Jessica's writing as "so utterly beautiful and compelling that reading her prose is akin to hearing the remarkable history for the first time".



CLOSING KEYNOTE

Delivered by Ita Buttrose AC, OBE



We're honoured to have Ita Buttrose AC, OBE deliver the closing keynote address of *The State of the Colony: People, Place & Politics in 1823*.

A renowned Australian figure and current Chair of the ABC, Ita is a media trailblazer, businesswoman, best-selling author, committed community and welfare contributor, and former Australian of the Year. Wrapping up the conference, Ita will help us reflect on the themes woven throughout the sessions, from power and politics, to 'hidden' experiences, and, of course, the role played by the press.



What do a gold bingo-ball cage, a 'full-bottomed' wig and an antique barrel key have in common?

They're all curiosities in upcoming exhibition *Unlocking the House*, which will further open the door to unique and often colourful stories from across the 200-year history of the Legislative Council. Visit in the Fountain Court at NSW Parliament House between 27 September and 27 October 2022 (weekdays, 9am - 5pm). Entry is free. Scan the code for further information.



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