



PARLIAMENT OF NSW

Media Release

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NEW COOKBOOK REVEALS FASCINATING HISTORY OF DINING AT NSW PARLIAMENT

A unique new cookbook released today explores dining, art, and history at the Parliament of NSW, taking readers on a journey from mid-nineteenth century 'Refreshment Rooms' to today's modern fine dining service.

Dining at New South Wales Parliament is the first publication of its kind from an Australian Parliament and includes recipes, photographs, historical anecdotes and more.

The book also provides a taste of the many notable personalities hosted and entertained at NSW Parliament House over the years, including:

- Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, in 1954 and 1992, who took time out of her busy touring schedule for a cup of tea at NSW Parliament
- Actress Audrey Hepburn in 1990, who received a personal tour of the Parliament from then-President of the NSW Legislative Council, the late John 'Johnno' Johnson MLC
- Crime novelist Agatha Christie in 1922, who enjoyed a seven-course luncheon including oysters, lamb chops and peas, and grilled chicken with butter sauce
- The first Prime Minister of Australia Edmund Barton, then Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly, in 1883, who dined on a menu of classic European dishes such as 'jambon à la Parisienne'.

In launching the book, President of the NSW Legislative Council, Matthew Mason-Cox said: "*Dining at New South Wales Parliament* explores the Parliament's rich collection of art and artefacts and takes the reader on a fascinating journey through history, tracing the evolution of dining practices and food trends."

"It takes us back to an era when cows in The Domain parklands provided milk for the Parliament, and finally explores our modern-day café and restaurant offerings."

Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly, Jonathan O'Dea MP, said the book also features delicious contemporary recipes showcasing the best produce New South Wales has to offer.

"*Dining at New South Wales Parliament* lets the reader in on the secret ingredient behind the Parliament's delectable scones, available each Friday for high tea at the Parliament, and shows the home cook how to faithfully recreate some of our kitchen's other delights," said Mr O'Dea.

NSW Parliament Executive Chef Vanessa Harcourt, NSW Restaurant and Catering Association 2022 Chef of the Year, said the unique project came about during the COVID-19 lockdowns in NSW.

“We began to look for ways to engage the Parliament’s chefs in meaningful work, which included testing *Dining at New South Wales Parliament* recipes from their home kitchens,” said Ms Harcourt.

“This book was a fantastic team effort, and we’re so proud to have pieced together a history that was previously unknown and untold.”

The book also explores how the Parliament used the lockdown to prepare meals for those in need through food rescue organisation OzHarvest, providing approximately 180,000 meals between 2020 and 2022.

Dining at New South Wales Parliament can be purchased through the NSW Parliament’s [online gift shop](#) from Wednesday, 9 November.