

MEDIA RELEASE

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Wednesday 14 June 2006

Dictionary of Sydney: A new online showcase of our history

An interactive Sydney history project will be announced today, as part of a landmark digital initiative led by the City of Sydney and the University of Sydney.

The new online Dictionary of Sydney will provide Sydneysiders, visitors and academics around the world with access to the ultimate history of the harbour city. It will answer questions like:

- *Who spent the early morning hours for many years writing 'eternity' repeatedly on the city's pavements?*
- *What is the Aboriginal name for Cockatoo Island?*
- *How did the Sydney Harbour ferry Greycliff sink?*

The Dictionary will eventually contain tens of thousands of entries - from prehistory to colonial days and modern Sydney life. It will include new research, as well as drawing on primary sources, bibliographic material and multimedia resources. Images, maps, databases and movies, will help illustrate the City's rich past.

A project website has been established to allow people to lodge submissions, find out more information and volunteer to work on the project.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP and Sydney University Vice-Chancellor Professor Gavin Brown will formally launch the project, and present a sneak preview into the project's website. The preview will occur on Wednesday 14 June in 'The Old Refectory', Main Quadrangle, University of Sydney, at 10am.

The chairperson of the Board of the Dictionary of Sydney and the City Historian **Dr Shirley Fitzgerald** said the project brings together hundreds of historians, academics and cultural institutions to create an exciting new way of telling Sydney's history.

"Sydney has a fascinating history created by its high achievers, its low down criminals and everyone in between. Digital formats allow the story to be told through an exciting variety of sources, reflecting the complex and layered nature of Sydney.

"And if you are a Sydneysider, it is your history too, so there will be room for everyone to contribute ideas, submit suggestions and engage in discussions.

"The Dictionary of Sydney will serve as a portal to our past and reflect on the development of one of the most character-filled and unique cities in Australia."



The
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of Sydney



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The University of Sydney's **Professor Stephen Garton**, Challis Professor of History and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, said the project was the first significant historical dictionary of a city to be conceived and presented electronically.

"It will be born digital," said Professor Garton, a chief investigator with the project. "The City of Sydney chose the University as its partner because of its outstanding research infrastructure and reputation in e-(electronic) humanities.

"The University is at the cutting edge of the use of digital technology in humanities research and scholarship. The project will also take advantage of the Archeology Department's pioneering *TimeMap™* project, which can dynamically generate maps on-the-fly from underlying databases."

"The University is pleased this significant infrastructure can be used in such a large scale project to benefit the whole community."

The project received a grant worth almost \$1 million last year from the Australian Research Council and is a collaboration between City of Sydney, University of Sydney, UTS, State Records of NSW and the State Library of NSW.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

What: Dictionary of Sydney - sneak preview

When: Wednesday 14 June 2006

Time: 10am

Where: 'Old Refectory', Main Quad, University of Sydney

Who: Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP and University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor Professor Gavin Brown.

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