

MEDIA RELEASE

24 April 2018

Launching *Australians Sharing a New Story* on traditional Blacktown land *Media Opportunity*

SydWest Multicultural Services and Initiatives of Change are pleased to advise a special Media Launch event is being held on the site of the first indigenous land grant ever, opening a 3-day community storytelling Festival.

To be held **Friday 26 April from 10:30 am in Colebee Neighbourhood Park, (just off Richmond Road)** this event will feature:

- Dharug elders telling their story
- Dharug elders sharing their dance and other activities of corroboree such as songlines and smoking ceremony

This event commemorates the historic event of governor Macquarie allocating 30 acres of land to Nurragingy and Colebee in 1816.

This site is now the Colebee neighbourhood Centre Park.

This ceremony serves to open the three-day community storytelling Festival to be held in the Blacktown area 3 to 5 May - ***Australians Sharing a New Story***.

Australians Sharing a New Story is a new partnership between **SydWest Multicultural Services** and **Initiatives of Change** that is bringing an innovative new three-day festival program to the people of Blacktown.

Together - the very old and the very new and everyone in between of Blacktown - will join together to share their stories and together write a new story over the 3-day weekend.

In addition to the Dharug elders activities, there will be a response from the current mayor of Blacktown Stephen Bali MP and Bob Fitzgerald Chair Of SydWest Multicultural Services and local Chief inspector who will then overview the ***Australians Sharing a New Story*** program and what we can expect from this great festival.

SydWest CEO Elfa Moraitakis said: *This event will be an exciting opportunity to help share our story with the help of the Dharug elders and the many and diverse residents that call Blacktown Home.*

We want everyone in Blacktown to join us over the three days in May to learn and listen and share their stories. Our launch event is a chance to show how this is done by the very oldest of Blacktown residents, the Dharug people'.

This event is a great media opportunity.

For further information, contact **Vikki Hine** SydWest Multicultural Services, on Tel: (02) 9621 6633 or vikki.hine@sydwestms.org.au

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Colebee/Nurragingy Land Grant is a site of state heritage significance because of its combination of historical, social and cultural values. The site was the first land grant ever given to Aboriginal people in Australia. The land grant is associated with two significant Aboriginal figures from the early colonial period-Nurragingy and Colebee-to whom the land was jointly granted in 1816. The location of the land grant is significant because it was an Aboriginal choice, being on land belonging to Nurragingy's clan. The land grant is valued by the contemporary Aboriginal community and the wider Australian community as a landmark in the history of cross-cultural engagement in Australia. For Aboriginal people, in particular, it represents a key historical site symbolising Aboriginal resilience and enduring links to the land (Godden, Mackay, Logan, 2010).

Colebee and Nurragingy courageously endeavoured to negotiate peaceful solutions during a time of escalating violence between Aboriginal people and the settlers.

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