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Revealed: The five exhibitions to open the Parramatta Powerhouse

Click on our guide below to see more about the first shows.

[Linda Morris](#)

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All five opening exhibitions at the billion-dollar Powerhouse Parramatta will be free to visitors aged 16 and under when the landmark museum opens on November 7 – a debut the state is hailing as its biggest investment in the city's cultural life since the Sydney Opera House.

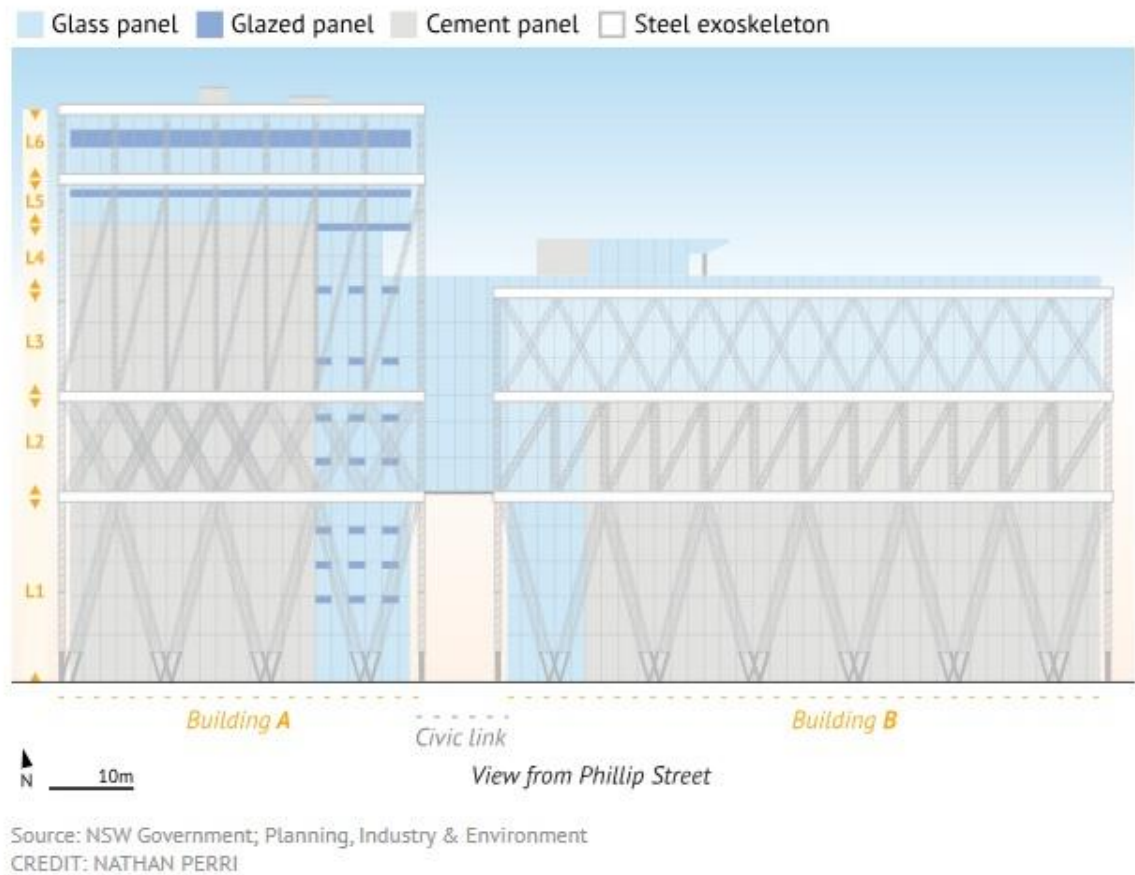
The NSW government confirmed first details of the ticketing structure as the final three temporary shows have been unveiled - a dedicated children's exhibition flipping the script on darkness as a place of fear and nightmares, a dive into Indigenous perspectives on water management and Australia's first show of the works of British designer and artist Es Devlin. While admission to the museum will be free, those over 16 will be charged an as-yet-undisclosed entry fee to the museum's flagship exhibition, *Task Eternal*, its blockbuster that will unpack humanity's fascination with stars, flight and space.

Access to a six-storey purpose-built steel tower topped by a room featuring the work by US artist James Turrell will likely carry an additional charge. For comparison, entry to a sister work at Tasmania's Museum of New Art is \$10. A full schedule of charges will be disclosed closer to opening.

"Western Sydney is a rapidly growing population, and it's much younger than the rest of the city," Arts minister John Graham said of a region where one in five people are aged 14 years or younger. "We want to make sure all communities, all audiences, feel welcome. And particularly at this time, when cost of living pressures are real, we want to make sure as many people – young and old, families, and individuals – can come to and enjoy the Powerhouse Parramatta."

Explore the new Powerhouse

Click around the museum to see what exhibitions and spaces have been planned



Representing a \$70 million-plus investment, the five temporary opening exhibitions will run for between 18 months and three years, and there will be periodic object rotations. More than 3000 objects will be displayed, with at least 1600 drawn from the Powerhouse collection.

Replacing original plans for a planetarium is the first Australian exhibition by Devlin, who has won Tony and Olivier awards for theatre scenic design, and collaborated with Beyoncé and U2 on recent concert tours.

The opening line-up marks a shift towards immersive technology and visitor participation rather than traditional spectator models, reflecting broader global trends. Temporary and immersive hands-on installations may add, however, to scepticism about matching the educational

engagement of permanent displays, such as the classic transport and steam exhibits at the Ultimo site.

Chief executive Lisa Havilah confirmed the museum will not have a standalone dedicated exhibit for western Sydney, saying local stories were embedded in all exhibitions within broader national and international contexts.

“These five foundational exhibitions place audiences at the heart of the museum, bringing to life stories of technology, creativity and excellence,” Havilah said.

Powerhouse's Parramatta launch exhibitions



Task Eternal: Pitched as the world's most ambitious aerospace exhibition tracing humanity's enduring quest to defy gravity, take flight and journey to space, this is the largest of the five exhibitions and features a historic Qantas Avro 504k aircraft, Leonardo Da Vinci's late 15th to early 16th Century drawings of a "flight machine" and this 4.5-tonne 1967 Apollo boilerplate test module on loan from the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum

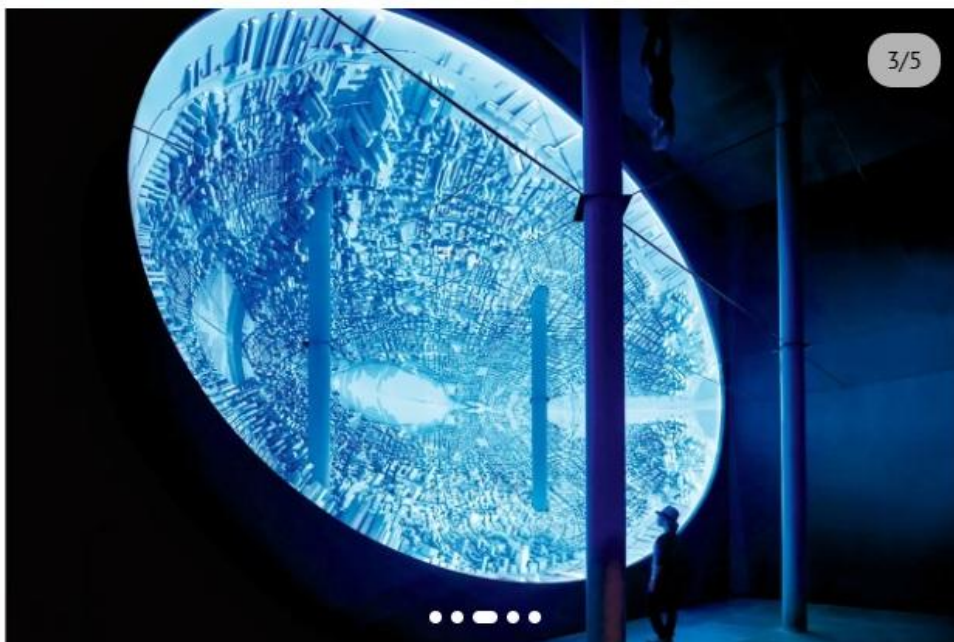
APOLLO COMMAND MODULE DESIGNED BY NASA. COURTESY OF SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM



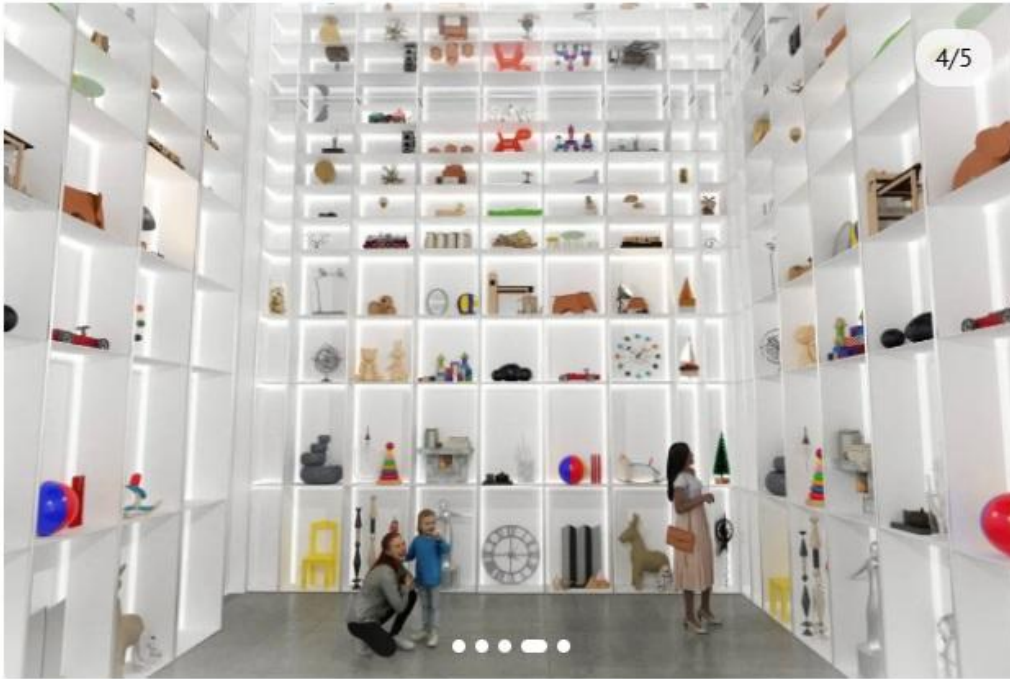


The Mall: This show examines the history, evolution and cultural significance of the shopping centre, which began with Westfield Blacktown in 1959. The show features shop windows displaying items from Australian fashion pioneers—Mambo, Sportscraft, Speedo and Bonds—donated memorabilia from the public and Western Sydney photography commissions, such as this boy in a Batman suit.

MY MALL, PORTRAIT OF BATMAN (COLE), COLES, NEPEAN VILLAGE, 2025-26. BY JO DUCK

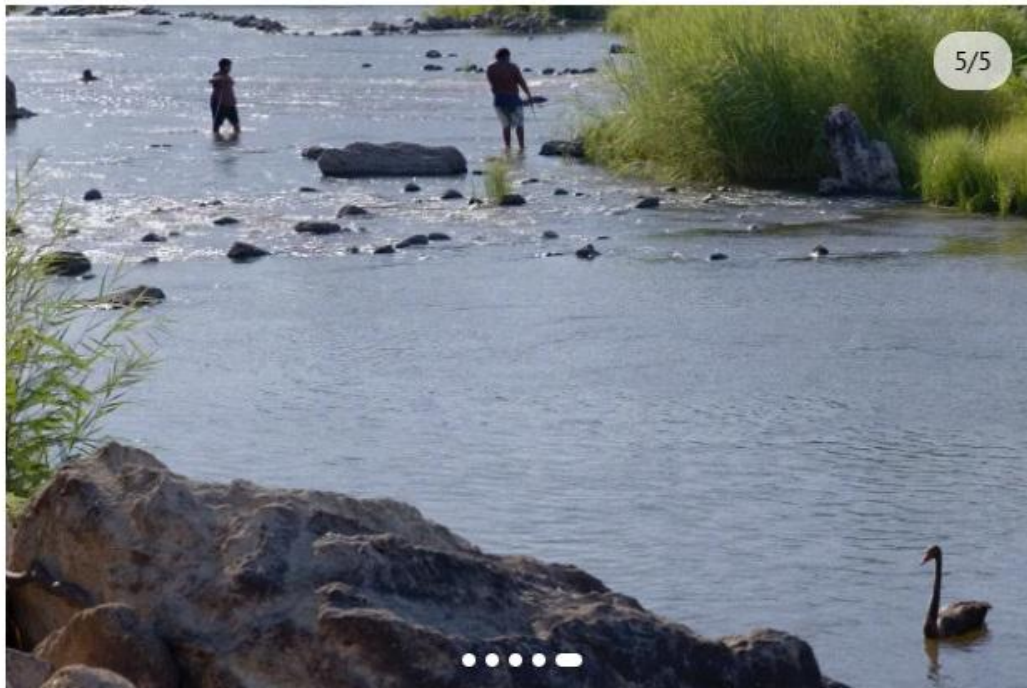


The Turning: British artist and stage designer Es Devlin has created five immersive works including Forest of Us—a mirror room exploring the symbiotic relationship between human beings and the biosphere; Memory Palace—an immersive 3D cityscape; Screenshare—a hybrid cinema and installation presenting sketches from 365 books Devlin has made; Redraw the Edges of Yourself—hand-drawn studies of flora and fauna; and Collective Portrait—a collaborative evolving installation where audiences are invited to draw portraits of a stranger. ES DEVLIN MEMORY PALACE, BY ES DEVLIN STUDIO



The Dark: The museum's dedicated children's show in presentation space 5 flips the script on darkness, reframing it from a place of fear to one of wonder. The centrepiece is a room sized display case featuring 100 beloved objects and stories loaned from children across Western Sydney.

THE DARK, POWERHOUSE



Overflow: Water is the central motif of this First Nations' show, which explores the importance and care of salt and freshwater ecosystems around NSW. First Nations filmmaker Ivan Sen has collaborated with communities to document these stories. MOOGAHLIN STILL, OVERFLOW FILM BY IVAN SEN, POWERHOUSE



The five shows

Es Devlin: The Turning: Five major works by British artist and stage designer Es Devlin, exhibiting for the first time in Australia. Havilah says her work – ranging from sculpture to film, architecture, language and performance – immerses audiences in atmospheric environments drawing on biodiversity, maths and imagination.

Visitors can explore Devlin’s work in five parts: *Forest of Us*; *Memory Palace* – an immersive 3D cityscape; *Screenshare* – a hybrid cinema and installation presenting sketches from 365 books Devlin has made; hand-drawn studies of flora and fauna in *Redraw the Edges of Yourself*.

For *Collective Portrait*, audiences are invited to draw portraits of a stranger.

The Dark: This dedicated exhibition for children aged 4 to 12 years reframes the fear of darkness into a “playground of curiosity” using interactive storytelling, a crystal tunnel, and 100 borrowed childhood toys. Also featured are items from the Australian Museum mineral collection, and newly commissioned First Nations animations.

Overflow: Developed in collaboration with Kalari Clan and Wiradjuri curator Emily McDaniel and working with seven Indigenous community organisations, this show considers the importance and care of salt and freshwater ecosystems around Australia. Highlights include First Nations filmmaker Ivan Sen’s documentation of the importance of caring for water country.

Task Eternal: Occupying the museum’s largest gallery, this headlining exhibition traces the history of aviation and space exploration in partnership with the Smithsonian and the British Museum.

Highlights include a Qantas Avro 504k aircraft, an Apollo rocket engine, next-generation spacesuits, integrated First Nations sky knowledge, and a 10-minute immersive James Turrell light installation (for a likely

additional fee). There are also eight delicate 15th- and 16th-century Leonardo da Vinci “flight machine” drawings on loan from the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Italy. Fragile and historic, they are to be displayed four at a time for a maximum of 90 days before being rotated.

The Mall: With its Americana title, this show examines the history and global impact of shopping centres, centring on western Sydney’s role – notably Blacktown, where a landmark 1959 Westfield design helped export modern retail architecture worldwide. Highlights include the iconic Levi’s 501 jeans worn by Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, early designs for the first barcode, recently digitised material documenting the United States’ first fully enclosed shopping mall, iconic 1980s arcade game machines and a bitcoin mining rig.



The Powerhouse Parramatta as seen from the opposite side of the river at night. STEVEN SIEWERT

More than a decade in the making – it received the green light in 2015 – the Parramatta Powerhouse project involved a \$915 million base build covering the riverfront construction, a new Castle Hill storage facility and

the digitisation of 371,000-plus collection items. Additionally, \$140 million was spent by the state government to secure the riverfront property from the City of Parramatta. The museum's pre-opening expenses, including [a documentary on its opening costing about \\$1.7 million, have exceeded \\$70 million.](#)

The museum says it has raised \$80.28 million in philanthropic contributions to be banked over 10 years, meeting its capital fundraising target for the base build, which was set at \$75 million.