https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-11-07/what-to-see-nsw-parramatta-powerhouse-officially-opens/107357170?fbclid=IwdGRjcAVbSPxjbGNrBVtI7WV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHBkb2YFc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQMMzUwNjg1NTMxNzI4AAEfELgDE2S1ICUFFoQro4wehvIgBT050Fin5TZT7koaUIYezVOG8v12YCOD4Fk_aem_ZmFrZWR1bW15MTZieXRlcw

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More than 3,000 objects on show as Powerhouse Parramatta opens to the public



By Nandini Dhir



The Overflow is among Powerhouse Parramatta's major exhibitions. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

It has taken four years of construction and more than 4,000 workers to convert an old car park on a riverbank into a museum of science, engineering, art and culture, with the Powerhouse Parramatta doors officially opening to the public on Saturday.

The $915 million project is the biggest cultural build since the Sydney Opera House, which opened in 1973.

Local and international artists, curators, architects and engineers have contributed to the new Powerhouse, which houses more than 3,000 objects, including items on loan from overseas collections.



The new museum houses more than 3,000 objects. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

Five major exhibitions are featured in the opening program, spanning more than 18,000 square metres of exhibition space.

The opening exhibits are accompanied by talks, shows and workshops scheduled throughout the 23-day opening festival.

The museum will also serve as an educational hub for school students to encourage children's interests in science and engineering.



Chris Minns officially opens the Powerhouse on Saturday. *(ABC News (Nabil Al-Nashar))*

NSW Arts Minister John Graham said the new museum aimed to deliver easier access to arts and culture for communities in the western suburbs.

"We know that this will inspire not just creatives but also scientists and engineers of the future," he said.



The opening festival runs for 23 days. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

Powerhouse Parramatta acting CEO Abbie Galvin described it as a "place of innovation" and "learning".

"This place will become a cultural backbone for Western Sydney," she said.

"We are now at a point where the educators have dropped their polishing cloths [and] the team have downed their tools," Ms Galvin said.

An ode to shopping centres



The Mall exhibition explores how shopping centres have been integrated into daily life. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

The Mall exhibition over two storeys pulls on elements from shopping centres and plazas across Western Sydney.

The exhibit space is a nod to the old Parramatta, with an arcade-style space that transports the visitor back in time.

It explores the evolution of shopping centres across the decades, tying in elements of fashion, design and technology.



Fashion, design and technology artefacts are part of The Mall exhibition. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

Natural water systems on country

Stepping into Overflow, the expansive space with natural light leaking in, brings attention to a shallow body of water in the centre of the room.

The exhibit, led by First Nations filmmakers and organisations, explores the importance of saltwater and freshwater systems across the state, and the integral role of Indigenous knowledge in protecting endangered species, flood mitigation and reviving language.



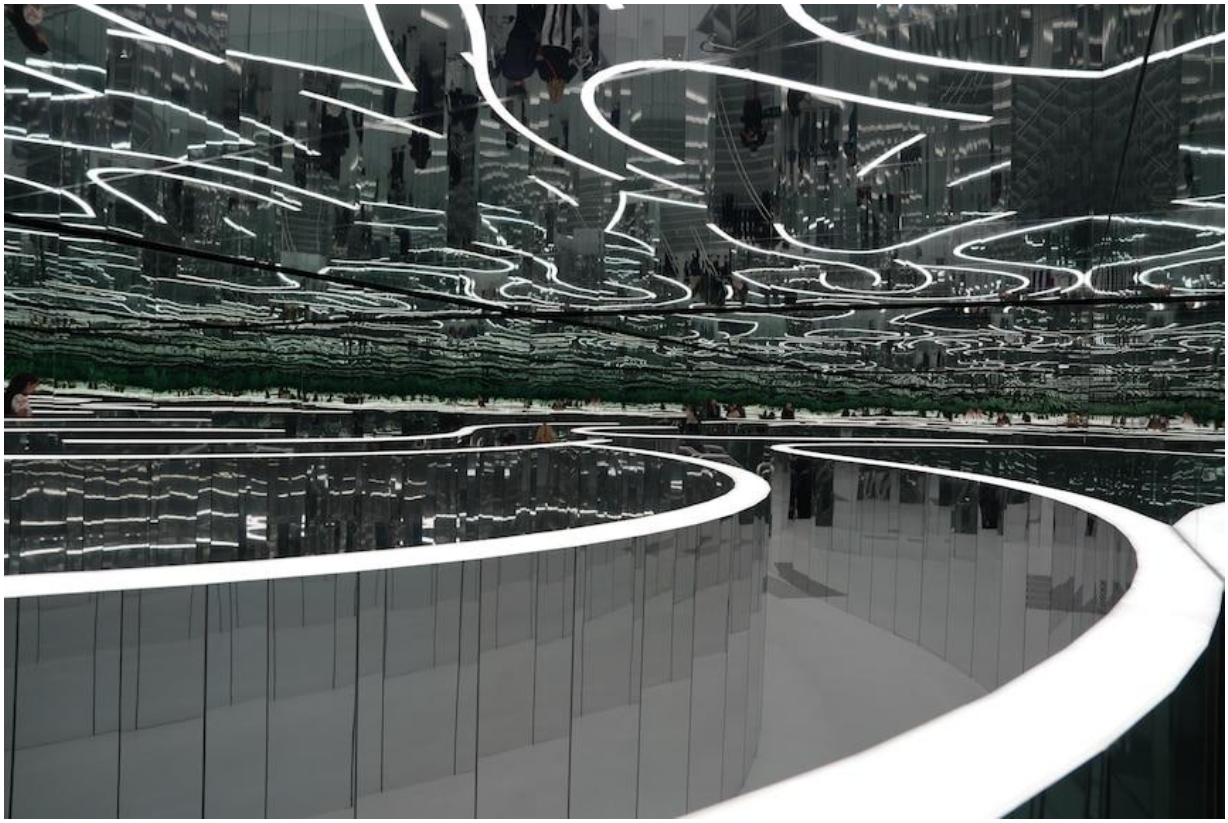
The Overflow exhibition is led by First Nations filmmakers and organisations. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

Filmmaker and Kamilaroi man Ivan Sen's work is on display at the museum, with a wide-reaching screen that shares the story of First Nations organisations, and how the pooling of knowledge helps inform cultural connections with water.

An immersive space

The Turning is a five-part immersive exhibition, with mirrors, films, interactive drawing spaces and 3D cityscapes.

The works by British artist Es Devlin encourage visitors to participate in the different spaces and engage with strangers in the museum.



Mirrors, films, interactive drawing spaces and 3D cityscapes form part of The Turning exhibition. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

"What you'll be experiencing here is the audience as the protagonist," Devlin told the ABC earlier in the week about her first Australian show.

"You are a performer in these works — the works aren't complete until you arrive.

"If people come away with a little bit more sense of their own capacity to shift not only their own perspective, but the perspective of another, then the work has done its job."

Secrets in the dark

The one exhibit being hidden from cameras is The Dark.

Keeping this space a mystery, The Dark is specifically designed for children and re-imagines bedtime stories with a crystal tunnel and a gateway to a land of giants.



The Dark exhibition is designed for children. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

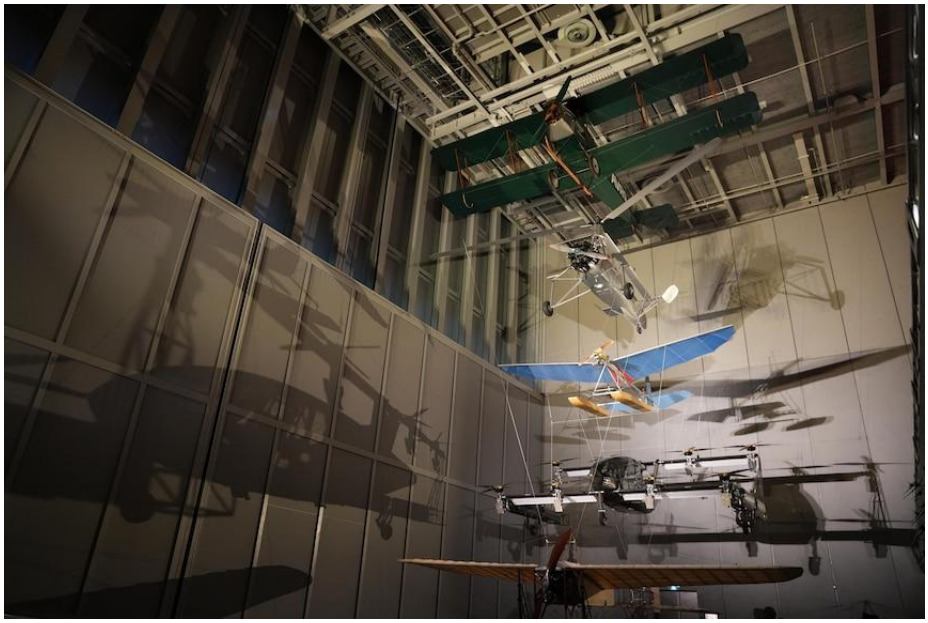
More than 800 objects are featured in the secret exhibit, including special items on loan from children across Western Sydney.

In the sky

Australia's first female astronaut Katherine Bennell-Pegg said she was excited to see Task Eternal come together as an exhibit.

"I've been geeking out at this exhibition," she said.

The exhibit fills the Powerhouse's largest gallery space, with aircraft suspended from the ceiling, small rockets produced by university students, and plane turbines.


Planes suspended from the ceiling are among the objects on show at the Task Eternal exhibition. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

The 2,200-square-metre space hosts more than 600 objects about aviation and space exploration.

Ms Bennell-Pegg's spacesuit also features in Task Eternal.

"It's really taken all of us on a journey from humanity's desire to take flights and then to extend that exploration into space," she said.

"It's so accessible because exploration [and] dreaming of the beyond is for everyone … at its core, space exploration is a human endeavour and that involves all of humanity and it's on display here."



More than 600 objects feature in the 2,200-square-metre space. *(ABC News: Abbey Haberecht)*

The essentials

Entry to the museum, and access to four out of five major exhibitions, is free.

Task Eternal, the space and aviation exhibit, is ticketed at $30 for adults, $20 for concession, and free for children under the age of 16.

Powerhouse Parramatta is on the bank of the Parramatta River, just off Church Street.



Street parking at the new museum is limited. *(ABC News: Sharon Gordon)*

It is about a five-minute walk from the Parramatta light rail Church Street stop, a five-minute walk from the Parramatta ferry wharf, or a 10-minute walk from Parramatta train station.

Street parking is limited, but there is paid parking at Eat Street car park on Erby Place, which is a two-minute walk from the Powerhouse.