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HISTORIC SCULPTURE HONOURS FIRST NATIONS CUSTODIANS AT NSW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

The Parliament of NSW has unveiled a powerful artwork celebrating the enduring cultural heritage of the traditional owners of the land where Parliament stands.

In a ceremony at NSW Parliament House today, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC Governor of NSW unveiled the striking sculpture and plaque on the Parliament's Macquarie Street forecourt alongside members of NSW Parliament and esteemed Indigenous community leaders.

The public artwork, a collaborative creation by Dharawal and Yuin artist Alison Page, Indigenous heritage consultant Rowena Welsh-Jarret and ceramicist Simon Reece, captures in its materiality, the history of the cultural landscape surrounding NSW Parliament House, honouring the First Nations custodians.

The Hon. Ben Franklin MLC, President of the NSW Legislative Council, said the unveiling was an important celebration of the living and thriving cultures of the Indigenous people of NSW and their connection with the natural environment. He also acknowledged the Parliament's complex history with First Nations People in this state.

"Ongoing efforts to build a future grounded in respect, reconciliation, and genuine partnership continue to guide our approach. The development of this Acknowledgement of Country artwork is not just a physical structure but a living record of the layers of history that connect us to this land.

"Each layer of the sculpture is not merely an aesthetic choice but a deliberate representation of the natural elements—earth, stone, ochre, shell and ash — meticulously layered to reveal their unique colours, imprints and textures," Mr Franklin said.

The Hon. Greg Piper MP, Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly, said the sculpture represented a significant milestone in advancing reconciliation between the NSW Parliament and Indigenous communities.

"By placing this artwork prominently at the entrance of the *'People's House'*, the Parliament of NSW aims to inspire deeper engagement with Indigenous Australians.

"We are honoured to feature an Indigenous artwork in such a prominent space on Macquarie Street. This initiative not only celebrates the rich heritage of indigenous peoples but also invites ongoing dialogue and reflection on history and their contributions to democracy.

"Art has a unique ability to bridge gaps and bring people together, and this sculpture is a testament to our commitment to reconciliation and cultural appreciation," Mr Piper said.

