14 December 2022

**New exhibition shares the blueprint for Australia's democracy**

A ballot box designed to be carried 500km on the back of a camel.

A ball gown hand-sewn to celebrate the peaceful achievement of Federation.

A boomerang-shaped petition calling for constitutional recognition in 2013.

These objects speak to what makes Australia’s democracy so, well… Australian.

A new exhibition at the Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) at Old Parliament House shares the blueprint upon which our distinctive democracy has been built.

*“Blueprint* looks at the fundamental principles that make our democracy characteristically Australian: fairness, freedom of speech, accountability and justice,” says MoAD Acting Director Andrew Harper. “These principles are ubiquitous in our lives, not just during elections. They require constant refinement, revision and reform.”

“Knowing how Australian democracy works is vital for making change. Understanding how the parts fit together empowers each of us to participate in ways that are meaningful to us,” says Andrew Harper.

An immersive digital installation by Walkley award winning journalist, director and film maker Patrick Abboud invites you to listen to voices we seldom hear, in places we rarely see. From an 11-year-old aspiring prime minister to Australia's first female Muslim stand-up comedian, from remote Western Australia to the Torres Strait, these five personal stories explore the ways democracy plays out in the lives of everyday Australians.

This exhibition offers several hands-on experiences for all ages: test your right to vote throughout history, check your democracy facts, have your say fridge magnet style and explore democracy as a three dimensional sculpture (it might make you laugh!) This exhibition features new and interactive ways to get all ages engaged and excited about our democracy.

*Blueprint* is the sixth exhibition to open at MoAD after an eventful year which included major restoration work following the devastating fire at the front of the building.

Media are invited to preview the exhibition ahead of its opening day on Friday (16 December).

For interviews with MoAD Acting Director Andrew Harper, please contact Simon Jenkins on (02) 6270 8120 or email [media@moadoph.gov.au](mailto:media@moadoph.gov.au)

Images of the three *Blueprint* objects listed above and other images from the exhibition can be found [here](https://www.moadoph.gov.au/about/media/).

Exhibition captions ( 2 images)

MoAD Acting Director Andrew Harper taking a look at the new *Blueprint* exhibition. Photo: MoAD.

Visitors exploring one of *Blueprint’s* interactive walls. Photo: MoAD.

Object captions

*Remote polling ballot box*, used 1890-1910. Designed to be carried by camel. On loan from the History Trust of South Australia. Photo: Brenton McGeachie/MoAD.

*Boomerang petition* made by Munganbana Norman Miller, 2013. Museum of Australian Democracy collection. Photo: Brenton McGeachie/MoAD.

*Margaret Chisholm’s Federation dress,* on loan from the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney. Gift of Jan Chattaway, 2000. Photo: Brenton McGeachie/MoAD.