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悉尼华人的故事

CELESTIAL CITY SYDNEY'S CHINESE STORY

MEDIA ALERT



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NEW EXHIBITION

***Celestial City: Sydney's Chinese Story* weaves a rich tapestry of the lives of Sydney's early Chinese and celebrates the pivotal role they played in shaping modern Australia.**

With vivid personal accounts, archival photographs and stunning family heirlooms, Sydney Living Museums' new exhibition **Celestial City: Sydney's Chinese Story**, opens at the Museum of Sydney on 29 March 2014.

The exhibition shines a spotlight on Sydney's fascinating Chinese history. It offers a rare insight into Chinese immigration during the 19th century, and into the day-to-day lives and struggles of this pioneering community.

'This is a really exciting exhibition that reflects who we are and where we have come from', says Cheryl Cumines, President of the Chinese Heritage Association of Australia. 'I think that it is also important for those Chinese who have come more recently to be aware of those Chinese who came before and paved the way for them', she says.

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'With almost one in ten of today's Sydneysiders claiming Chinese heritage, Sydney's Chinese story is one that begs to be told', says Mark Goggin, Director of Sydney Living Museums. 'The exhibition offers rich insights into the lives of our earliest Chinese-Australians, known at the time as "Celestials", and the contributions they made to the growth of Australia.'

Famous Chinese identities of the time included Quong Tart. Born in China and raised on the New South Wales goldfields, Tart became an influential businessman and mandarin of the 5th rank, the best known Chinese Australian in Sydney at the time.

'By the 1870s the Chinese immigrants, from market gardeners and goldminers to merchants and mandarins, had shaped their place in Sydney life,' says exhibition curator Dr Nicola Teffer. 'But even though Chinese expertise was becoming increasingly valued, this good will was often overshadowed by Australian fears of the new community'. Newspaper articles of the time reflected this prejudice, linking the Chinese community to opium smoking, gambling, cheap labour and overcrowded housing.

'The breadth of material collected in this exhibition is quite remarkable and doesn't shy away from the trials faced by Sydney's early Chinese', says Mark Goggin. 'Some of these prejudices seem abhorrent to us today, but they serve to show how far multicultural Sydney has come, thanks in great part to the resilience and vitality of the Chinese community. Of course, you'll also discover forgotten Sydney icons of great beauty like the Chinese tearooms of the late 1800s.'

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The exhibition's final theme brings the story to the present day, showing footage of interviews with current members of Sydney's successful Chinese community. These include Dr John Yu AC, former parliamentarian the Hon Helen Sham-Ho OAM, fashion designer Vivian Chan Shaw and artists Wang Xu and Shen Jiawei.

The exhibition at the Museum of Sydney is supported by a program of free talks, workshops and guided walking tours. Sydney Living Museums has also planted a Chinese-style market garden on the Museum of Sydney forecourt. Visitors are invited to explore our veggie garden and be involved in planting and harvesting.

We wish to thank the many individuals and families within Sydney's Chinese community who are supporting this exhibition and shared their stories, in particular the extended Tart family and Brad Powe. We also thank the Ashfield & District Historical Society and the Chinese Heritage Association of Australia for their contributions.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

What:	Celestial City: Sydney's Chinese Story
Where:	Museum of Sydney – on the site of first Government House, Cnr Bridge & Phillip Sts
Exhibiting:	29 March – 12 October 2014
Admission:	Adult \$10, Child/Concession \$5, Family \$20, Members free
Open:	Daily 10am – 5pm

Visit: sydneylivingmuseums.com.au

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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Historic Houses Trust of NSW, incorporating Sydney Living Museums, cares for significant historic places, buildings, landscapes and collections. It is a statutory authority of, and principally funded by, the New South Wales Government.

IMAGE CREDITS

1. Tin Lee's Certificate of Domicile (detail), 1903. National Archives of Australia NAA ST 84/1; 1903/261–270; 747389 2. Decorative carving of Quong Tart's company trademark 'Q T & Co.', 1886–98. Lent by the Powerhouse Museum. Gift of Mr Norman Rodd, 2004 3. Henry Fine Chong in Chinese robes, Globe Photographic Co, date unknown. Powe family collection 4. Portrait of William James Nomchong and Mrs Ellen Nomchong [nee Shing], Clovelly, NSW, photographer unknown, 1926. National Library of Australia 5. Porcelain teapot, 1880–1900. Courtesy Tart family 6. Portrait of Quong Tart, artist unknown, c1880, oil on canvas. State Library of New South Wales ML 1346