Sydney Opera House launches on the Google Cultural Institute

– More than 1,000 digital artefacts tell the Opera House story online for the first time –
– 360° experience reveals a day in the life of one of the world's busiest performing arts centres –
– Explore Australia's architectural masterpiece with panoramic Street View imagery –

Sydney – Embargoed until 11.00am AEST, Wednesday, 27 April 2016. The Sydney Opera House and the Google Cultural Institute today launched an unprecedented digital collection that will allow audiences around the world to explore the living story of Australia's most famous building as never before.

Unveiled by NSW Deputy Premier & Minister for the Arts Troy Grant, the collection of 50 online exhibits weaves together rare archival photography, celebrated performances, early architectural drawings, historical documents, little-known interviews and Street View imagery to tell the story of the Opera House in an entirely new way.

The collection includes a new 360^0 experience of the Opera House for Google Cardboard that captures one of the world's busiest performing arts centres as it is seldom seen, between the acts, waking up, in rehearsal and at rest. Created in collaboration with the Lab at the Google Cultural Institute in Paris, the immersive experience includes stunning performances by the outstanding young Australian soprano Nicole Car, who recently starred in Opera Australia's acclaimed production of *Luisa Miller*; cellist and Sydney Symphony Orchestra Director of Artistic Planning Benjamin Schwartz at sunrise in the Utzon Room; and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra itself on the Concert Hall stage rehearsing with David Robertson, Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

NSW Deputy Premier & Minister for the Arts Troy Grant said: "The Sydney Opera House is the symbol of modern Australia, its premier cultural venue, number one-tourist destination and a World Heritage-listed masterpiece of human creativity. The launch of this incredible collection will mean more people can explore the Opera House's rich history and the diverse artistic and cultural experiences it offers, wherever they are."

Sydney Opera House CEO Louise Herron AM said: "The Sydney Opera House was made possible by a rare combination of remarkable individuals with incredible vision. Together they enabled Jørn Utzon, in the words of Frank Gehry, to create a building 'ahead of its time, far ahead of available technology … a building that changed the image of an entire country.'

"Innovation is part of the Opera House's DNA and it is wonderful that our partnership with the Google Cultural Institute has enabled us to weave together the many strands of the Opera House story – the times and people who made it possible together with its vibrant present and exciting future – really for the first time."

Curated by creative director and writer Sam Doust and produced by the Opera House in collaboration with the Google Cultural Institute, the collection draws on the Opera House's archive, the Sydney Opera House Wolanski Archive Collection, the collections of the Opera House's resident companies, the State Library of New South Wales, State Records NSW, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Arup and many others. Made possible by the support of the Opera House's Major Partner Google, the collection took over six months to create.

Director of the Google Cultural Institute Amit Sood said: "We're delighted to have worked with the Sydney Opera House to bring this cultural icon online and make it available for all the world to experience on the Google Cultural Institute. The Opera House has so many stories to tell. Now people everywhere can immerse themselves in 60 years of history on and off the stage."

Local high school students were among the first to experience the Opera House collection on the Google Cultural Institute alongside the NSW Deputy Premier at today's launch. Images from the event plus a selection of assets from the collection are available to download here.

You can also visit the Sydney Opera House on the Google Cultural Institute to discover the collection for yourself from your mobile phone, tablet or computers at **g.co/sydneyoperahouse** or via the new Google Arts & Culture mobile app from your iOS or Android device.

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Sydney Opera House
The Opera House is a masterpiece that belongs to all Australians. It is the country's number one tourist destination and its busiest performing arts centre, welcoming more than 8.2 million visitors a year on site and hosting 1,900 performances attended by 1.45 million people. Deloitte has estimated the total social asset value of the Sydney Opera House to Australia at $4.6 billion. On its 40th Anniversary in 2013, the Opera House embarked upon a Decade of Renewal to prepare it for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors.

Google Cultural Institute
Founded in 2011, The Google Cultural Institute is a not-for-profit initiative that partners with cultural organizations to bring the world's cultural heritage online. We build free tools and technologies for the cultural sector to showcase and share their gems, making them more widely accessible to a global audience. The Google Cultural Institute has partnered with over 1,000 cultural institutions in 70 countries, more than 240,000 high-resolution digital images of original artworks, 6 million archival artefacts, over 1,800 Street View museum captures, and more than 2,000 online exhibitions curated by experts. Find out more about us on our official website, or download the Art and Culture app for iOS or Android.