

MEDIA RELEASE: Embargoed until 2:30pm, Friday 16 May 2025

Old Bega Hospital Revival Celebrated at 2025 National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards

The inspiring transformation of Old Bega Hospital has been spotlighted at the [2025 National Trust \(NSW\) Heritage Awards](#) – a celebration of outstanding practice, awarding excellence in conservation of Aboriginal, built, natural and cultural heritage.

Works on the Old Bega Hospital carried out by Design 5 - Architects, Old Bega Hospital Reserve Land Manager, NSW Public Works and Leser Build have resulted in two awards presented to the project team at today's National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards Ceremony, held in Sydney.

The Old Bega Hospital revival project took top gong in the Built Conservation category and won the coveted Judges' Choice title.

The Old Bega Hospital was built in 1888. Following its closure in 1957, the building was used for various purposes before becoming a community centre in 1985. In 2004, a fire destroyed most of the building, leaving only the brick walls and chimneys, along with remnants of the roof, floors, and joinery.

Following years of community fundraising, a government grant was secured in 2019. With project management by NSW Public Works, Design 5 – Architects were selected as lead design consultant in 2020. Construction was carried out by local firm Leser Build in 2023-24.

Existing fabric was retained and repaired wherever feasible, and new elements were informed by archival drawings, historic photographs, and site evidence. The building now includes compliant accessibility, upgraded facilities and services, a community kitchen, and multi-purpose spaces for hire. Remnants of the fire-damaged fabric were retained and featured in the building's continuing use as a valuable community facility.

The National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards Judging panel described the project works as “sensitive, elegantly resolved and a project that sets the standard for heritage conservation.”

Judges also commended the project team for showing “a high level of refinement in the conservation philosophy applied, which appropriately balances the delicate question of when to retain and when to replace. Very impressive.”

This year marks the 31st year of the National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards which saw submissions from right across the state. More than 50 projects were shortlisted, and 20 winners were recognised across a total of ten categories, four individual prizes, a President's Prize, the highly sought-after Judges' Choice Award – won by the Old Bega Hospital project team – and the NEW People's Choice Award won by the 2024 Transport Heritage Expo.

“Overall, the geographical spread of winners this year is very impressive – from Port Macquarie to Bega, Sydney to Broken Hill,” said Debbie Mills, Chief Executive Officer of the National Trust (NSW). “Congratulations to the Old Bega Hospital team and to all of this year's winners.”

Penny Sharpe, Minister for Heritage, applauded the winners for their outstanding efforts in safeguarding and promoting NSW's heritage, noting that “These projects play a crucial role in ensuring our unique places and stories are celebrated and conserved for future generations.”



The ceremony was presented by Richard Morecroft and speakers included keynote speaker Professor the Hon Bob Carr; Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Heritage; Sally Barnes, Chair of the Heritage Council, National Trust (NSW) President Kathryn Pitkin AM and Awards Jury Chair Matthew Devine.

Judges who joined Matthew Devine on the panel included: Ann Toy (Interpretation), Barrina South (Aboriginal heritage), Dr Caitlin Allen (Archaeology), David Burdon (Architecture), Kathryn Pitkin AM (Education), Dr Libby Gallagher (Landscape), Peter John Cantrill (Architecture) and Sophie Canaris (2024 Young Achiever recipient).

The National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards is a signature event of the Australian Heritage Festival, coordinated annually by the National Trust. The NSW Government through Heritage NSW is principal sponsor of the Australian Heritage Festival and the National Trust Heritage Awards.

The full list of 2025 winners are:

Aboriginal Heritage - *proudly sponsored by Extent Heritage*

- Dhuluny: 200 years of Wiradyuri resistance, Bathurst – entered by Wiradyuri Traditional Owners Central West Aboriginal Corporation (WTOCWAC)

Advocacy

- Ensuring the future of Port Macquarie Museum, Port Macquarie – entered by Port Macquarie Historical Society Inc.

Architecture

- Former Workmen's Dwellings Lower Fort Street, Dawes Point – entered by Neeson Murcutt Neille

Built Conservation

- Old Bega Hospital, Bega – entered by Design 5 - Architects, Old Bega Hospital Reserve Land Manager, NSW Public Works, Leser Build

Education and Interpretation - *proudly sponsored by City Plan*

- Pirie Chambers Heritage Trades Training Program and Conservation, Broken Hill – HSR (Aust) Group and Elizabeth Vines OAM, Architect and Heritage Advisor

Enduring

- Minister's Stonework Program, State-wide – entered by NSW Public Works

Events, Exhibitions and Tours

- Flood Level 1955 - A Historical Exhibition, Maitland – entered by Maitland City Council
- Transport Heritage Expo 2024, Sydney – entered by Transport Heritage NSW

Interiors and Objects

- Interiors: Parliament of NSW Rum Hospital Project, Sydney – entered by Department of Parliamentary Services
- Objects: Conservation of the Barangaroo Boat, Sydney – entered by Sydney Metro with Silentworld Foundation and York Archaeological Trust

Landscape

- Nepean River Trail, Camden – entered by Camden Council

Resources and Publications

- Resources: Australia's Earliest Timber Houses – entered by Christopher and Deborah Hallam
- Publications: The Australian Ark: The Story of Australian Wine, 1788–2023 by Andrew Caillard MW – entered by David Longfield, Longueville Media & Angus Hughson, The Vintage Journal

Judges' Choice

- Old Bega Hospital, Bega – entered by Design 5 - Architects, Old Bega Hospital Reserve Land Manager, NSW Public Works, Leser Build

President's Prize

- Preserving and Promoting the Priceless Collections of the National Herbarium of New South Wales: Mass Digitisation and Free Public Access via an Online Herbarium Search Portal – entered by National Herbarium of New South Wales, Botanic Gardens of Sydney

NEW! People's Choice

- Transport Heritage Expo 2024, Sydney – entered by Transport Heritage NSW

Young Achiever Award - proudly sponsored by GML Heritage

- Steven Barry

Heritage Skills Award

- Ben Elliot

Lifetime Achievement Award - proudly sponsored by Museums of History NSW

- Sheridan Burke

Cathy Donnelly Memorial Award

- Dr Lisa Murray

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Susan Darwiche, Double Shot PR – Director **Mb:** 0414 706 704 **Email:** susan@doubleshotpr.com.au

Notes to Editors:

About the National Trust (NSW)

The National Trust is Australia's oldest and largest independent conservation organisation founded in 1945 in New South Wales by Annie Forsyth Wyatt. Collectively the National Trust in Australia owns or manages more than 300 built and natural heritage places (the majority held in perpetuity), is supported by 7,000 volunteers and employs more than 300 people nationwide.

The National Trust (NSW) is committed to engaging the community to celebrate and conserve heritage places and collections through events and education. With the support of our members, volunteers and dedicated staff and partners, we advocate on the protection of historical and naturally significant places and collections to ensure their preservation for future generations.

About the National Trust Heritage Awards

The National Trust Heritage Awards has been running since 1994 and is one of the most highly anticipated events in the heritage, cultural and conservation sector. The awards are an annual event run by the National Trust (NSW) as part of the Australian Heritage Festival. The NSW Government through Heritage NSW is principal sponsor of the Australian Heritage Festival and the National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards, which is the signature event of the Australian Heritage Festival.

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