

## Media release

17 September 2025

### 50 Years On: Reflections on the Dismissal

This November, the Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) at Old Parliament House will mark the 50th anniversary of the Dismissal – one of the most controversial events in Australian political history.

On 11 November 1975 the Governor-General Sir John Kerr dismissed the Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and replaced him with Malcolm Fraser on the condition that he secures supply then goes to an election. The Coalition subsequently won in a landslide.

To mark this significant anniversary, MoAD will present a compelling program of events, an exhibition, and free daily tours designed to explore the political, constitutional and human dimensions of the Dismissal.

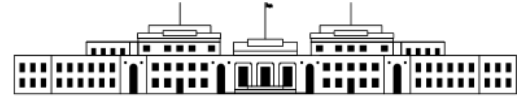
"The Dismissal shaped Australia's history. Fifty years later, it remains one of the most debated moments in Australian political history," said Chair of the Board at Old Parliament House, Barrie Cassidy. "We're proud to host engaging programming, encouraging conversation right here, at the place where history happened."

On the anniversary itself, MoAD will host a full day of events offering fresh perspectives from people who were there and opportunities to reflect on the Dismissal. The program will feature analysis and discussions, as well as personal reflections from a diverse range of speakers, including two former Australian Prime Ministers, the Hon Paul Keating and the Hon John Howard OM AC.

Among the speakers will be Niki Savva, political commentator, author, and Board Member of Old Parliament House, who was reporting for *The Australian* from the building on the day of the Dismissal.

"People of my generation remember exactly where they were when John Kennedy was assassinated, when man walked on the moon and when Gough Whitlam was dismissed. On November 11, 1975 I was on the front steps of Parliament House listening to his speech, and hearing the crowd roar," Ms Savva said.

"It was the most momentous day in Australian political history, condemned by many and welcomed by others.



“Please join us this November 11 to hear fascinating, never-before-told stories of that day, including from inside the Governor-General’s residence, as well as from some of the key players.”

Audiences across the country – and around the world – can watch the events online, while visitors to the Museum can view them on multiple live screens throughout Old Parliament House.

From November through February 2026, MoAD will present a new exhibition, *The Dismissal: Words that made history*, inviting visitors to look beyond the headlines and into the people, politics, and power plays that defined the event.

The exhibition will bring together key documents from the period, many exhibited together for the first time, including the original letter of dismissal handed by Governor-General Sir John Kerr to Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. From handwritten notes to official letters, these documents didn’t just change a government, they changed the course of the nation.

Complementing the exhibition will be free, Dismissal-themed tours offered daily, guiding visitors through the spaces where history unfolded and the stories that continue to shape our understanding of Australia’s democracy.

MoAD’s website will also host a suite of digital resources, enabling Australians everywhere to reflect, share, and learn more about this defining national moment.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dismissal – Panel sessions program**

Full program of events available [here](#).

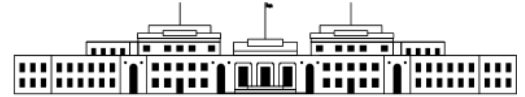
### ***The Dismissal: Words that made history* exhibition**

To mark 50 years since the Dismissal, some key documents concerning the event will be exhibited together for the first time. From handwritten notes to official letters, the words that appear on these pages changed not just the government, but the course of the nation. These are the words that made history.

*The Dismissal: Words that made history* is free to visit and will be on exhibition at MoAD from November until February 2026.

### ***Dismissed* tour**

After 50 years, the dismissal of the Whitlam Labor government and the election of the Fraser Coalition government remains a distinctive event in Australia’s political history. Join our free, daily tour to learn more about the events leading up to one of the most historic days at Old Parliament House.



*Dismissed* is a free tour and will run daily at 11am from 1 October until 31 January 2026. Bookings recommended.

### **The Dismissal – Background information**

[Available here](#).

### **Images**

Available [here](#).

### **Media enquiries**

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### **About the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House**

The Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) at Old Parliament House is a modern museum located inside a heritage-listed building that was once home to Australia's national parliament. MoAD protects, conserves and interprets this national icon, highlighting the crucial role the building and its collections have played in shaping today's Australia.

Through exhibitions, education programs and digital content, MoAD deepens public understanding of Australia's social and political history, inspiring audiences of all ages to participate as active citizens.