

Explore - Sydney Essentials

- Ideas for AANZPA Conference visitors • 12-19 January 2027 •

The conference is based at St Andrew's College in Newtown, close to the University of Sydney and some of the city's most lively neighbourhoods. Whether you have a spare hour, a free afternoon or a few extra days, here are some rewarding ways to experience Sydney.

Begin on Gadigal Country

We are gathering on Gadigal Country. These places and resources offer a starting point for learning about the continuing cultures, histories and custodianship of Aboriginal peoples in Sydney.

[GADI exhibition](#) – At the Australian Museum, this exhibition was developed with local Aboriginal Elders and communities and explores the culture and history of the Country now known as central Sydney.

[You are in Cadi](#) – An introduction from the Botanic Gardens to the traditional lands of the Gadigal and their enduring relationship with Country.

[Yura Nura: People & Country](#) – At the Museum of Sydney, this exhibition presents First Nations perspectives on Country, culture and the history of the Sydney region.

[Aboriginal cultural experiences in Sydney](#) – A useful collection of guided walks, harbour experiences, galleries and cultural tours. Book ahead where required.

Eating nearby

You will not be stranded for dinner. St Andrew's College is close to Newtown, Enmore, Chippendale and Glebe, all of which have plenty of places to eat at a wide range of prices.

[King Street and Enmore Road](#) – The easiest place to start. This long dining strip begins a short walk from the college and is lined with cafés, pubs, small bars, takeaway food and restaurants serving cuisines from around the world. The southern stretch of King Street is known as Sydney's '[Vegan Mile](#)'. Walk along King Street towards Newtown, or continue onto Enmore Road, and choose whatever appeals.

[Spice Alley](#) – A lively, lantern-filled collection of casual Asian eateries in Chippendale. It is approximately a 25-minute walk from St Andrew's, or a short bus or taxi ride, and works well for groups because everyone can order from a different vendor.

[The Italian Bowl](#) – A popular, casual King Street restaurant serving generous bowls of pasta and other Italian favourites.

[Thai Pothong](#) – A long-standing Newtown restaurant known for Thai food, warm service and exuberant décor.

More Newtown dining ideas

There are lots recommendations for delicious dinner options from [Time Out Sydney, Broadsheet](#) or the [Australian Good Food Guide \(AGFG\)](#).

[Carriageworks Farmers Market](#) – For breakfast or food shopping rather than dinner: every Saturday from 8.00 am to 1.00 pm, approximately one kilometre from St Andrew's.

Nearest supermarket – [QE Foodstores](#), Shop 5, 35 Missenden Road, Camperdown.

Activities nearby

These are easy options from St Andrew's College when you have only a few hours.

[Newtown and King Street](#) – Newtown is one of Sydney's liveliest neighbourhoods and a great place to wander and people-watch. Explore King Street's cafés, independent bookshops, vintage stores, boutiques, street art and colourful local characters.

[Chau Chak Wing Museum](#) – A free museum on the University of Sydney campus, open seven days, with archaeology, natural history, art and cultural collections.

[Dendy Newtown](#) – An easy local cinema option at 261 King Street.

[Sydney Uni Sport & Aquatic Centre](#) – The closest place for a swim or workout; check casual-entry arrangements before visiting.

[Victoria Park Pool](#) – A public outdoor pool beside Victoria Park and the university campus.

[Sydney Park](#) – A large green space with wetlands, hilltop views and walking paths, south of Newtown.

Harbour, ferries and beaches

For a classic Sydney experience, build an outing around the water. Ferries are part of the pleasure, not merely transport.

[Circular Quay to the Opera House and Botanic Garden](#) – Walk from Circular Quay around the Opera House foreshore, then continue through the Royal Botanic Garden to Mrs Macquarie's Chair for expansive harbour views.

[Manly by ferry](#) – Take the ferry from Circular Quay for one of Sydney's best harbour journeys, then walk to Manly Beach or around to quieter Shelly Beach.

[Bondi to Coogee coastal walk](#) – A spectacular coastal walk linking beaches, cliffs and ocean pools. Do a shorter section if the day is very hot.

[Cockatoo Island / Wareamah](#) – A short ferry trip to a layered harbour site with significant First Nations, convict and industrial histories. Allow several hours to explore.

[Barangaroo Reserve](#) – Walk the reconstructed headland and harbour foreshore, then continue towards Walsh Bay or the city.

[Taronga Zoo](#) – Travel by ferry from Circular Quay. The zoo's hillside setting provides remarkable views back across the harbour.

[New Sydney Fish Market](#) – Sydney's new waterfront food precinct at Blackwattle Bay brings together seafood retailers, specialty food stores, cafés and restaurants.

Art, performance and culture

Planning ahead: Many January 2027 theatre and music programs will not be announced until late 2026. Check venue websites again in October or November.

[Sydney Festival – 7-25 January 2027](#) – The conference falls in the middle of Sydney's major summer arts festival, with theatre, dance, music, installations, outdoor events and free performances across the city. The full program will be released later in 2026.

[Art Gallery of New South Wales](#) – Two neighbouring buildings beside the Botanic Garden, combining Australian, international and Asian art. Check the January program for exhibitions and events.

[Museum of Contemporary Art Australia](#) – Contemporary art at Circular Quay, with harbour views from the rooftop. The museum is normally closed on Tuesdays.

[White Rabbit Gallery](#) – A distinctive collection of contemporary Chinese art in Chippendale, with free admission and a tea house. Usually open Wednesday to Sunday; check summer dates before visiting.

[State Library of New South Wales](#) – Visit the historic Mitchell Library spaces and browse exhibitions drawn from the library's art, photography and archival collections.

[Sydney Opera House](#) – Book a guided tour or check the program for theatre, music, talks and film.

[Sydney Theatre Company](#) – Theatre at Walsh Bay, within an easy harbour walk from Circular Quay.

[Belvoir St Theatre](#) – One of Australia's leading theatre companies, based in nearby Surry Hills.

[Seymour Centre](#) – The closest major performance venue to the conference, beside the University of Sydney.

[Live music nearby](#) – Check programs at the Enmore Theatre, Factory Theatre and Camelot Lounge, all within Sydney’s inner west.

[City Recital Hall](#) – An intimate city concert hall with excellent acoustics and a varied classical, contemporary and world-music program.

A full day escape

[Blue Mountains](#) – Travel by train from Central to Leura, Katoomba or Blackheath in approximately two hours. Choose a bushwalk, visit lookouts or ride the cableways at Scenic World. Start early.

[Scenic World](#) – A convenient way to experience the Jamison Valley via the Scenic Railway, Skyway, Cableway and rainforest walk. Advance booking is wise in summer.

[National parks by car](#) – With a car and extra time, consider Ku-ring-gai Chase, Royal or Lane Cove national parks. Check park alerts, closures and fire conditions before setting out.

Practical essentials

[Transport for NSW Trip Planner](#) – Use it for trains, buses, ferries and light rail. You do not need an Opal card: tap on and off with the same contactless bank card or device for every journey.

[Sydney weather](#) – January can bring heat, humidity, storms and strong sun. Check the Bureau of Meteorology forecast each morning.
