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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**CELEBRATING SYDNEY’S ABORIGINAL ELDERS IN PICTURES**

A unique exhibition showcasing 21 portraits of Aboriginal Elders who live in urban Sydney is now on show at the Australian Museum.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello, who yesterday attended the official launch of *Sydney Elders: Portraits of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders*, said the exhibition is recognition of the importance of these leaders in Aboriginal communities.

“This exhibition is all about celebrating the lives and many achievements of our Aboriginal leaders living in Sydney,” Mr Dominello said.

“These photos particularly represent the significant contribution Elders have made to the wider Aboriginal community and important social issues such as equal wages and land rights.

“They also capture the continuation of traditional culture, protocols and practices in modern, urban Aboriginal communities.

“These poignant portraits were taken by renowned Aboriginal photographer Mervyn Bishop.

*Sydney Elders: Portraits of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders* provides a snapshot of the diversity of life experiences of senior Aboriginal people in Sydney today.

“Elders play an integral role in Aboriginal communities and in the broader community – educating and advising young Aboriginal people as well as creating pathways for future generations.

“As role models, they drive the hopes and expectations of young people in their communities and have a powerful role to play in helping younger generations achieve their full potential.

“I encourage Sydneysiders and visitors alike to take the time to enjoy this fantastic exhibition and learn more about our Aboriginal Elders.”

Minister for the Arts, George Souris, said *Sydney Elders: Portraits of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders* represents urban Aboriginal life through pictures.

“The NSW Government is committed to improving visibility of our rich Aboriginal heritage and supporting Aboriginal communities to maintain strong and vibrant local Aboriginal cultures,” he said.
“That is why the O’Farrell Government has committed more than $1 million to the NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy which provides a framework for State Government agencies to foster a vibrant Aboriginal arts and cultural sector.

“The NSW Government has provided $28.9 million in recurrent and capital funding to the Australian Museum in 2011-12 to showcase world class exhibitions such as this.”