



✦ 4TH AND 5TH AUGUST 2024 ✦

Program
COMMEMORATIVE
EVENTS

WELCOME

Welcome to the commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the 1944 Cowra Breakout.

Allow me to share a personal reflection. It has been an honour for me to have been involved in marking the pivotal anniversaries of the Cowra Breakout. As Chair for the 50th Anniversary in 1994, I witnessed the historic gathering of Japanese and Australian soldiers, who had faced each other as adversaries in New Guinea. This was a momentous occasion, graced by the presence of the National President of the Returned and Services League Major General "Digger" James. Shortly afterwards he initiated profound movements towards reconciliation between our nations.

I have had the privilege of serving as Chair for the 50th, 75th, and now the 80th Anniversary—embarking on a three-decade journey alongside many others who were and remain committed and dedicated to fostering unity between Cowra and Japan, and indeed, between Australia and Japan. This year, we mark the 80th Anniversary of the Cowra Breakout, a tragic event where cultures clashed, and enemies met in battle on Australian soil. Yet, from this crucible emerged an enduring friendship, rooted in simplicity, depth, and truth—a bond that surpasses imagination.

The 80th Anniversary serves as an occasion for remembrance and reaffirmation of the deep and abiding connection between our nations. We, here in Cowra, extend an invitation to you, to join us in this significant commemoration.

Graham Apthorpe

Chair - Cowra Breakout 80th Anniversary Committee

Lead Up Events

Intertwined – The world premiere production of the new musical written by Cowra composer/musician and librettist, Lusi Austin. Intertwined is based on events surrounding the Cowra Breakout and subsequent reconciliation.
26, 27 and 28 July 2024 at Cowra Civic Centre.

Cowra Visitors' Centre Historical Display – 29 July to 10 August, featuring images and artefacts from the Cowra Prisoner of War Camp and those who were held there during WWII. Open all days 9am to 5pm.

Capturing the Homefront – A touring exhibition from the Australian National Maritime Museum that shines a light on life at home during WW II. The exhibition includes photographs by American photojournalist Dorothea Lange, and Australian photographers, Samuel Hood, Edward Cranstone, Hedley Keith Cullen and Jim Fitzpatrick. 7 July to 11 August 2024 at Cowra Regional Art Gallery.
Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 4pm, Sundays 10am to 2pm.
Extended Hours: Sunday 4 August 10am to 4pm, Monday 5 August 12 to 2pm.



PROGRAM OF EVENTS

Sunday 4th August

8.00am - Morning Church Service. All are welcome to attend St Raphael's Catholic Church at the corner of Kendal and Lachlan Streets.

3.30pm - Peace Bell Ceremony and torch run from Australia's Peace Bell to the Cowra Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre. Gather at Australia's Peace Bell in Darling Street where a brief ceremony will take place and a runner will take a lantern from there through to the Japanese Gardens Car Park in readiness for the next event.

4.30pm - Lantern Parade from the Cowra Japanese Garden to POW Campsite. Cowra Community members and visitors are invited to take part in the Peace Parade. The parade will assemble in the carpark of Cowra Japanese Garden. A giant crane, a symbol of hope and peace will lead a parade of 239 lanterns, each representing those lost as a result of the Cowra Breakout. The parade will make its way from the Japanese Garden along Sakura Avenue to the Cowra POW Campsite. The crane and lanterns will then be placed in front of the Peace Panels and remain in place until the 1.30am event. To register for a lantern, please contact Roslyn Ryan ryansclan@bigpond.com.

5.00pm - Community Event on the site of the Cowra POW Breakout. Focusing on peace and unity, activities will include performances by the cast of 'Intertwined' as well as Japanese soprano singer Atsuko Arai who will perform with some of Cowra's school children. There will be a reading of a special peace poem and a summary of the POW Breakout and the importance of the legacy of peace, which Australia and Japan found in the wake of the Breakout.

6.30pm - Official Mayoral Dinner at Cowra Showground Pavilion, with special guest, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales. Tickets available online at breakoutmayoraldinner.eventbrite.com.au.



PROGRAM OF EVENTS

Monday 5th August

1.30am - Commemoration Event - POW Campsite

This event will offer solemn reflections on the human toll of the Breakout and its historical significance. Attendees will have the chance to contemplate the profound human cost, and the occasion will also highlight how this tragedy paved the way for reconciliation between Australia and Japan in subsequent years.

7am - Media Breakfast - Cowra Japanese Garden Café

The media briefing breakfast for the Cowra Breakout Anniversary ceremonies will provide detailed information on the schedule, key individuals and provide an opportunity for interviews.

9.30am - Wreath Laying - Australian & Japanese War Cemeteries

Wreath Laying will commence at the Australian War Cemetery featuring the Australian Federation Guard Catafalque Party. Wreaths will be laid by dignitaries as well as private tributes. At 10am a RAAF flyover of F35A Aircraft will take place paying tribute to the current partnership between the RAAF and the Japan Air Self-Defense's first international deployment of its F-35As. The Federation Guard, dignitaries and members of the public will move to the Japanese Cemetery where both Buddhist and Shinto Ceremonies will be offered, followed by the laying of wreaths and tributes.

11.30am - May Weir Memorial Morning Tea at Cowra Japanese Garden - Private Function for Japanese and Australian invited guests.

Cowra Breakout 80th Anniversary Committee
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