

YHA celebrates 100 years of hostelling on site of its new education centre in The Rocks

YHA will celebrate the centenary of the international youth hostel association, Hostelling International (HI) on August 26, adjacent to the site of The Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre under construction in The Rocks, with a group of students from Fort Street Primary School.

YHA is best known for providing budget accommodation in Australia and overseas, however the organisation's roots are firmly in education.

"With the construction of an educational facility on one of Australia's most significant historic sites, YHA has come full circle," said Mr Julian Ledger, Chief Executive Officer, YHA NSW.

"The organisation began by providing affordable accommodation to enable school groups to benefit from the 'classroom of the outdoors'. With this state-of-the-art facility we will be continuing our ongoing commitment to education," Mr Ledger said.

YHA's origins date back to August 26, 1909 when a German teacher, Richard Schirrmann, spent a night in a school building while taking a group of students on an excursion in the German countryside. From here, the organisation has grown to become the world's largest budget accommodation network, providing more than 4,000 YHA/HI hostels in more than 60 countries.

The Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre is part of the Sydney Harbour YHA complex nearing completion on The Big Dig site on Cumberland Street in The Rocks. It will offer an inspiring education programme and high quality, group accommodation. The two classroom education centre is situated at its heart and will overlook the remnants of more than 40 homes, shops and pubs dating back to the First Fleet and uncovered during recent archaeological digs.

YHA engaged a specialist education consultant to develop an Education Programme to cater for primary school through to tertiary students. These experiential programmes will be delivered by Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority's (SHFA) education unit, Sydney Learning Adventures and will include a simulated dig and artefact handling.

YHA is constructing the 106 bedroom Sydney Harbour YHA and The Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre after winning an open tender process to develop the SHFA owned site in 2006. The complex is expected to open in November 2009.

For more information on The Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre contact Alison Frappell on (02) 9261 1111.

YHA is part of the world's largest budget accommodation network, Hostelling International, which provides more than 4,000 YHA/HI hostels in more than 60 countries. Renowned for its unique properties, YHA hostels include heritage castles, log cabins and beach houses. A membership based organisation, YHA provides travellers with quality accommodation and the opportunity for personal growth through travel, fostering cross cultural understanding and environmental responsibility. YHA is a not for profit organisation, with surpluses invested in the accommodation network and the experience it provides.

Media note: For further information or images please contact Kate Bromley, Indigo Ink PR on (02) 9489 9783 or 0408 407 847.

