

Australian Embassy Berlin

Public and Cultural Affairs

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Bicentenary of the birth of Ludwig Leichhardt in October 2013

Overview of projected activities

The bicentenary of the birth of the Prussian-born Australian explorer Ludwig Leichhardt in October 2013 provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen the bilateral cooperation between Australia and Germany, in particular with a view to Leichhardt's achievements in science and research.

Leichhardt, who was born c. 90 kms south-east of Berlin in the state of Brandenburg, in 1842 voyaged to Australia, where he led three expeditions into central and north-eastern Australia. He vanished on the last of his journeys in 1848 in an attempt to cross the continent from east to west. Leichhardt made significant contributions to Australian exploration and natural science, collecting and cataloguing thousands of specimens of native Australian flora and fauna. For his discoveries, he received prestigious awards from the geographical societies of London and of Paris.

The Australian Embassy Berlin supports the activities of a local Ludwig Leichhardt work group, which comprises representatives from various institutions including the state of Brandenburg's science ministry and the technical university of Cottbus (BTU). Based in the town of Goyatz, near Leichhardt's birthplace, the work group aims to make his name and achievements more widely known in Germany through a number of local projects and events in 2013. Leichhardt is relatively well known in the region – in marked contrast to the rest of Germany – and two local high schools as well as a primary school bear his name. For a number of years, the Embassy has maintained close links to one of these schools, the Ludwig Leichhardt Oberschule (middle school), which has a correspondence relationship with Bremer State High School in Ipswich, Queensland.

Recently, plans for a partnership between the Ludwig Leichhardt Gymnasium (high school) in Cottbus and a suitable counterpart in Australia have emanated from within the group. The initiative, which appears to have the backing of the State Secretary in German's foreign office, Cornelia Pieper (FDP), highlights Leichhardt's symbolic role in the mutually beneficial scientific and research collaboration between Australia and Germany, which today encompasses fields as diverse as the natural sciences, hypersonics, renewable energy, preventive health, and information and communication technology. In addition, Leichhardt is the focus of ongoing research work in Australia and Germany.

The overleaf summary provides an overview of key activities currently being planned for the 'Leichhardt Year 2013' in both Germany and Australia with a particular focus on bilaterally relevant projects. A more comprehensive listing of local events in Leichhardt's native Spreewald region can be found at www.leichhardtland.de.

Projects with a bilateral relevance or impact in Australia and Germany

Project	Where and when
The issue of a commemorative bullion coin. The Perth Mint has produced a two-dollar Leichhardt silver coin and a one-dollar base metal version. Sneak preview at the Embassy's Australia Day function on 28 January.	Berlin, <i>World Money Fair</i> , 1 February 2013 (official release)
Establishment of two Ludwig Leichhardt 'Jubilee' scholarships for Australian researchers by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.	Spring 2013
Ludwig Leichhardt Symposium. A broadly academic event focusing on Leichhardt's legacy in various fields. Likely to include Dr Roslyn Russell, UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, Canberra.	Lieberose, 24 May 2013
Release of the joint German-Australian Ludwig Leichhardt stamp.	Berlin and Melbourne, 10 October 2013

German projects

Press conference at the Australian Embassy , coinciding with the Embassy's Australia Day celebrations and the opening of a Ludwig Leichhardt exhibition compiled by members of the LL work group.	Berlin, 28 January 2013
Formal reception at the Bundestag complex , including speeches by Ambassador Tesch, Brandenburg's Minister for Science, Research and Culture Sabine Kunst, and Volkmar Klein, Chair of the Bundestag's Australia-New Zealand Friendship Group, as well as excerpts of the opera 'Voss'.	Berlin, 19 February 2013
Exhibition <i>Der Australienforscher Ludwig Leichhardt</i> , jointly organised by the University of Potsdam, the Cottbus Municipal Museum, and the Fürst Pückler Museum Foundation.	Cottbus, Schloss Branitz, opens 4 May 2013
Symposium <i>Tausendundein Leichhardt</i> , jointly organised by the University of Potsdam and the Fürst Pückler Museum Foundation.	Cottbus, Schloss Branitz, 27-28 September 2013
Ludwig Leichhardt Conference. Central conference of the Ludwig Leichhardt work group.	Goyatz, 23 October 2013
Opening of a Ludwig Leichhardt stele made by Berlin-based Australian artist Sue Hayward.	Schwielochsee (Goyatz), 23 October 2013

Australian projects

Leichhardt Bicentenary Essay and Drawing Competition for primary and secondary students in Queensland schools located on Leichhardt's expedition route, initiated by Sue Boyce, Senator for Queensland. (Details at: www.sueboyce.com.au/Ludwig_Leichhardt)	Queensland, entries closed 20 May 2013, results announced in August 2013
Seminar <i>Ludwig Leichhardt's Legacies</i> , jointly organised by the University of Technology Sydney and the University of Potsdam.	Sydney, 22-23 May 2013
Publication of extracts from Leichhardt's diaries and accompanying essays by the Queensland Museum.	Brisbane, July 2013, official launch in October 2013 (tbc)
Leichhardt Symposium on Biodiversity and Conservation , an academic conference hosted by the University of Queensland, in collaboration with the Ludwig Maximilians University and the Technical University Munich. (Details at: www.biology.uq.edu.au/leichhardt-symposium)	Brisbane, 22-23 October 2013, follow-up event October 2014 in Munich (tbc)
Leichhardt Bicentenary Art Project , a proposed exhibition by artist Bill Gannon, curated in collaboration with the Sydney College of Arts.	Leichhardt Town Hall, Sydney, opens 23 October 2013 (tbc)