Christmas Lights return to North Sydney as Mary MacKillop Place lights up for Christmas

8 nights of free festive lights, music, food and community celebration from 17 – 24 December

North Sydney - Thursday 17 December 2026

This Christmas, the historic grounds of Mary MacKillop Place will once again be transformed into a festive wonderland as **SEASON OF WONDER – CHRISTMAS AT MARY MACKILLOP PLACE** returns from **17–24 December 2026**.

Across eight magical nights, families, friends and the wider community are invited to experience a **free Christmas celebration** featuring illuminated grounds, festive installations, live music and carols, food and refreshments, family activities and spaces for quiet reflection.

Set in the heart of North Sydney, the celebration offers Sydneysiders the opportunity to slow down and reconnect during one of the busiest times of the year.

Visitors can wander through the illuminated grounds at their own pace, capture festive photos, enjoy Christmas music and share an evening together under the lights.

A fun experience every night

While all are welcome to visit the site throughout the duration of the lights, alongside the illuminated grounds, a series of specially designed activities have been created on select evenings to offer even more ways for the community to connect.

Friday 18 December - "Under the Stars" Youth and Young Adults Night

Youth & Young Adults from across Sydney are invited to gather with friends, experience a night under the lights and enjoy an evening of music, connection and community as the year comes to a close.

Saturday 19 December - "A night with a cause"

Join us for a special evening supporting Mary MacKillop Place's annual Christmas Food Drive – for the fourth year in a row - in partnership with Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (ACM). ACM's work focuses on supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Sydney with a food pantry all year around, Christmas hampers and many more initiatives. Visitors are encouraged to bring along pantry items to support the food drive or enjoy our special fundraising sausage sizzle, where all proceeds will go to supporting ACM.

Sunday 20 December - Family Night

A magical evening for families featuring children's face painting, letter writing to Santa and a special Santa photo opportunity.

Monday 21 December - Paws & Wonder

Four-legged friends are invited to join the Christmas celebrations. Visitors can bring their dogs along in their festive best and take part in a best-dressed competition via Mary MacKillop Place's Instagram.

Thursday 24 December - Quiet Night

A sensory-friendly Christmas experience for those seeking a calmer way to enjoy the festive season, with opportunities to experience the illuminated grounds at a gentler pace and access a dedicated quiet space for rest and reflection.

More than Christmas lights

At the heart of the celebration is the opportunity to experience Mary MacKillop Place in a new way.

Throughout the event, visitors are encouraged to make an evening of it - arriving early, enjoying food and refreshments, listening to Christmas carols and exploring the grounds together.

For those seeking a quieter moment amid the festivities, **the Mary MacKillop Memorial Chapel will remain open throughout the Christmas Lights season**, offering visitors a space for peace, prayer and reflection.

Set within the place where Australia's first saint, **Saint Mary MacKillop**, lived and worked, Mary MacKillop Place provides a unique setting for a Christmas celebration centred on hospitality, community and hope.

EVENT DETAILS

SEASON OF WONDER – CHRISTMAS AT MARY MACKILLOP PLACE

📍 **Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney**

🗓️ **Thursday 17 December – Thursday 24 December 2026**

🕠 **From 5:30pm nightly**

🎟️ **Free admission**

Visitors are invited to come early, pick up dinner (or bring along their own picnic), wander through the illuminated grounds, enjoy live Christmas music and make an evening of it.

All are welcome.

MEDIA INVITATION: OFFICIAL OPENING AND LIGHTING CEREMONY

Thursday 17 December 2026 | From 5:30pm | Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney

Members of the media are invited to attend the official opening of **SEASON OF WONDER – CHRISTMAS AT MARY MACKILLOP PLACE**.

The evening will include the official **Lighting Ceremony and welcome at 6:00pm**, marking the opening of eight nights of Christmas celebrations.

Media opportunities include:

- Official lighting ceremony
- Illuminated heritage grounds and festive installations
- Live Christmas carols
- Interviews with event spokespeople
- Families and community members experiencing the event
- Christmas food and hospitality offerings + a catered private launch with a taste of the lights menu
- Extended access to the Chapel and Mary MacKillop Place grounds
- Photography and video opportunities throughout the evening

MEDIA RSVP HERE: https://form.jotform.com/263070185812858

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About Mary MacKillop Place:

Mary MacKillop Place is a place of hospitality, spirituality, history and community in the heart of North Sydney. A site of pilgrimage for Catholics across the world and the home of Australia's first saint, Saint Mary MacKillop. It welcomes visitors from across Australia and around the world to experience its museum, chapel, accommodation, hospitality and community programs.