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AUSTRALIA’S FIRST SAINT HONOURED WITH HARBOUR BRIDGE DISPLAY

The countdown has begun to the canonisation of Australia’s first saint, with a spectacular light display proposed for the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, has announced the light display will begin tomorrow night and run every night this week leading up to the canonisation of Mary MacKillop in Rome next Sunday, October 17.

“A total of 26 projectors will beam five images of Mary MacKillop on the southern and northern pylons of the bridge,” the Minister said.

They include some of Mary MacKillop’s favourite quotes, including:

- “Whatever troubles may be before you, accept them cheerfully.”
- “Do not be afraid. Love one another.”
- “Let charity guide you in all your life.”

Mr Kelly will officially flick the switch for the light display tomorrow night at 8pm and it will operate every night from sunset to midnight up until and including Sunday, October 17.

The NSW Government has also allocated $250,000 in funding for Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery, the original resting place of Mary MacKillop.

Mr Kelly said while the remains of Mary MacKillop are now situated within the Mary MacKillop Chapel at North Sydney, Australia’s imminent first Saint was originally buried at Gore Hill in 1909, before her remains were relocated to their present site three years later.

“As such the burial site at Gore Hill, surrounded by her fellow Sisters of Saint Joseph, represents a significant historical site not just to the Australian Catholic community but the entire nation and it is important it is preserved and protected for future generations,” the Minister said.

“Earlier this year, I signed a licence agreement with the Catholic Cemeteries Board to allow it to undertake maintenance and improvements of the Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery prior to the canonisation of Mary MacKillop.

“The Board is undertaking a number of projects to not only improve the appearance of the site but also public access and understanding of the site’s significance.

“The work includes the installation of fencing, signage, lighting and security around the Sisters of St Joseph burial sites, enhancement of the memorial in that area, an increased paved area for visitors and the installation of a grave timeline and commemorative sculpture in this area.”

Earlier this week, the Minister announced property deeds signed by Mary MacKillop for land she purchased on behalf of her Order for convents, schools and orphanages can now be viewed on the Land and Property Management Authority’s website.

The LPMA, in conjunction with the Sisters of St Joseph, has also produced a commemorative booklet on Mary MacKillop, detailing her life and work.