

## ***Convict Story***

Historic Houses Trust of NSW



### *Bringing History Alive*

The Historic Houses Trust of NSW (HHT) has released its first Connected Classrooms program, based on the well-attended *Rats* and *Convict Life* programs at Hyde Park Barracks Museum. Students are transported back in time to explore the life of a convict – through the stories of the convict presenter students gain insights into the everyday life of convicts and learn how and why they were transported to Australia and the importance of convict labour to the development of the new colony. The target audience for this program is ages 8-10 years and the program links to the History, English and Creative Arts curriculums.

Using state-of-the-art Interactive Classrooms, schools connect with the HHT via a monitor and video conferencing equipment. Students are active participants in the lesson and are able to examine artefacts and primary sources. These sessions allow the entire class to participate and communicate with the broadcaster and also with other schools linked in at the same time. Dressed in convict uniform and drawing on dramatic props such as the cat 'o nine tails and convict ballads, the HHT's charismatic presenters create an evocative yet factual persona who leads children through the realities of early colonial life.

Since its launch in November 2010, around 2,400 children from 23 schools have taken part in the program. More than 50% of schools are new to the HHT and several have a high percentage of Aboriginal students (for example Gilgandra with 33%) or are schools with high percentages of NESB children (for example Greenway Park with 60%). The majority of schools taking part are located more than 200 kms from Sydney including Gilgandra Public School (476 km from Sydney), Khancoban (576 km), Byron Bay (779 km), Kempsey West (420km), Goulburn North (266km) and Menindee (850km).

By engaging with the NSW Connected Classrooms initiative, the HHT is now able to provide exciting learning opportunities and contact with HHT experts, and to encourage actual visits to HHT house museums for students and communities regardless of where they live and got to school.

*Convict Story* was developed and produced with support from the NSW Department of Distance and Rural Technologies.

[www.hht.net.au/education/resources/connected\\_classrooms](http://www.hht.net.au/education/resources/connected_classrooms)