

# MEDIA RELEASE

8 DECEMBER 2015

## RARE CHINESE TREASURES TO STAR IN NLA'S SUMMER BLOCKBUSTER

In a world-first, treasures from the National Library of Australia will go on display with priceless gems from the National Library of China in the summer blockbuster exhibition, *Celestial Empire: Life in China 1644-1911* – only at the National Library of Australia, Canberra.

The life, culture and traditions of the last imperial dynasty that gave birth to modern China will feature in *Celestial Empire: Life in China 1644-1911*, when it opens on 2 January 2016 for a strictly limited season.

Chair of the National Library of Australia Council, Mr Ryan Stokes, said the exhibition had been nearly three years in the making, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2012 with the National Library of China.

'The exhibition provides a rare window into nearly 300 years of life at court, in the fields and in the cities of Beijing and Shanghai – the Qing Dynasty,' Mr Stokes said.

'It is also a first for these two leading cultural institutions,' he said. 'Many of these treasures have not been out of the country before.'

Mr Stokes was at the National Library today to see curators unfurl one of the star attractions of the upcoming exhibition, the 6m x 60cm plan of the Forbidden City Palace from the National Library of China's collection.

The plan belongs to the Lei family archives, is registered on UNESCO's History of the World Register – and has never been out of China before.

High-res images from *Celestial Empire* are available at <https://www.nla.gov.au/news/media-kits>

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