



The Sir John Monash Centre

- The Sir John Monash Centre is the hub of [the Australian Remembrance Trail along the Western Front](#), educating a new international audience about Australia's early role in international affairs.
- The Centre tells Australia's story of the First World War Western Front battlefields in the words of those who served.
- The Centre has the strong support of local, regional and national authorities.
- During construction, more than 180 personal artefacts and relics and 230kg of unexploded ordnance from the First World War were uncovered.
- The Centre is filled with Australian art and craftsmanship including the 'Morning Star' tapestry, Indigenous artworks, the Rising Sun glass sculpture and a fit-out featuring eight varieties of Australian timbers sourced from each state and territory. For more information on the artists see the 'Art in the Sir John Monash Centre factsheet'.
- Only a 90-minute drive from Paris, the Sir John Monash Centre offers an outstanding Western Front experience for visitors to the Somme region of France.
- Entry to the Sir John Monash Centre is free.

Design

- The Sir John Monash Centre, adjacent to the [Australian National Memorial](#), has been built by French contractors according to the design of Australian firm, [Cox Architecture](#), and honouring the original design by Sir Edwin Lutyens.



- The use of light in the Centre is deliberate, complex and essential to the experience. The darkened entry chamber resembling the trench system is contrasted by the spacious foyer—top lit by a triangular oculus which draws the eye to the Australian National Memorial tower.
- The darkened immersive gallery at the heart of the Centre is nestled between full glass panels which create a three-dimensional effect and link the gallery to the foyer. The display space immediately below the floating roof is contrasted with the sunlit exit space. The design takes visitors on a journey from darkness to light, commemoration to interpretation, war to peace.

Sustainability

- The Sir John Monash Centre uses a range of environmentally-friendly design solutions to help reduce energy and operating costs.
- The building is half submerged in the ground with a meadowed roof to help reduce temperature variation and to blend seamlessly with the landscape.
- The European Regional Development Fund embraced the Sir John Monash Centre as a flagship environmentally sustainable project, awarding significant grant funding of over €420,000 towards the installation of a geothermal system to heat and cool the building.
- A geothermal system consisting of 41 geothermal piles driven 185 metres below the surface draw on the consistent temperature of the chalky earth to heat and cool the building.
- This geothermal system greatly reduces energy consumption and maintains the building's climate at an operating cost lower than a conventional system.



Technology

- The approximately 1,000 square metre building will house a 483 square metre multimedia interpretive and immersive gallery experience designed by Convergence Associates (Melbourne).
- The Western Front is brought to life with interactive and immersive technology produced by [Wildbear Entertainment](#) featuring new and archival footage, animations, maps, music and soundscapes which are tailored for a personalised experience and delivered in three languages—English, French and German.
- To have the full experience of the Centre, visitors will need to download the Sir John Monash Centre app, available for free download to visitors' own iOS and Android devices via the on-site Wi-Fi network. This app will then guide them through the experience.
- Using beacon technology the app determines a visitor's location, launching video and other content on to one of the nearest screens, projectors, and individual devices.
- Outside, as visitors walk past the more than 2,000 gravesites, they will hear stories of some of the soldiers lost on the battlefields. As they move to the Australian National Memorial, which bears the names of more than 10,700 Australian soldiers who died in France and have no known grave, the app integrates data from the [National Archives of Australia](#) so visitors can search the database and locate names of soldiers commemorated on the wall.