

# History - Matt Pearson - State Library Archives Reveal A City Under Siege As Bubonic Plague Sparks Panic And A Mass Cleansing Of Sydney Slums



Photo: State Library NSW

*Bubonic plague outbreak in Sydney killed 103 people in eight months  
Mass cleansing of city saw vast tracts of housing, slums razed in CBD  
Further 12 outbreaks occurred between 1900-1925  
Significant urban renewal resulted from demolition of inner city slums*

Panic and dread swept through Sydney when the bubonic plague arrived in 1900 and authorities, knowing the ravenous potential of the disease, were ruthless in their attempts to control it.

These stunning pictures from the online archives of the State Library of NSW, uploaded to its [Flickr Commons account](#), document life in the city when the plague arrived.

State Librarian Dr Alex Byrne said the photos told a unique Sydney story, but pointed out that even in the tragic circumstances of 1900, some good still came through.

See more: <http://m.dailytelegraph.com.au/-mass-cleansing-of-sydney-slums/>