

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM OFFICIALLY REOPENS TO THE PUBLIC **Doors Open with Free General Admission from This Saturday 28 November 2020**

Sydney, 11:00am, 26 November 2020: The Australian Museum, closed for the past 15 months for a \$57.5 million transformation, the largest in its history, was officially reopened today by the NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian and Minister for the Arts Don Harwin, in a ceremony held in the Museum's new Hintze Hall, named for its donor.

The major renovation of Australia's first museum, delivered on time and on budget, has redeveloped its public and exhibition spaces, unlocking more than 3,000sqm of new public space, repurposed from back-of-house areas. The expansion allows the AM to host one major international travelling exhibition or two smaller exhibitions at the same time. Other public spaces have also been reimagined, including the creation of a new Museum Shop, a second café, a new Members Lounge, new education rooms, cloakroom and new amenities.

Known as Project Discover, the transformation was made possible by the NSW Government contributing \$50.5 million and generous philanthropic support from AM private donors contributing more than \$7 million.

The Museum will open its doors to the public from this Saturday 28 November, with free general admission for visitors to enjoy the newly revamped public spaces. There are two major exhibitions on show for the AM's reopening – a special, ticketed exhibition, ***Tyrannosaurs – Meet the Family*** and ***Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year*** which is free as part of reopening.

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said the reopening of the Museum would be welcomed by the people of NSW with the renovation placing the Australian Museum among the region's finest natural history and cultural institutions.

"The Australian Museum is the country's first museum so it is only fitting this world class institution has an upgraded home in the heart of Sydney," Ms Berejiklian said.

"The expanded exhibition areas will house the world's biggest and best travelling exhibitions and I'm excited for the opportunities it brings for the people of NSW and visitors from around the globe."

At today's ribbon-cutting ceremony, Minister for the Arts Don Harwin, said the Museum was an important cultural home for the people of NSW and all Australians.

"Our cultural institutions come alive only when we inhabit them," Minister Harwin said.

"The renewed and expanded Australian Museum is a place for everyone to enjoy - all the time. A civic space where people can meet and spend time together, discover and explore.

"With its rich history, the Australian Museum has witnessed significant changes in our society and continues to play an important role in our cultural landscape.

"The Museum's transformation has put it firmly on the world stage, yet it remains a truly Australian museum and an iconic part of Sydney's own backyard."

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Australian Museum

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Australian Museum's Director and CEO, Kim McKay AO, who led the vision for Project Discover, said the AM plays an important role in the community.

"Museums are much more than collections on display – they are centres of discovery, learning and storytelling and places of social interaction," Ms McKay said.

"The Australian Museum has entered a new age – both physically and in its focus. Our new key focus areas of climate change, First Nations knowledge and scientific leadership through the Australian Museum Research Institute reflect the role of the Museum in today's world.

"This is an important step towards the Australian Museum's future, and we look forward to continuing to expand and evolve the Museum. Over the next three years, the AM will continue to open new galleries, including a new interactive education space and new Mineral, Pacific and Egyptian Galleries.

"I'm very proud of the team who have made this transformation possible. The Museum will truly come to life again this weekend when the public return and the sound of children being surprised and delighted fills these halls."

The design of Project Discover was led by COX Architecture and Neeson Murcutt + Neille, the firm behind the award-winning Brian Sherman Crystal Hall. Kane Constructions, who collaborated with Neeson Murcutt + Neille to build Brian Sherman Crystal Hall, also managed the build of Project Discover. A construction waste strategy was implemented, where materials such as timber were recycled in the new exhibition spaces, helping achieve a more than 90% diversion from landfill for all demolition waste.

The transformation has also revealed more of the Australian Museum's sandstone, honouring the heritage buildings of the iconic institution. The Minister's Sandstone Project has seen \$3 million invested to restore the heritage sandstone on the Barnet Wing and the sandstone fence surrounding the AM along College Street.

The Australian Museum is committed to keeping visitors and staff safe and has achieved the NSW Government's 'COVID Safe' industry standard by demonstrating adherence to the respective Government and public health guidelines and the implementation of new safety measures. To learn more about the transformed Australian Museum, visit [Australian.Museum](https://australian.museum).

#ENDS#

Editorial information: Reopening media kit, including images and video assets, available at at <https://foto.australian.museum>.

About the Australian Museum

The [Australian Museum](https://australian.museum) (AM) was founded in 1827 and is the nation's first museum. It is internationally recognised as a natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. As custodian of more than 21.9 million objects and specimens, the AM is uniquely positioned to provide a greater understanding of the region through its scientific research, exhibitions and public and education programs. Through the Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI), the AM also plays a leading role in conserving Australia's biodiversity through understanding the environmental impacts of climate change, potential security threats and invasive species.

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