

Oceans in Crisis: renowned US environmental advocate, Terry Garcia to deliver annual Talbot Oration at the Australian Museum

International ocean's expert and explorer Terry Garcia speaks at the Australian Museum on the eve of World Environment Day

Sydney, Tuesday, 2 June 2026: The Australian Museum (AM) will host the sixth annual [Talbot Oration](#) on **Thursday 4 June 2026**, on the eve of World Environment Day, bringing together leading voices in ocean science, conservation and environmental policy for an evening of ideas and conversation. US ocean and exploration advocate **Terry Garcia** will deliver the oration.

In his first visit to Sydney, Garcia, President of Exploration Ventures and former Executive Vice President and Chief Science and Exploration Officer of the National Geographic Society and Deputy Administrator of NOAA, will share his experience at the frontier of ocean exploration and policy. In this year's Talbot Oration, Garcia maps the scale of the crisis and the emerging solutions through technology, investment and international cooperation, making a compelling case for individual action and cautious optimism.

"We are pushing the ocean to its limits while simultaneously dismantling the scientific institutions we need to understand and respond to that threat; complacency is not an option, however, neither is despair. There are solutions within reach, and the knowledge, technology and international will to pursue them. What we need now is the courage to act on what the science is telling us," Terry Garcia said.

Prior to joining National Geographic, Garcia served as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere at the US Department of Commerce, and as Deputy Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In 2010, he was appointed by President Obama to the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling, leading the investigation into the disaster's root causes and developing recommendations to prevent future incidents.

The keynote address will be followed by a panel discussion moderated by AM Director and CEO Kim McKay AO, featuring:

- **Jasmine (Jas) Chambers**, Chair and Co-founder of Ocean Decade Australia and President of Science & Technology Australia, whose career spans international science diplomacy, ocean governance and research partnerships across the Pacific;
- **Tim Jarvis AM**, explorer, environmental communicator and South Australia's Australian of the Year 2024, known for his expeditions to Antarctica and long-standing advocacy for its protection; and

- **Melissa Malu**, Head of Pasifika Collections and Engagement at the Australian Museum, Malu brings her Tongan and Fijian heritage to her transformative work in cultural preservation and community development focusing on the impacts of Climate Change across the Pacific.

The panel will explore the intersections of ocean exploration, traditional ecological knowledge, conservation and the policy frameworks needed to safeguard future ocean protection.

For six years, the Talbot Oration has brought the world's finest scientific and environmental minds to Sydney to speak honestly about the challenges facing our planet. Terry Garcia has spent his life at the intersection of science, policy and exploration, and his insights could not be timelier.

As the cornerstone event of the AM's [Climate Solutions Centre \(CSC\)](#), the Talbot Oration brings together the public to hear from leaders in environmental sector, reflecting the AM's role as a leading scientific institution and forum for important conversations about the impacts of climate change.

"Establishing the Climate Solution Centre at the Australian Museum has been an initiative that brings climate issues to the fore. Working with curator Dr Jenny Newell, we're creating a place where scientists, researchers, advocates and communicators connect the Australian public with real and practical solutions. The work is becoming more serious, and I'm excited that the next chapter of the CSC will provide a forum for more public engagement.

"Over the next five years, the CSC will highlight research in social science, biogeography and collections-based science projects expanding into new initiatives that communicate climate science in ways that will truly connect the AM's audiences. In the face of so much environmental change, despair can feel like the natural response, but the science tells a different story. The tools to repair, regenerate and build resilience already exist," Kim McKay said.

Event details:

Thursday, 4 June; 6:30 to 8pm.

Australian Museum 1 William Street, Sydney, 2000

Free for members and \$20 for non-members;

registration required via australian.museum/event/talbot-oration-2026

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About The Talbot Oration

Named in honour of former Australian Museum Director Professor Frank Talbot AM, this annual oration celebrates Talbot's commitment to, and achievements in marine research and environmental studies in Australia and on the global stage. Talbot was a marine scientist of global renown, and the Oration named in his honour showcases advances in the field of climate change research and environmental conservation, enabling the public to better understand how responses to the climate challenge determine our future prospects, health, and the sustainability of our natural environment.

Australian Museum

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About the Australian Museum

The nation's first museum, the Australian Museum (AM) was founded in 1827 and will mark its 200-year anniversary in 2027. It is internationally recognised as a natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. The AM holds more than 22 million objects and specimens in its collection, the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. It pursues a mission to ignite wonder, inspire debate and drive change. The AM's vision is to be a leading voice for the richness of life, the Earth and culture in Australia and the Pacific and commits to transforming the conversation around climate change, the environment and wildlife conservation; being a strong advocate for First Nations cultures; and continuing to develop world-leading science through the [Australian Museum Research Institute \(AMRI\)](#). The AM is not only a dynamic source of reliable scientific information on the environmental and social challenges facing our region, but also a trusted site of cultural exchange and learning. Visit www.australian.museum

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