

Welcome Early Birds

We hope you enjoy your visit to the Australian Museum



Visual Story

My Early Birds visit to the Australian Museum

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I will be visiting the Australian Museum

I will use this Visual Story to prepare for my visit.

The Australian Museum (AM) inspires understanding and conservation of our natural and cultural worlds.

Early Birds: Autism and sensory-friendly mornings open from 8am – 10am.

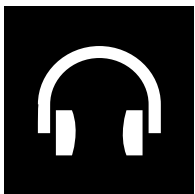
I am welcome to stay and enjoy the AM for the remainder of the day, however, lighting and sound in exhibition spaces will return to previous levels after 10am.

Symbols I will see in this Visual Story

During Early Birds, the lights and sounds will be turned down where possible.

Sensory symbols

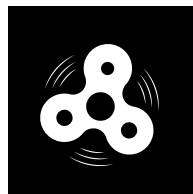
If I have sensory sensitivities, I can bring items that help me to feel comfortable and relaxed, like:



Noise reducing headphones

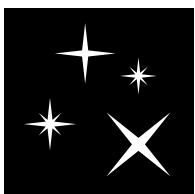


Hat or sunglasses

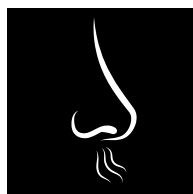


Stimming or fidget toy or device

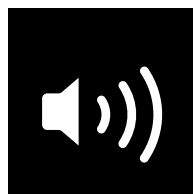
These symbols will help me prepare for spaces that might have bright lights, smells, loud sounds or be very visual.



bright lights



smells

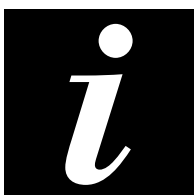


loud sounds

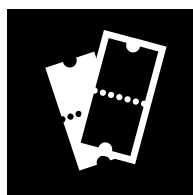


visual

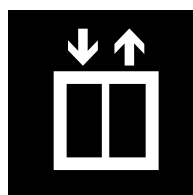
These symbols represent the following general information that can be found on various levels of the Museum



information



tickets



lift



toilets



Behaviour symbols

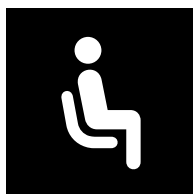
These are some positive behaviours I can follow while at the AM to keep the museum displays, and everyone, safe.



I will walk through the AM, so I don't slip or bump into anything or anyone.



There are some display objects that I can touch. Some things may feel rough, smooth, bumpy, soft or hard.



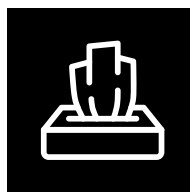
If I need a rest I can take a seat. Or if I am hungry I can use the seats at the cafes to eat.



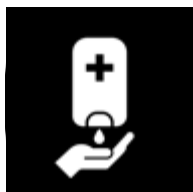
If there is a 'Please do not touch' sign, or when objects are behind glass, this means I won't be able to touch because they need to be kept safe.



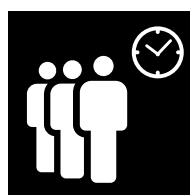
I will not take any food or drink into the galleries and exhibitions. This will help preserve the collections.



I will cover my nose and mouth with a tissue or flexed elbow when coughing or sneezing.



I will make sure my hands are clean before and after I touch something. There are hand sanitising stations and toilets where I can wash my hands throughout the AM.



Sometimes the AM is very busy. I might have to wait in a queue for my turn. I can play with something I have brought from home while I wait.



Where can I find the Australian Museum?



The AM's main entrance is located on the corner of College Street and William Street in central Sydney, across the road from Hyde Park and opposite St Mary's Cathedral.

The entrance is on College Street, which is a main road and can be noisy with traffic.

To plan how I will get to the AM, I can visit the [Parking and Public Transport](#) webpage.

I will know when I am there because I will see the sandstone building with the AM logo.

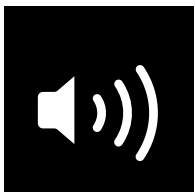




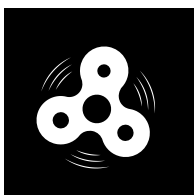
Entering the Australian Museum



First, I will walk up the Museum Walk ramp to the entrance.



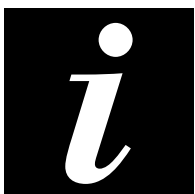
A security guard will greet me and help me if I need it.



If there is a queue, I will wait patiently for my turn. I can play with something I have brought from home while I wait.



Entering the Australian Museum



Next I will enter Crystal Hall, where I will be greeted by staff and asked if I would like a lanyard or map.



If I have pre-purchased a ticket to an exhibition, I will show staff my ticket (printed or on device) as I enter.

I can purchase ticket/s to special exhibitions at the Admissions desk.

Staff wear a black uniform and have a name badge.

Staff can answer my questions or help me if I get lost.



Australian Museum map

I can pick up an Australian Museum map from the front desk. This map shows the locations of:

- exhibitions and galleries
- cafes
- visitor facilities

I can explore the online map [here](#). I can check the [AM website](#) before I visit to see what exhibits I will be able to explore.



Acknowledgement of Country



I will see the Acknowledgement of Country inside the main entrance.

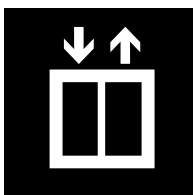
The land on which the Australian Museum stands is Gadigal land.

The painting of the Sydney Shield in Crystal Hall pays respect to the Custodians of this land.

I am welcome to look at and touch this wall.



Lifts



There are three lifts I can use to go to different levels of the AM. I can use the lifts if I am unable or prefer not to use the stairs.

I will need to press the arrow button to use the lift. Once inside, I will press the number button for the level I want to visit.

Lift A has access to all levels

Lift B has access to UG and Level 1, 2, & 4

Lift C has access to B and UG



Toilets



If I need help finding the toilet, I can:

- look for signs
- look on the map
- ask a staff member

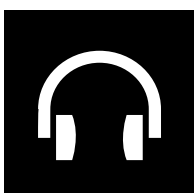


The closest toilet to the entrance of the AM is on the ramp, behind the shop on Level G. This is an accessible toilet.

Alternatively, many toilets, including an all gender toilet, are located near the Cloaking Room on Level Lower Ground (LG).



There are toilets on every level of the Australian Museum, including a Changing Places accessible adult change facility on Level 2. I will need to ask staff to access this room.



The hand dryers will be turned off and paper towel will be available instead.



Places to eat



I can buy pre-made food like sandwiches, salads and drinks at the Billabong Waterhole Café on Level 2.

I can also bring my own food and eat it in Hintze Hall on Level UG, where there are tables and chairs available.



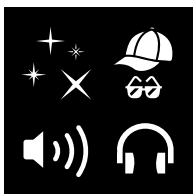
I am not allowed to eat or drink in the exhibition spaces. This helps keep the displays safe and clean.



Where can I go if I need somewhere quiet?



During Early Birds (8-10am), I am welcome to use the Members Lounge or Burra Theatrette as a Quiet Room if I need to take a break.



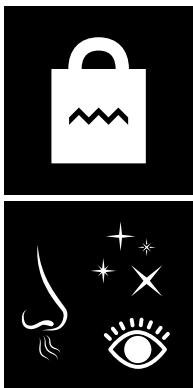
The Members Lounge is located on Level LG, and Burra Theatrette is located on Level 2. I can take the lift or stairs to get there.

There will be Sensory Oasis tents provided by St Vincent de Paul Society with calming resources inside.

After 10am, these quiet spaces will not be available.



Gift Shop



The AM Shop is near the entrance and exit to the AM on Level G.

I can visit the AM Shop when I start or finish my visit.

The shop has all sorts of things for sale, such as mineral specimens, books, Australian animals and dinosaur toys. The putty and sensory toys are popular. Some of the soaps and toiletries for sale have a strong smell.

Suggested route to see all Exhibitions

1. Hintze Hall (Level UG)
2. *Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year* (Level UG)
3. *Ngurruwarra/Derndernyin* (Level UG)
4. *Bloodsuckers: Nature's Vampires* (Level UG)
5. First Nations Gallery: *Garrigarrang: Sea Country* (Level UG)
6. *Wild Planet* (Level UG)
7. Westpac Long Gallery: *200 Treasures of the Australian Museum*
(Level G and Level 1)
8. *Minerals* (Level 1)
9. *Burra* (Level 2)
10. Pasifika Gallery: *Wansolmoana (One Salt Ocean)* (Level 2)
11. *Surviving Australia* (Level 2)
11. *Dinosaurs* (Level 2)



Beginning my AM journey

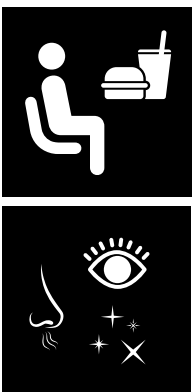


If I want to go to the galleries and exhibitions,
I can use the ramp around the back of the shop or the stairs.



Hintze Hall

■ High Sensory
■ Busy areas, with a mix of multimedia, loud noises and/or low lighting



Once I have travelled up the ramp or stairs, I will enter Hintze Hall on Level UG, which is the centre of the AM. I can access many exhibitions from here.

If I need a snack or a drink, I can use the nearby picnicker seating to eat and drink. I will need to sit at one of the tables to eat and drink. There are bins nearby where I can put my rubbish.



Photo © Lewis Burnett (detail)

The 2026 Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year (AGNPY 2026)

Low Sensory
Quiet, well lit areas
with fewer people
and low noise levels

I do not need a ticket to enter AGNPY 2026.

I can access the exhibition on the Upper Ground floor (UG).

See nature in a whole new light in this stunning, photographic exhibition, featuring works by some of the world's best nature photographers.

100 spectacular images are on display, showcasing the beautiful wildlife, landscapes and natural heritage of Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and New Guinea.

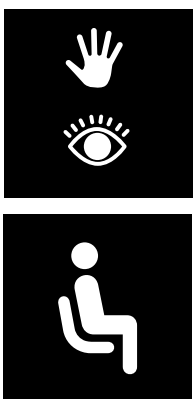
There is no set route through this exhibition.



Ngurruwarra/Derndernyin Exhibition

Medium Sensory
Light areas with few
people, some audio
and visual noise

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be aware that this exhibition contains the names, voices and images of people who have passed away.



I do not need a ticket to enter *Ngurruwarra/Derndernyin*.

I can access the exhibition on the Upper Ground floor (UG).

Ngurruwarra/Derndernyin is a powerful collaborative exhibition created by ten Kaiadilt, Lardil and Gangalidda artists, honouring the stone fish traps of the Wellesley Islands. At its centre is a monumental 20-metre-long painting that celebrates culture, story and identity across the seas, lands and skies of the Traditional Owner communities of the region.

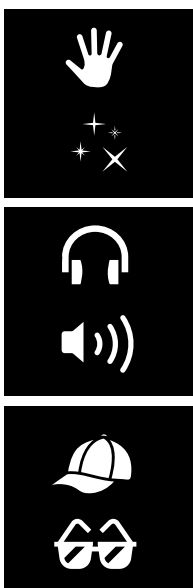
There are videos and sounds playing throughout the exhibition space. This three-screen audio-visual artwork by Martin Potter, which expands on these themes and a 9-metre-long pencil drawing titled *Dulka Warngiida*, being displayed for the first time.

There is no set route through the exhibition.



Bloodsuckers: Nature's Vampires

■ High Sensory
■ Busy areas, with a mix of multimedia, loud noises and/or low lighting



I must have a ticket to enter *Bloodsuckers: Nature's Vampires*. I can pre-purchase this online, or if not sold out already I can purchase at the Admissions Desk on the day I visit.

Once I have my ticket, I will move to Upper Ground (UG) to present my ticket. My ticket will be scanned, and staff will direct me to enter the exhibition. I will go down one floor by taking the escalator or lift.

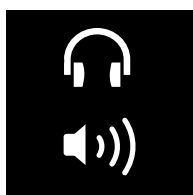
This exhibition is all about the fascinating bloodsuckers of our planet, from ancient myths to modern science. There are several rooms, with interactive exhibits that help illustrate their impact on pop culture, medicine and environmental systems.

Once I am finished exploring the exhibition, I will exit by taking the escalator or lift up to Upper Ground.



First Nations Gallery: *Garrigarrang: Sea Country*

Medium Sensory
Light areas with few
people, some audio
and visual noise



I will walk into *Garrigarrang: Sea Country* from Hintze Hall or *Wild Planet*. I will see Ghost Net sculptures hanging from the ceiling. These sculptures were made using fishing nets which litter the waters of northern Australia and Torres Strait.

This exhibition is dimly lit and has some LED strip lights underneath the displays.

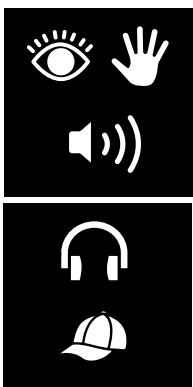
TV audio is turned off for Early Birds from 8am-10am.

Some displays in this exhibition talk about death. If I find this overwhelming, I can leave this space and explore somewhere else.



Wild Planet

Medium Sensory
Light areas with few people, some audio and visual noise



I can find *Wild Planet* from Garrigarrang: *Sea Country*, Hintze Hall, or walk through from Westpac Long Gallery.

In this exhibition I will see lots of animals and animal skeletons in glass cases. This exhibition can get loud when there are many people. I may want to wear my noise reducing earmuffs or headphones.

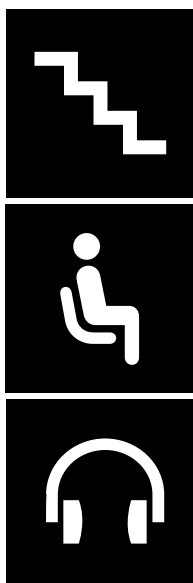
There will often be a scientist or two in this gallery who I can talk to and touch some of their resources.

I can also listen to the exhibition audio description on my headphones and mobile on this free [Audio Guide](#).



Westpac Long Gallery: 200 *Treasures of the Australian Museum*

Low Sensory
Quiet, well lit areas
with fewer people
and low noise levels



This exhibition showcases 100 treasures of the AM alongside the stories of 100 of Australia's most-influential people. I will walk downstairs to enter the exhibition from Wild Planet, Level UG.

There are comfy seats I can sit or lie down on if I need to.

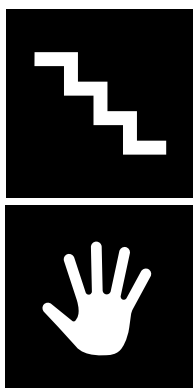
I will see collections of objects. Some are very old, some are very rare, some are beautiful, others mysterious. All tell fascinating and unexpected stories – about the Museum, about Australia and its region, or about the wonders of the natural world.

I can also listen to the exhibition audio description on my headphones and mobile on this free [Audio Guide](#).



Westpac Long Gallery: 200 *Treasures of the Australian Museum*

Low Sensory
Quiet, well lit areas
with fewer people
and low noise levels



I can walk up the stairs or take the lift to Level 1 and continue exploring the *200 Treasures of the Australian Museum*. I can discover the stories of 100 extraordinary people who have shaped Australia and made it the country it is today.

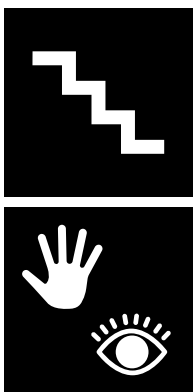
Scientists, explorers, and pioneers; entrepreneurs, athletes, and artists; politicians, an outlaw and a saint.

I can touch the screen to learn more about the people I see on the screen. There is a sign on the right hand side of the screen which explains how I can use them.



Minerals

Medium Sensory
Light areas with few
people, some audio
and visual noise



I can access *Minerals* from *200 Treasures*, or I can walk up the stairs (or take the lift) to Level 1.

This exhibition is a sensory friendly space. It is quieter, calmer and darker. I can learn how minerals are made and see minerals that glow in the dark.

This exhibition has touch screens and games I can touch and play to learn how minerals are made.



Burra

■ High Sensory
■ Busy areas, with a mix of multimedia, loud noises and/or low lighting



I can enter Burra by walking up the stairs or catching the lift to Level 2.

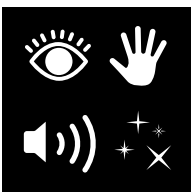
This is the AM's learning and play space which explores the migration journey of Burra the eel. There are lots of things for me to touch and play with including screens, tactile displays, dress up and books.

There are multimedia walls and floors. This area may be filled with children and can become noisy when busy. I may like to wear headphones if I become overwhelmed.



Surviving Australia

High Sensory
Busy areas, with a
mix of multimedia,
loud noises and/or
low lighting



I can enter *Surviving Australia* from *Wansolmoana* or *Dinosaurs*.

In this exhibition I journey through the prehistoric past of Australia and into our modern environment to discover Australia's most fascinating creatures. I will see a lot of Australian animals and extinct Australian animals in showcases. The models of animals vary in size, from small to large models.

There are many displays that I can touch in this exhibition. There are also many digital interactives on screens I can play with.

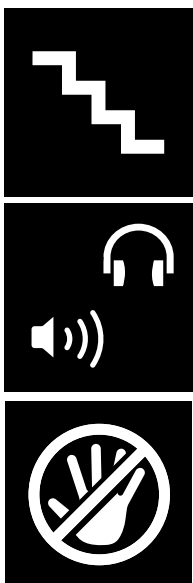
Gentle nature audio plays throughout this exhibition space. This exhibition can get loud when there are many people. I may want to wear my noise reducing earmuffs or headphones.

Content warning: There are models of sharks and snakes, and images and specimens of spiders in this exhibition. I can skip or leave this exhibition if I feel scared.



Pasifika Gallery: *Wansolmoana (One Salt Ocean)*

Medium Sensory
Light areas with few
people, some audio
and visual noise



I can enter *Wansolmoana* by taking the ramp from Billabong Kiosk or by taking the stairs from *Garrigarrang* on Level UG.

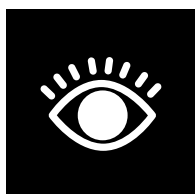
In this exhibition, I will experience the diverse and dynamic culture of Pasifika people through stories and objects across the region.

There are touch screens I may touch to listen to stories from various people, and to locate where the different islands and objects come from on a map. I am not allowed to touch objects in this exhibition.



Dinosaurs

■ High Sensory
■ Busy areas, with a mix of multimedia, loud noises and/or low lighting



I can access *Dinosaurs* via *Birds of Australia* on Level 2, or up the marble stairs from *Wild Planet*. I will walk among dinosaur skeletons and life-size models, as well as the fossil teeth, skulls and claws of these ancient creatures.

There are many fossil displays I can touch in this exhibition.

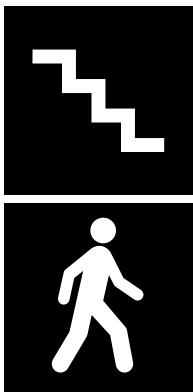
The loud noises and strobe lights in this exhibition are turned off for Early Birds, from 8am-10am.

This exhibition also has models which show death and a model of a dinosaur autopsy, that I may find scary. I can choose not to see this exhibit.

I can also listen to the exhibition audio description on my headphones and mobile on this free [Audio Guide](#).



Exiting the Museum



If I followed the suggested sequence in this Visual Story, I will have now visited every exhibition in the AM.

To exit the Museum, I will need to walk down the stairs or catch the lift to Level G.

The exit is next to where I entered the Museum.

We hope you enjoy your visit to the Australian Museum!

The Australian Museum has worked with Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) to make this an accessible event. "Autism - A Different Brilliant" - Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) Registered Trademark.

