



Visual Story

My visit to Night Owls at 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.

Night Owls will open at 6pm, and the event will finish at 9pm, at which time the lights will begin to come back on.

Symbols I will see in this Visual Story

The AM has low, medium and high sensory areas. These are indicated on the AM Map.

Sensory symbols

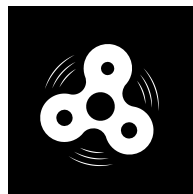
If I have sensory sensitivities, I can bring items that help me to feel comfortable and relaxed, like:



Noise reducing headphones



Hat or sunglasses



Stimming or fidget toy or device

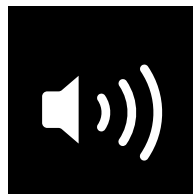
These symbols will help me prepare for spaces that might have bright lights, smells, loud sounds or be very visual.



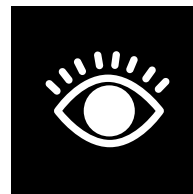
bright lights



smells

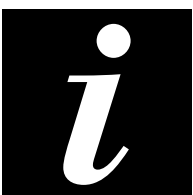


loud sounds

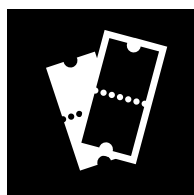


visual

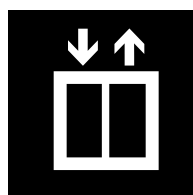
These symbols represent the following general information that can be found on various levels of the Museum



information



tickets



lift



toilets



Behaviour symbols

These rules help 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.



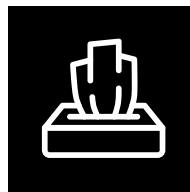
If I need a rest I can take a seat. Or if I am hungry I can use the seats at the cafes to eat.



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.



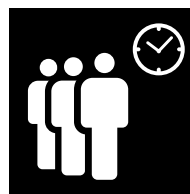
I will not take any food or drink into the galleries and exhibitions. This will help preserve the collections.



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



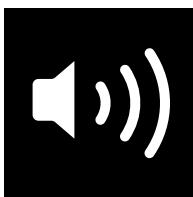
I will make sure my hands are clean before and after I touch something. There are hand sanitising stations and toilets where I can wash my hands throughout the AM.



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



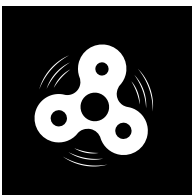
First, I will walk up Museum Walk ramp to the entrance.

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

There may be a queue and I might need to wait my turn.

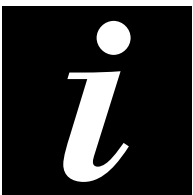


I can play with something I have brought from home while I wait.

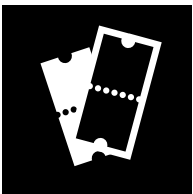




Entering the Australian Museum



If I have pre-booked a ticket to Night Owls, I will show staff my ticket (printed or on device) as I enter.



I can purchase ticket/s to *Bloodsuckers* using my card 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 and Night Owls event guide

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.

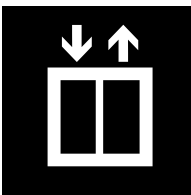
The land on which the Australian Museum stands is Gadigal land.

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.

During Night Owls, Level 4 will be closed.

If I have a ticket for the *Bloodsuckers* exhibition, I can use Lift C within the exhibition space.



Cloaking Room



If I have a bag or jacket that I would like to store during my visit, I can take them to the cloakroom on Lower Ground (LG).



If there is a queue, I will wait patiently for my turn. I can play with a stim or fidget toy/device from home, whilst I wait.

I will be greeted by a member of staff who will take my belongings and give me a number tag.

When I am ready to collect my things I will need to hand over the number tag in order to get my belongings.

I must remember to collect items at least 10 minutes before the museum closes.



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).

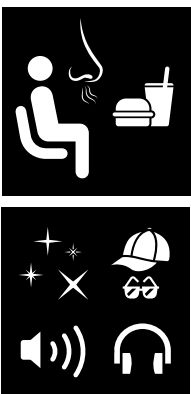
There are toilets on every level of the Australian Museum, including a Changing Place accessible adult change facility on Level 2. I will need to ask staff to access this room.

During Night Owls, the toilets on level 1 will be gender neutral.

The hand dryers will be turned off during the event.



Places to eat



There will be a pop-up bar in Hintze Hall where I can buy snacks including pies, sausage rolls, bags of potato chips, soft drinks and alcohol.

I can bring my own food if I like. There will be tables where I can eat my food.

If I am over 18 I can buy a beer or glass of wine. I must remember to show my ID if I am asked to.

It might be busy and loud in Hintze Hall. I can wear my noise cancelling headphones or earplugs if I need to.

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

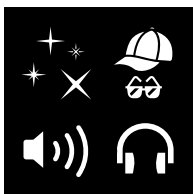


Where can I go if I need somewhere quiet



During Night Owls, I am welcome to use the Education Room as a Quiet Room if I need to take a break.

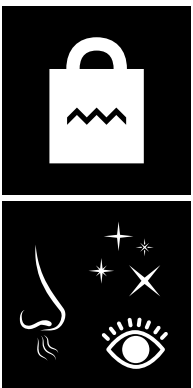
The Education Room is located on Level G. I can take the lift or stairs to get there.



Before 6pm, 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.

During Night Owls, the gift shop will close at 9pm.

Suggested route to see everything

1. Hintze Hall (Level UG)
2. *FrogID Touring Exhibition* (Level UG)
3. *Bloodsuckers: Natures's Vampires* (Level UG)
4. First Nations Gallery: *Garrigarrang: Sea Country* (Level UG)
5. *Wild Planet* (Level UG)
6. Library of the Unusual
7. Westpac Long Gallery: *200 Treasures of the Australian Museum* (Level G and Level 1)
8. *Minerals* (Level 1)
9. Insects Touch Table (Level 1 landing)
10. STEM station (Level 2)
11. Burra (Level 2)
12. Pasifika Gallery: *Wansolmoana (One Salt Ocean)* (Level 2)
13. *Surviving Australia* (Level 2)
14. *Dinosaurs* (Level 2)
14. *Birds of Australia* (Level 2)

The following pages will explain what to expect in each exhibition and gallery space during Night Owls.



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

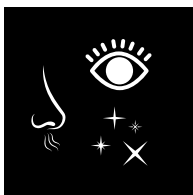
- High Sensory
- Busy areas, with a mix of multimedia, loud noises and/or low lighting



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.



There will be a stage where interviews with specialists will happen at set times throughout the night. I have the opportunity to ask a question to the experts. Emma from Aspect will be there to help if I need it. There will be Auslan interpreters on stage to translate the conversations that are happening into sign language.



There will be two presentations from Erth on the stage during the night. I can choose to watch one or both presentations. The Erth team are designers, makers and puppeteers. They will bring some of their puppet creations onto the stage for people to see. The puppets may look like animals or creatures.

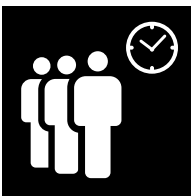


During the talks and Erth presentations, there may be sounds, lights, movement and people clapping during the presentation. If it feels too loud or busy, I can take a break and return when I am ready.



Hintze Hall

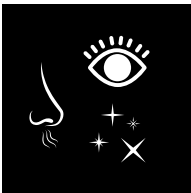
■ High Sensory
■ Busy areas, with a mix of multimedia, loud noises and/or low lighting



There will be tables with special specimens and collection objects for me to explore during the night. I can choose to look closely, ask questions, or move on when I am ready. Some objects may be able to be touched, and some may be for looking only. Staff and experts will let me know what I can do.



There will be a person called Alison Mellor who will have information about bees. I can ask her questions and learn about bees and how they live. There will be a person called Jaever Santos who will have information about marine biodiversity. I can ask questions and learn about sea animals, plants, and ocean habitats.



I can spend as much time as I like at each table. If I would prefer quiet time, I can look independently without asking questions.



There will be a letter writing activity where I can sit down and write or draw a message to celebrate the 100th birthday of David Attenborough. I can choose to join in or watch first.

There will be paper and pens available for me to use. I can take my time and complete as much or as little as I like. I can think about David Attenborough's life, nature programs, and the animals and places he has helped people learn about.

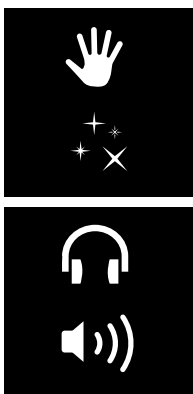
There will also be special artefacts from the Archives and Library to look at. Staff will share stories about David Attenborough and his work. Some objects may be for looking only.

There will be a kiosk where I can purchase food, drinks and snacks. There are bins nearby where I can put my rubbish.



FrogID Touring Exhibition

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



I do not need a ticket to enter *FrogID Touring Exhibition*.

I can access the exhibition by taking the lift or the ramp by the Museum Shop to the Upper Ground floor (UG) and walking through Hintze Hall.

The exhibition is made up of several stations, various videos and models that feature some of Australia's most amazing creatures, frogs. In the exhibit there is printed text and QR codes that I can scan so I can read about what makes frog special and an important part of our environment.

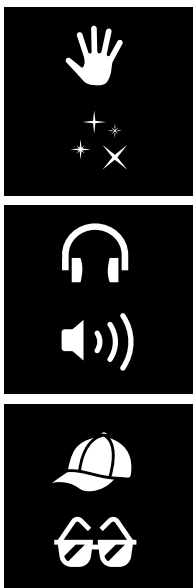
There are frog videos and noises playing throughout the exhibition space.

There is no set route through the exhibition. I can navigate to any of the stations at anytime.



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.

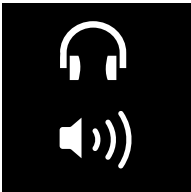


First Nations Gallery: *Garrigarrang: Sea Country*

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



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.

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

There will be a First Nations touch table where I can look at and gently explore natural objects and handmade items. I may see seeds, feathers, weaving, shells, and native plants.

Some objects may have different textures, smells, or shapes. I can choose what I would like to touch, smell, or simply look at.

First Nations staff will explain how to handle the objects carefully and respectfully. I may learn stories about Country, culture, plants, animals, and how materials are used in everyday life and art.

There may be natural scents from plants such as eucalyptus, lemon myrtle, or native mint. If I do not like strong smells, I can step back or choose another activity.



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.

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

During Night Owls, there will be a Silent Disco in *Wild Planet*.

A Silent Disco allows me to choose whether or not I would like to listen to music and dance. The music is played through headphones instead of loud speakers.

If I would like to join the Silent Disco, I can collect headphones from a table at the entrance to the gallery. Staff will help me put them on, use the buttons, and change the channels if I need support.

The music on the headphones comes from the DJ performing at the DJ decks. There will be different channels with different styles of music, so I can choose what I would like to hear.

There will also be short dance lessons during the night. If I would like to join, I can change my headphones to the red channel at the right time and follow the instructors. I can also choose to watch only.

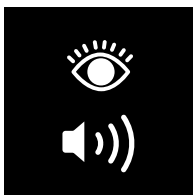
The gallery may have people dancing, lights, and movement. If it feels too busy, I can take a break and return when I am ready.



Theatre: Library of the Unusual



There will be a presentation called the Library of the Unusual in the theatre. It will be a looping slideshow, so I can enter and leave at any time.



The slideshow will show drawings, books, and images from the Museum's Library and Archives. Some pictures may look unusual, strange, or surprising. The images may show animals, creatures, or objects that mix real facts with old stories and folklore.

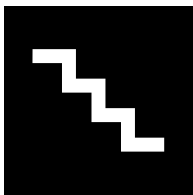
The theatre may be darker than other spaces, and there may be sounds from the slideshow or other people nearby.

I can sit and watch for as long as I like, or leave when I am ready.



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 down stairs to enter the exhibition from *Wild Planet*, Level UG.

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](#).

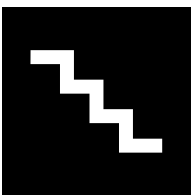
There will also be some arcade games that I can play. I can line up to take a turn. Once my turn is finished, I can line up again if I would like another turn. This is so that everybody gets a turn





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.



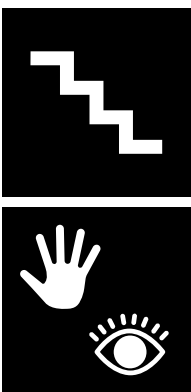
Scientists, explorers, and pioneers; entrepreneurs, athletes, and artists; politicians, an outlaw and a saint.

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.



Level 1 – 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.

Minerals highlight tours will happen throughout the night, led by an expert.



Level 1 landing: Invertebrates



Outside the lift on Level 1 (near the entrance to Westpac Gallery or Minerals) I will find Naomi, who will have a variety of insects including phasmids available.



I may like to hold or gently touch an insect. I must listen to the experts and follow their instructions. The insects are harmless but I may feel a little tickle as their legs crawl up my arm.



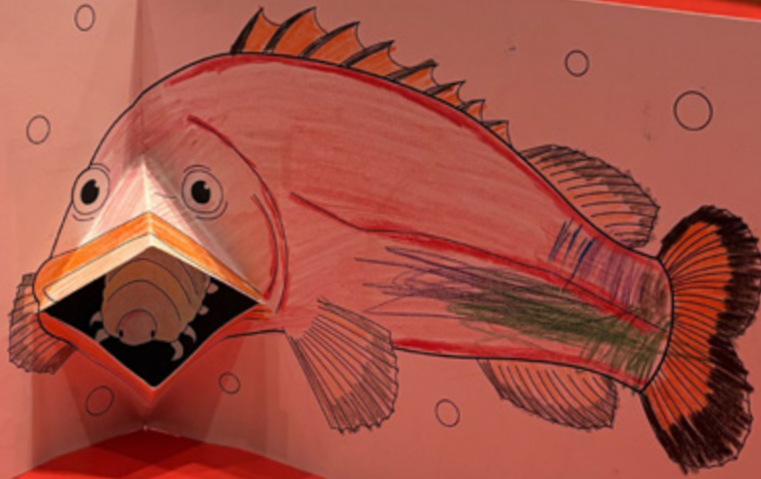
Tongue-eating louse *Cymothoa indica*

The tongue-eating louse is a parasite that moves in and takes over!

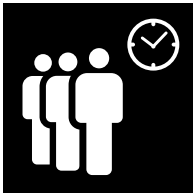
This parasite enters a fish, then crawls to the mouth cavity where it clamps onto the base of the tongue.

With the blood supply cut off, the tongue tissue dies and the louse becomes the new 'tongue', able to consume as much of the fish's blood as it needs.

Can you find a tongue-eating louse in the Bloodsuckers exhibition?



Burra: Make your own tongue-eating louse



There will be a craft activity where I can make my own paper tongue-eating louse. I can choose to join this activity at any time during the evening.



The tongue-eating louse is a small marine animal that lives in the ocean. I may learn facts about how it survives and lives with fish.

There will be paper and craft materials for me to use. I can create my craft in my own time and ask for help if I need it.



This activity may involve sitting at a table with other people nearby. There may be conversation and movement around the space.

In Burra Fire there will be the Nocturnal Worlds podcast playing on loop, where I can rest and take a break from the busy event. I can choose to visit this space at any time.

The Nocturnal Worlds podcast will be playing through speakers. The sound will include gentle nature sounds and calm storytelling.

There will also be a projection on the screen to watch. The images may move slowly and be designed to feel relaxing.

The room may be dimmer and quieter than other spaces in the museum. People may be sitting quietly or resting nearby.

I can sit, listen, watch, or simply spend time quietly in the space.



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. This space has interactive features I can touch, listen and see, as well as staff facilitating craft activities, that I am welcome to join in.

There will be an area to solve puzzles, with facilitators to help me if I need it.

There is a quiet space in Burra that I can use, if I need a break.



Billabong Waterhole



During Night Owls, the Billabong Waterhole café will be closed.

Throughout the evening, there will be hands-on STEM activity sessions. The activity will go for 20 minutes, but I can leave at any time. I can choose to take part or just watch.



The activities will be guided by a staff member called Janelle. She will explain what to do and support the group if needed.

I will be working in a small group environment. The space is designed to feel calm, supportive, and low-pressure.

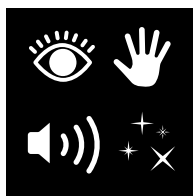


I may use materials such as wire, water, string, and elastic bands. I will be guided through experiments, and can observe, and try activities at my own pace. There is no rush and I do not need to finish everything.



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.

There will be two roving performances in the *Surviving Australia* gallery with Erth. I can choose to see the performance as I move through the space.

The Erth team will bring their puppets to life in different parts of the gallery. The puppets may move, appear suddenly, or come close to where I am standing.

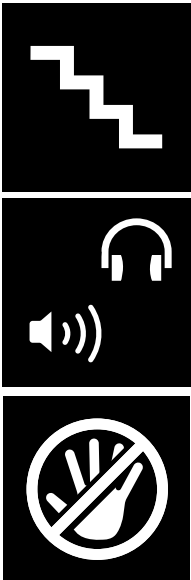
The puppets may look like animals or creatures. Some may be large and detailed. The movement may feel surprising or change quickly.

There may be other people watching at the same time, and the gallery may feel busy or active. I can choose to watch from a distance, move closer, or step away if I need space.



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.

In this exhibition, I will experience the diverse and dynamic culture of Pasifika people through stories and objects across the region. The lights are set lower, however there are touch screens with audio that might be a little loud – especially if more than one screen is playing at a time. I may like to use my headphones.

Apart from the touch screens, I am not allowed to touch objects in this exhibition.

There will be a Pasifika-themed activity space where I can explore objects, colours, patterns, and scents. I can choose to join in or look around first.

Elijah will be there to welcome visitors and explain the activities. I can ask questions or listen quietly. There will be scented coconut oils to smell. I can choose whether or not I would like to smell them.

There will be a beading activity where I can arrange beads into patterns. I can touch and move the beads to create my own design.

There will also be a weaving activity where I can use my hands to explore materials and make simple woven patterns.

I can take part at my own pace, watch only, or leave and return when I am ready.



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.

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

There will be a small-group guided tours through the *Dinosaurs* Gallery. I can choose to join the tours or not.

The tour will be led by a person called Alexander Goodman. He is a palaeontology student. He will talk about dinosaurs and how they changed and adapted over time.

The tour will be calm, paced, and easy to follow. I can listen and look at the dinosaur displays. At the end, there will be time to ask questions if I would like to.

There will also be a touch table with dinosaur fossils and specimens. Some fossils may be real remains and some may be replicas. I may see and hold items such as dinosaur bones or claws, like a *Centrosaurus* backbone or a *Suchomimus* hand claw.

I will be able to touch the objects carefully if I am invited to do so, and staff will guide me on how to handle them.



Birds of Australia

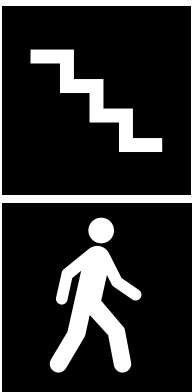
■ Low Sensory
Quiet, well lit areas
with fewer people
and low noise levels

I can discover *Birds of Australia* on Level 2.

In this exhibition I will come face to face with familiar and unfamiliar birds alike, from the iconic cockatoos and budgies to the stunning Regent Bowerbird and adorable Little Penguin.



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.

