



Night Owls

Friday 8 May 2026, 6pm – 9pm

Come join the fun in this exclusive night out with dancing, science, craft, and more

NIGHT OWLS 2026

This document outlines the program of activities and events designed to help you prepare for your Night Owls experience.

Night Owls is an exclusive after-hours program at the Australian Museum, created for adults who prefer a calmer, sensory-friendly environment. The evening offers a curated schedule of experiences that support autistic visitors and anyone who benefits from a more relaxed and accessible museum visit.

Please note that all schedule items and activities are subject to change. A visual story and maps will be provided closer to the event date.

* = AUSLAN Interpreted event

WESTPAC LONG GALLERY - G

ARCADE GAMES

Step back in time in Wild Planet and enjoy a selection of free retro tabletop games. Drop in anytime to play classic favourites in a relaxed setting, whether you stay for a quick round or settle in for a longer game.

WILD PLANET - UG

SILENT SOUNDS DISCO

Slip on a headset and wander the galleries where you can choose between three channels: a live set from Justin Rynne, spinning disco, pop and house favourites to keep the energy high, or curated playlists designed to complement the Museum after dark. Choose your channel, set your own volume, and move at your own pace. A museum experience you can quite literally vibe your way through.

DANCE/MOVEMENT LESSONS

Join award-winning choreographer Liz Lea for a playful dance workshop inspired by the remarkable birds found throughout the Museum's galleries. In this relaxed, drop-in session, explore simple movements drawn from bird behaviours, from fluttering wings to curious head tilts, and discover how the natural world can inspire the way we move. No dance experience needed, just curiosity and a willingness to try something new.

- **6:30pm, 7:15pm*, 8:00pm**

THEATRE - UG

LIBRARY OF THE UNUSUAL

Step into the *Library of the Unusual*. A curious collection pulled straight from the pages of the Museum's own library and archives. Discover quirky, cool, strange, and downright unbelievable drawings that blur the line between fact and folklore. Unearth the oddities hiding in plain sight.

HINTZE HALL - UG

ASK AN EXPERT (Mainstage)

Throughout the evening, join relaxed, live conversations with Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI) experts. Facilitated by Lee Constable, hear fascinating stories from the people who work at the frontiers of science. Submit your questions via our roving reporter or simply listen in.

- **6:30pm***: *"Behind the bite"* with Giovanni Ramon Cabrera (Collection Manager Entomology)
 - Ever wondered what's really going on beneath the buzz? Join one of the Museum's experts for a bite-sized talk uncovering the surprising diversity and ecology of mozzies, shedding light on their hidden lives, curious behaviours, and the vital roles they play in our ecosystems.
- **7:30pm***: *"Unlocking the Archive"* with Darcy Campbell (Project Archivist)
 - Curious about what lives behind the scenes? Join one of the Museum's archivists for a bite-sized talk diving into the Archives and Library, where unexpected objects, rare finds, and fascinating stories are waiting to be uncovered.
- **8:30pm***: *"Dracula Ants"* with Elaine Tan (Digitising Technical Officer).
 - What are Dracula ants, and why are they named that? Join an expert dive into the strange world of ant colonies as superorganisms, and discover the surprising behaviours behind one of nature's most dramatically named insects.

ERTH (Mainstage)

Join Erth's team of designers, makers and puppeteers as they present a menagerie of their exquisite creations live on stage. Presented by Erth artists Gabrielle Paananen, Albert David and Tom Caley.

Across two sessions the Erth team will share the secrets behind the stagecraft, highlighting the painstaking research and training undertaken to bring their puppet creations to life.

- **7:00pm***: Erth's Birds
- **8:00pm***: Erth's Mammals

TOUCH TABLES

Get up close to a curated selection of specimens and collection objects, supported by knowledgeable experts who can answer questions or simply let you explore independently. A tactile way to connect with our natural and cultural worlds.

- Marine Biodiversity with Jaever Santos (Senior Natural Sciences Collection Enhancement Project Coordinator)
- Bees with Allison Mellor (Environmental educator and Science communicator)

CELEBRATING DAVID ATTENBOROUGH'S 100th BIRTHDAY

Put pen to paper and help celebrate the 100th birthday of David Attenborough. Drop into this hands-on letter writing activity and reflect on his extraordinary life and legacy. Get up close to unique artefacts from the Archives and Library and hear stories that bring Attenborough's extraordinary life and work into focus.

GARRIGARRANG - UG

FIRST NATIONS SENSORY TOUCH TABLE

Step up to this touch table and respectfully explore First Nations objects and native plants through a hands-on tactile experience. Discover cultural knowledge, living traditions, and the deep connection between people and Country as you engage with stories grounded in care, place, and community.

MINERALS GALLERY – L1

MINERALS GALLERY TOUR

Join a small-group guided tour with David Dixon, as you wander through the stunning Minerals Gallery. Discover the science and stories behind some of the Museum's most dazzling specimens, delivered in a calm, paced format with space to pause, ask questions or simply take it all in.

- **6:30pm, 7:15pm, 8:00pm***

L1 LANDING

TOUCH TABLES

Get up close to a curated selection of specimens and collection objects, supported by knowledgeable experts who can answer questions or simply let you explore independently. A tactile way to connect with our natural and cultural worlds.

- Invertebrates with Naomi Huynh

BILLABONG WATERHOLE – L2

STEMstation

Drop in and explore hands-on STEM activities, guided by Creative Producer for Science Engagement, Janelle Townsend. these small-group workshops invite you to experiment, observe and discover at your own pace in a supportive and low-pressure environment.

- **6:15pm, 6:45pm, 7:45pm, 8:15pm**

WONSOLMOANA GALLERY – L2

WONSOLMOANA: SCENT, WEAVE, CREATE

Venture with the Australian Museum to the vast Pacific. From scented oils, vibrant weavings and patterned adornments. The beauty of the Pacific is diverse and unique. Join your guide for hands-on weaving, infused coconut oils and beaded pattern adornments.

SURVIVING AUSTRALIA – L2

SURVIVING AUSTRALIA

Join Erth in the Surviving Australia gallery for a roving encounter with their extraordinary puppets, brought to life by a team of designers, makers and puppeteers.

- **7:20pm, 8:20pm**

DINOSAURS GALLERY – L2

DINOSAUR GALLERY TOUR

Join a small-group guided tour with palaeontology student Alexander Goodman through the Dinosaur Gallery. Discover the evolutionary history and adaptations of various dinosaurs in the gallery, with the opportunity to ask questions at the end, delivered in a calm, paced and approachable format.

- **6:30pm*, 7:15pm, 8:00pm.**

DINOSAUR TOUCH TABLE

Step up to this touch table and get hands-on with dinosaur fossils and specimens up close. Hold real remains and replicas of prehistoric life, from a Centrosaurus backbone to a Suchomimus hand claw, and discover how these incredible creatures once lived on our planet millions of years ago.

BURRA – L2

TONGUE EATING LOUSE – Burra Eel

Drop in anytime during the evening to create your own paper tongue-eating louse, a surprisingly fascinating marine parasite. Using craft materials, learn how this extraordinary parasitic crustacean takes the place of a fish's tongue in the ocean.

NOCTURNAL WORLDS – Burra Fire

Prepare to descend into a world of sonic wonder with Nocturnal Worlds, an Audiocraft original podcast created with the Australian Museum.

Nocturnal Worlds: journeys through nature for sleep and relaxation weaves together a symphony of nature sounds and captivating storytelling in an audio experience that highlights Australia's unique nocturnal ecosystems.

EDUCATION ROOM 1 – LG

QUIET SPACE

Step into a calm, low-lit quiet space designed for pause and restoration. With soft furnishings, layered rugs, and gentle lighting, this room offers a peaceful place to rest, reset, and take a break from the energy of the Museum at your own pace.