Visual Story

My visit to the Australian Museum

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.

The AM is open from 10am-5pm every day of the year. It is closed on Christmas Day.

Symbols I will see in this Visual Story

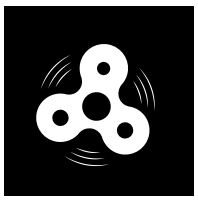
The AM has low, medium and high sensory areas. These are indicated on the AM Map.

Sensory symbols

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

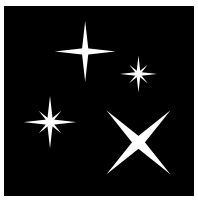
Noise reducing headphones

Hat or sunglasses



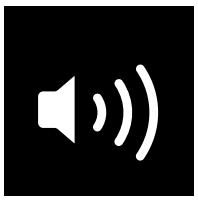
Stimming or fidget toy or device

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



bright lights

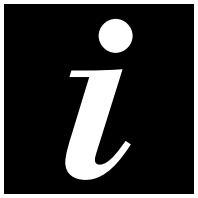
smells



loud sounds

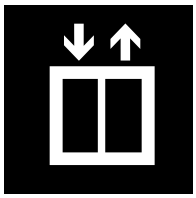
visual

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.

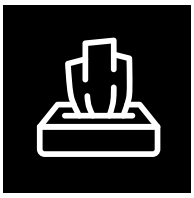
I will walk through the AM, so I don't slip or bump into anything or anyone.

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

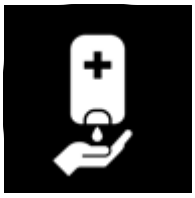
If I need a rest I can take a seat. Or if I am hungry I can use the seats at the cafes to eat.

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.

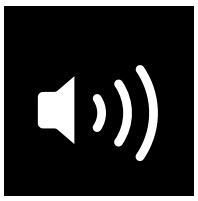
The entrance is on College Street, which is a main road and can be noisy with traffic.

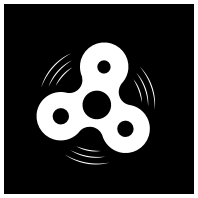
To plan how I will get to the AM, I can visit the Parking and Public Transport webpage.

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

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Entering the Australian Museum



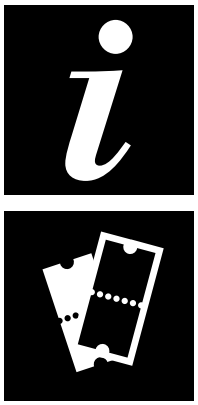


First, I will walk up Museum Walk ramp to the entrance.

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

Sometimes the AM is very busy. I might need to wait 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.

If I have pre-purchased a ticket to a program, event, or 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.

I can collect a map of the AM to help me navigate and explore.

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

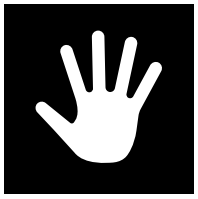
Australian Museum map

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

Cloaking Room

If I have a bag or jacket that I would like to store during my visit, I can take them to the cloaking room 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 Places accessible adult change facility on Level 2. I will need to ask staff to access this room.

The hand dryers are very loud. I can wear my noise cancelling headphones in the bathroom if I find the hand dryers too loud.

Places to eat

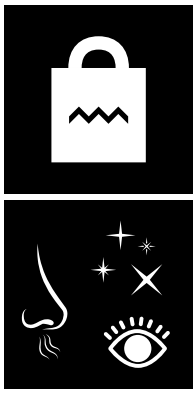
I can buy pre-made food like sandwiches, salads and drinks at the Billabong Waterhole Café on Level 2.

For a meal with a view of the city I can also buy a fresh seasonal meal at Bistro Gadi on Level 4. Before my visit to the Museum I will need to check Bistro Gadi's opening hours on this webpage because trading hours vary during school term and school holiday periods.

Hintze Hall Espresso Bar is open 10am - 4pm during school holidays. I can also bring my own food and eat it in Hintze Hall 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.

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

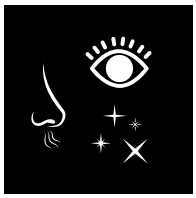
1. Hintze Hall (Level UG)
2. *Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year* (Level UG)
3. First Nations Gallery: *Garrigarrang*: *Sea Country* (Level UG)
4. *Wild Planet* (Level UG)
5. Westpac Long Gallery: *200 Treasures of the Australian Museum* (Level G and Level 1)
6. *Minerals* (Level 1)
7. Burra (Level 2)
8. Pasifika Gallery: *Wansolmoana (One Salt Ocean)* (Level 2)
9. *Surviving Australia* (Level 2)
10. *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 buy hot and cold snacks at the Hintze Hall Espresso Bar. It is open 10am to 4.30pm during school holidays only.

I can also bring my own food and 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.

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.

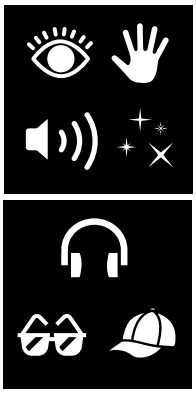
This exhibition is dimly lit and has some LED strip lights underneath the displays.

There are TV screens with audio that might be loud.

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 are bright lights and a lot of reflective glass in this exhibition. I may want to wear sunglasses or a hat in this space.

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*

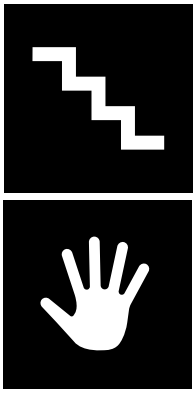
Low Sensory
Quiet, well lit areas with fewer people and low noise levels

This exhibition showcases 100 treasures of the AM alongside the stories of 100 of Australia's most-influential people. I will walk down stairs to enter the exhibition from *Wild Planet*, Level UG. This gallery is a sensory friendly space. It is quieter, calmer and darker in this exhibition. 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



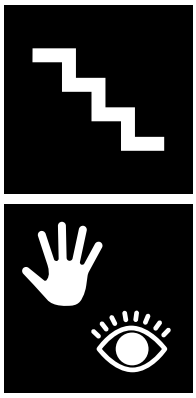
I can walk up the stairs or take the lift to Level 1 and continue exploring the *200 Treasures of the Australian Museum.* I can discover the stories of 100 extraordinary people who have shaped Australia and made it the country it is today.

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)*

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

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. 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.

Dinosaurs

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

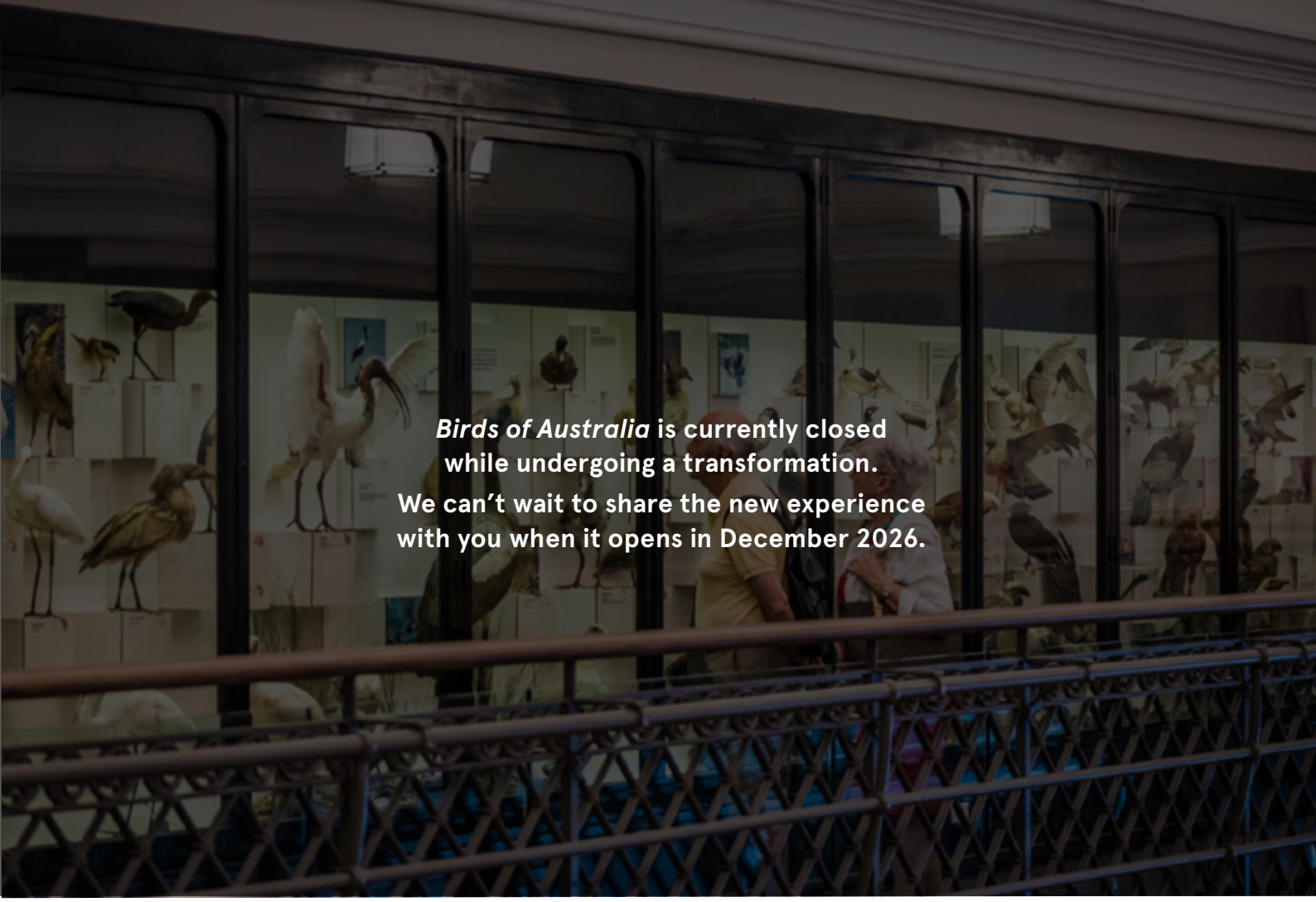
I can access *Dinosaurs* via *Birds of Australia* on Level 2, or up the marble stairs from *Wild Planet*. I will walk among dinosaur skeletons and life-size models, as well as the fossil teeth, skulls and claws of these ancient creatures.

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

This exhibition has unexpected loud sounds such as dinosaur roars and thunder that I may get frightened by. I can wear my headphones. There is a flashing strobe light when the thunder sounds that I may wish to wear my hat or sunglasses for.

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.



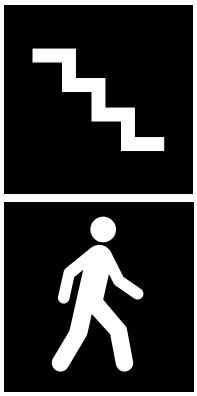
Birds of Australia

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.

autism spectrum AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM FOUNDATION

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM