

Sensory Friendly Evening at the South Australian Museum

Access Guide

About the event

The Sensory Friendly Evening at the South Australian Museum is a special after-hours opening specially designed for people who may find the Museum too busy or noisy to visit during regular opening hours. While we are holding this event to celebrate World Autism Day, everyone is welcome, not just Autistic visitors.

We will be limiting the number of visitors to keep crowds low and will turn some sound and video elements down or off.

We will also have some special activities just for this event. This will include having one of the Museum's palaeontologists out on the floor on Level 3 to talk about fossils.

There will also be a palaeo-artist running a fossil painting workshop on Level 2. You can come along and paint a model fossil to take home while talking with the artist about their experience of working in science as a neuro-divergent person.

Please understand that sometimes the activities or people running them can change at short notice, but we will try to inform ticket holders as early as we can about any changes.

The temporary exhibition space is currently being changed over, so this gallery is not open to the public. The doors to this space will be closed so you won't be able to wander in by accident.

Transport

There are several public transport options when travelling to the Museum.

Train: The Museum is a 10-minute walk from the Adelaide Railway Station, which is also on North Terrace.

Tram: The closest tram stop is Art Gallery, which is out the front of the Museum on North Terrace on the Botanic/Entertainment Centre line. You can also walk from Rundle Mall or North Terrace on the Glenelg line.

Bus: There are a number of bus stops on North Terrace and King William Street, as well as other nearby locations in the city.

Check [Adelaide Metro](#) for the most up to date timetables and information.

Parking

There is one accessible car park at the rear of the Museum, available on a first-come, first-served basis. Entry to the car park is through the boom gate on Morgan Thomas Lane, off Kintore Avenue. Please ensure your valid disability parking permit is displayed.

If the park is already in use, visitors can be dropped off at the Museum's rear door.

Alternative accessible parking is also available at:

- Wilson Parking, North Terrace (opposite the Museum)
- U-Park, Gawler Place

On arrival

For this event, entry is through the main entrance on North Terrace. These are automatic double doors. There is ramp and stair access to the lawn area in front of the doors. You will need to go through two sets of automatic doors to enter the Museum,

A staff member will greet you as you enter the foyer and check your tickets. You can then explore the Museum at your own pace.

The back door to the Museum is closed during this event. If you need access via this door, please contact us at education@samuseum.sa.gov.au so we can assist you.

The event starts at 5pm when the Museum closes and will end at 7pm. You can arrive at any time during these two hours and leave whenever you are ready. At about 6:45pm, staff will walk around the museum and remind people that the event will be ending soon.

If you arrive at the Museum before 5pm, it will be open to the public as normal. This may mean that there are loud announcements over the PA system and the foyer area may be busy as people leave. You will need to come to the foyer to show your ticket to staff to remain in the Museum for the sensory-friendly opening.

Staff

There will be different staff available to help make this event enjoyable and accessible.

Museum staff will be in the foyer to help when you arrive and will also be in the Discovery centre and walking around the Museum during the evening. Museum staff will have name badges. You can ask them about different areas in the Museum or if you need help with anything.

Security staff will be present in the Museum too. There will be two or three security staff, depending on how many tickets are sold. Security staff will be wearing Wilsons Security uniforms and can help you with directions or if you feel unsafe about anything. They can also help with lost property or if you notice anyone else in the museum who may need help.

There will also be an artist running a workshop on Level 2. They do not usually work at the Museum so they might not be able to help you find things or answer questions about the Museum, but they are a palaeontologist and will be happy to talk to you about science and will help you with the activity.

Crowds and other visitors

We are limiting the number of visitors at this event to keep crowds low and help create a quiet environment.

Sensory friendly evenings are open to all, and visitors may respond or make noises in the space as they feel comfortable. Visitors are welcome to stim, make noise and respond to the displays in whatever way feels comfortable. Please be understanding of other visitors if they respond to the displays in different ways.

Discovery Centre

The Discovery Centre on Level 1 is open for the duration of this event. There will be a staff member there who you can ask questions about science or the Museum. You cannot bring in objects for identification, but you can ask about sending in photos if you would like help identifying something you have seen.

The Discovery Centre is the space where you can touch objects including bones, minerals and fossils. You can also use a microscope or look at some of our live animals.

Shop and Café

The Shop and Café will be closed for this event. If you wish to visit either of these before the event, the Café usually closes around 3:30-4:00pm and the Shop around 4:45pm.

Food and drink

Food can only be consumed in the foyer on the ground floor. Water may be consumed anywhere in the Museum.

Sound

Sound elements will be turned down or off for this event. Most sound effects are background sounds and do not include sudden loud noises. Sounds that may be on at low volume include natural sounds of animals and environments.

Lighting

Lighting can be quite different in different parts of the Museum. The ground, first and second floor galleries are dimly lit, while the third floor, Discovery Centre, mezzanine and foyer are brighter. Lights are steady and there are no flashing or strobing effects.

Quiet room

The Museum does not have a dedicated quiet room, but some areas are usually quieter than others. The Temporary Exhibition space at the end of the Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery on the ground floor can be a good place to take a break if you need one. The exhibition currently on display in this space is called *Wangka Walytja*, and it features drawing from the Papunya Literature Production Centre in the Northern Territory.

You can also step outside if you need, just let staff know if you are planning to return.



Image: The entrance to the Wangka Walytja exhibition, the entrance panel is pink with white writing and inside the room there is a yellow wall with framed artworks.

Seating

There is seating available throughout the Museum. The seating is a combination of large bench and ottoman style seating, individual ottoman stools, and chairs with backs and arms. Some of the ottomans are dark and sit on dark carpet, which could be hard to see for some visitors with low vision. The walkers available for loan at the front desk can also be used as seats.



Images: Three images showing different types of seating at the museum. A grey armchair with wooden legs, a small black cube shaped ottoman, and a two long brown leather benches.

Bathrooms

Toilets are located on the ground floor at the eastern end of the World Mammals Gallery.

There are 2 accessible toilets and male and female bathrooms.

The accessible toilets do not include adult changing facilities or hoists.

The bathrooms have hand dryers built into the taps. The taps work by motion sensor and activate when you put your hands under the spout. For this event, the hand drying components have been disabled, and paper towel is provided instead. In the access toilets, the hand dryers are still active, but paper towel is also available.

Parents and change facilities

There is a Parents Room on Level 1 near the southern lift. It includes a microwave, seating, a toilet and baby change facilities.

Breastfeeding and bottle feeding is welcome anywhere in the Museum.



Image: External view of the Parents Room. The door is a light cream colour with two vertical rectangular windows covered by pink panels. To the right of the door, a grey sign with a white icon indicates a parenting room.

Wheelchair accessibility and mobility aids

All galleries in the Museum are accessible for most wheelchairs and mobility devices. Due to space restrictions, some larger power chairs may not be able to navigate all turns within the Egyptian Gallery.

Wheelchairs and walkers are available for loan to use in the Museum. To access this service, ask staff on arrival. Photo ID will be required to borrow a walker or wheelchair. These devices are loaned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Sensory aids

The Museum will have our sensory backpack available for free loan during the event. To borrow a backpack, you can sign one out using the sign out sheet in the foyer and then sign it back in when you are finished. There will be Museum staff available to help with this. Each backpack contains a pair of ear defenders, a soft toy, a fidget toy, and some communication cards.

We also have some sets of adjustable ear defenders which will fit bigger heads. You can borrow these in the same way as the backpacks.

There are a limited number of backpacks and ear defenders, so we might run out. They will be loaned out on a first-come first-served basis.

You are welcome to bring your own sensory aids to make your experience more comfortable.

Lifts

There are two lifts within the Museum.

One is located in the north-east corner of the Museum, accessible on the Ground floor through the World Mammals Gallery. This is the largest lift and allows access to the Pacific Cultures Gallery on the mezzanine floor.

The other is located in the south-east corner of the Museum, accessible on the Ground floor through the Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery. This lift is much smaller. It will accommodate most wheelchairs, but it is narrow. Visitors who dislike small or confined spaces are advised to use the larger lift.

The lifts can be slow especially when they are being called from multiple levels. Visitors who can use stairs often find them a quicker way to move through the Museum.

Further information

If you have any other questions, please contact us at education@samuseum.sa.gov.au
We will be very happy to help.