

## AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1827 - 1899

Year	History
1827	Earl Bathurst, British Secretary of State for the Colonies, writes to Governor Ralph Darling authorising the sum of 200 pounds a year for the formation of a "Publick Museum at New South Wales". And so the "Colonial" or "Sydney Museum", as it was first known, was born.
1829	The Colonial Museum's first custodian, William Holmes, is appointed. A carpenter and keen naturalist, he is the Museum's first Zoologist and collector. His career is later cut short when he is "shot by accidental discharge of gun while collecting birds and other curiosities" at Moreton Bay, in Brisbane, in August 1831.
1830	The museum is located at Bent Street (Macquarie Place), in the shed and outhouse of a building that had previously housed Australia's first Post Office.
1831	The museum moves to rooms in the Legislative Council building in Macquarie Street.
1836	Convict John Roach is appointed as the museum's first taxidermist, "collector and bird stuffer".
1836	The museum changes its name to the Australian Museum (AM).
1837	The AM's first catalogue is published, including 36 Australian mammal species, birds, fish, shells, fossils, along with nine Aboriginal artifacts and 16 from Melanesia.
1841	The AM moves to rooms in the newly-constructed Court House at Woolloomooloo.
1844	Plans are drawn up for a new AM building. A total of £3000 is allocated by the Legislative Council and the current site identified on William Street, on land previously occupied by a convict garden.
1849	Curator W.S. Wall prepares and mounts the skeleton of a whale outside the AM, which becomes the subject of the museum's first memoir, written in 1851. Such is the whale's fame that it even had its own original music, The Catadon Polka.

1854	The AM buildings open to the public with an exhibition of NSW products on their way to the Paris International Exhibition of 1855.
1857	The AM's Long Gallery is formally opened to the public, attracting some 10,000 visitors in the opening week; at a time when Sydney's population was only 45,000.
1864	Gerard Krefft is appointed curator.
1869	Krefft spends his honeymoon excavating the remains of the Diprotodon in the Liverpool ranges.
1870	Krefft describes the Queensland lungfish <i>Neoceratodus forsteri</i> for the first time, after seeing it served for dinner at a friend's home.
1873	The theft of a gold specimen from the AM brings to a head conflict between Krefft's evolutionary ideas and conservative Trustees, who demand Krefft's resignation.
1874	A Parliamentary committee asks Krefft to resign. When Krefft refuses to leave, he is forcibly ejected from the AM by two prize fighters who carry him in his chair out the front door.
1879	Thousands of objects from the AM's anthropological collections are placed on display in the Ethnographic Court at the Sydney International Exhibition, housed in the Garden Palace (in the current Botanic Gardens). The objects are presumed lost when the Garden Palace burns down in 1882.
1887	Robert Etheridge leads the Museum's first three-week field trip to Lord Howe Island.

## 1900 - 1999

Year	History
1901	The AM' first volunteer is recruited – Hereward Leighton Kesteven
1904	Charles Hedley leads a multi-disciplinary expedition to Masthead Island
1910	Opening of the Vernon wing plus a new lecture theatre. To mark the occasion, a sperm whale skeleton is suspended at the front entrance to the AM.
1920	Joyce Allan becomes the first woman in the scientific staff of the AM.
1921	Installation of the Lord Howe Island Boatswain bird diorama, the first museum diorama in Australia.
1927	The AM celebrates its centenary in a very low-key way, with the unveiling of a bronze plaque by then NSW Premier, TR Bavin.
1928	AM staff join the British Great Barrier Reef Expedition – the era of Reef research begins.
1933	Expedition in search of megafauna remains at Cuddie Springs.
1946	Butterfly theft from AM collections by researcher Colin Wyatt. A total of 3000 specimens are recovered, stolen from the AM and the South Australian Museum.
1948	American Arnhem Land Expedition.
1959	Annual visitors number 300,000.
1960	Opening of the basement and sub-basement of William Street wing provide the AM with its first purpose-built scientific workspaces.
1963	Five more floors of the William St (Parkes-Farmer) wing are opened, which house a new library, café, ethnographic and fossil galleries.
1965	AM Discoverers Club formed.
1966	Frank Talbot appointed AM director and receives the museum's first ARC grant for ichthyological research.
1966	First field work on One Tree Island, Great Barrier Reef. By 1971, a permanently-manned field station had been set up.
1968	National Photographic Index of Australian Birds begins, conceived by Donald Trounson as a collection of photographs of every bird in Australia.
1972	Establishment of the AM's conservation department.
1973	Lizard Island Research Station established with a donation by Henry Loomis. Cottages are built in 1974 and a laboratory in 1976.
1978	Launch of the "Australian Museum Train program" to take exhibitions and educational services to the regions.
1982	The AM receives the Museum of the Year Award for best new exhibition for its Mammals in Australia Gallery.

1983	The AM's first travelling ethnological exhibition Abelam - Museum on the Road goes on tour.
1983	Opening of the Skeleton Gallery its signature piece The Bone Ranger Rides Again.
1984	The Dinosaurs from China exhibition brings more than a quarter of a million visitors to the AM; its most successful exhibition to date.
1985	Opening of the Aboriginal Australia Gallery & Insect Gallery.
1985	Purchase of collection of opalised fossils, including the oldest known platypus/echidna-like animal.
1986	Opening of the Planet of Minerals gallery.
1986	Opening of the Discovery Room, an interactive space designed for children.
1987	The AM embarks on a repatriation program. Along with the Canadian Museum of Civilization and representatives of the Kwakwakw'wakw (Kwakiutl) people of Canada's Northwest Coast, the AM begins to repatriate material from the Cape Mudge area of British Columbia.
1988	Establishment of the Australian Museum Foundation to raise funds through corporate patronage.
1990	Launch of the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes to reward outstanding achievement in Australian science research and the communication of science to the broader community.
1993	A fundraising campaign raises more than \$450,000 from corporate sponsors and the public to purchase the opalised fossil remains of an Australian pliosaur, dubbed "Eric".
1995	Museum mammalogist Dr Tim Flannery describes a new species of tree-kangaroo, Dingiso Dendrolagus mbaiso, after learning of the existence of the black-and-white tree kangaroo in the high altitude, mossy forests of the Sudirman Range in West Papua.
1996	The opening of the Albert Chapman mineral gallery showcases the world-renowned collection purchased by the NSW Government and transferred to the AM.
1996	The Aboriginal Heritage Unit is created as a part of the anthropology department "to act as an intermediary between the Australian Museum and the indigenous communities of Australia on issues of indigenous cultural heritage management", and to facilitate its repatriation program.
1999	Sixty-three years after death of the last Tasmanian Tiger, in a Tasmanian zoo, the Rheuben Griffiths Trust is launched to fund research into cloning the extinct animal, using DNA extracted from a preserved Thylacine pup in the AM's collection.

## 2000 - Present

Year	History
2002	The AM celebrates its 175th birthday.
2004	Staging of a major exhibition showcasing content from the AM's collections, titled Uncovered: Treasures of the Australian Museum.
2007	The AM celebrates its 180th anniversary.
2008	Completion of new Collection and Research building on the College Street site, adding 5000 square metres of office, laboratory and storage areas for scientists. Opening of two new permanent galleries, "Dinosaurs" and "Surviving Australia".
2008	The AM joins the International Barcode of Life project to create an online DNA barcode register of 500,000 species worldwide.
2010	A research project is launched into the DNA sequencing of the Golden Mantle Tree Kangaroo.
2011	The AM launches its first smartphone app. The "DangerOz" app is about Australia's most dangerous animals.
2011	Establishment of the Digivols Lab team of volunteers to photograph and digitise the AM's collections.
2012	Opening of the major exhibition Alexander the Great, the largest collection of treasures to come to Australia from the State Hermitage in St Petersburg, Russia. The exhibition showcases more than 400 objects from classical antiquity through to the modern age, spanning a period of almost 2500 years.
2012	Timor-Leste land and marine faunal survey, one of the largest undertaken by AM.
2012	Opening of the Australian Centre for Wildlife Genomics at the AM.
2013	Launch of the Koala Genome Project.
2014	Launch of the Australian Museum Research Institute.
2014	Appointment of Kim McKay AO as Director and CEO of the AM.
2014	Tyrannosaurs: Meet the Family wins the Museum and Galleries National award for best-touring exhibition
2015	Announcement of free general admission for children under 16 to the AM.
2015	Launch of the AM's Museum Centre for Citizen Science.
2015	Opening of the Crystal Hall entry pavilion on William Street. The pavilion later wins the 2016 Public Architecture Award at the NSW Architecture Awards.
2015	Opening of the Wild Planet gallery.
2015	Opening of Pacific Spirit Gallery and First Australians Gallery.
2015	Trailblazers: Australia's 50 Greatest Explorers wins the Museums and Galleries National award for best touring and temporary exhibition.

2015	Closure and renovation of the Long Gallery, in partnership with Westpac, the NSW Government and the Australian Museum Foundation.
2016	Launch of David Attenborough Virtual Reality Experience show.
2016	Opening of new offsite collection store and exhibition space for AM at the Museums Discovery Centre, in Castle Hill.
2016	Opening of Spiders Alive exhibition, jointly created with Questacon.
2016	The AM releases its Master Plan, to triple its exhibition space.
2017	AM marks its 190th year. During a visit to the AM, Sir David Attenborough is made a Lifetime Patron of the museum and has a species of Tasmanian snail named after him.
2017	AM commences an international touring program, starting with the export of the exhibition Tyrannosaurs: Meet the family to North America.
2017, October 13	Official opening of the newly-renovated Westpac Long Gallery and the permanent exhibition <i>200 Treasures of the Australian Museum</i> . Launch of giant animated projection and light show <i>200 Treasures Up in Lights</i> , sponsored by Westpac, which runs from October 13 to 22, in celebration of the exhibition and the Australian Museum's 190th anniversary.