



An Australian Government Initiative



national science week



Photo: Wing's Wildlife Park



Inspiring ideas
for National
Science Week

**TOURISM
FOCUSSED
ACTIVITIES**

A NATIONAL WEEK OF SCIENCE

National Science Week is Australia's annual celebration of science and technology, running each year in August. We've compiled this brochure of science-inspired ideas to help tourism organisations showcase the science in their work and get involved by holding their own National Science Week events.

This celebration of science is an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of Australian scientists to the world of knowledge. It also aims to foster a broader interest in science pursuits and encourage all people to be fascinated by the world.

National Science Week is supported by the Australian Government in various ways, including through the \$500,000 National Science Week Grants Program. Other partners include CSIRO, the ABC and the Australian Science Teachers Association.



Photo: National Science Week

CORNUCOPIA OF EVENTS

During National Science Week, over one million people participate in more than 1,000 events across the country. Each year these events attract a wide audience from children to adults, and science amateurs to professionals. National Science Week demonstrates the practical application of science and technology in our everyday lives, and provides resources and venues for science activities.

Events are held by universities, schools, research institutions, museums, science centres, libraries, industries and various private organisations. With much of Australia's tourism industry based on natural resources, science and tourism have considerable overlap.

This pack aims to encourage tourism organisations to participate in National Science Week by providing inspiration, ideas and suggestions on how to be involved. Many tourism organisations already present excellent STEM content every day. We hope this pack provides further inspiration to highlight science through specific events.

Organisations that hold National Science Week events play an important role in the community, with the opportunity to connect locals and tourists to educational resources that help them better understand Australian science.

The following pages include a list of event ideas, simple activities, and stories of science-related endeavours run by tourism organisations in previous National Science Weeks, as well as helpful tips and more information.



TOP TIPS FOR TOURISM ORGANISATIONS

Give yourself plenty of time for planning and advertising: August comes around quickly.

Check other local tourism websites to see what they're up to.

Contact Inspiring Australia in your state or territory, find a local or regional science hub and tap into some local science. [READ MORE >](#)

Check the National Science Week site. [READ MORE >](#)

Check out Questacon's list of hands-on STEM activities. [READ MORE >](#)

Use the resources of the Children's Discovery Centre, such as their Little Bang Book of Discovery's simple experiments to do at home (or at work) using everyday items. [READ MORE >](#)

Explore a galaxy of possibilities for mobile STEM programs or online learning on the STARportal, the Office of the Chief Scientist's directory of STEM activities. [READ MORE >](#)

Visit the CSIRO Education page. [READ MORE >](#)

Use CSIRO's Double Helix magazine. [READ MORE >](#)

Be inspired by San Francisco's Exploratorium. [READ MORE >](#)

Check out the Powerhouse Museum's lesson plans and worksheets. [READ MORE >](#)

Host a free science film night for the community showcasing Scinema films – available for free. [READ MORE >](#)

INSPIRING IDEAS

Highlight a staff member at your workplace who has a science background or is involved in science at your organisation and ask them to give a short talk to guests about their science and what inspires them.

Run a workshop or interactive display explaining some of the science used in your industry or illustrating a fun scientific concept.

Promote science-based products in your gift shop (if applicable) – for example, books, tools, and science kits.

Contact your local tertiary institution, CSIRO, or science industry to ask for a scientist, engineer or another expert to give a presentation linked to your business, suggest ideas, or help develop partnerships.

If you are a paid tourism organisation, consider offering a free talk session/ film screening or access to part of your organisation/product during National Science Week to highlight how important science is to your field. This engages the public with your organisation, illustrates the real-world application of science, and encourages more connected relationships with customers.

Offer a free, science-related gift to people attending your organisation during National Science Week. This helps to keep people thinking about science, even after leaving and offers the opportunity of further promotion of your organisation.

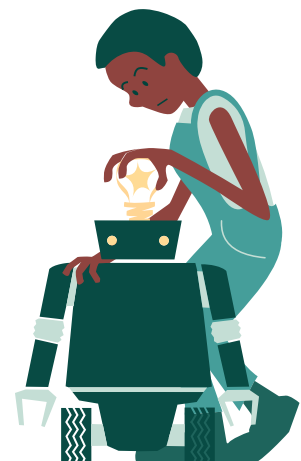
Host a science talk, panel discussion, or debate at your organisation. Focus on a subject that is of most interest to your organisation and the community, discuss how science can address the problems facing your region, or highlight how science is important to your organisation and what you promote.

Highlight breaking news linked to your industry's area of science by using the Australian Science Media Centre's resources to get the facts and promote informed discussion. [READ MORE >](#)

Hold a speed-meet of STEM professionals from local organisations, businesses, universities and professional associations.

If you're running any kind of event in August, give it a bit of flair with a science theme.

Some of these ideas have been successfully run in the past and are described in more detail in the case studies on the following pages. We hope they will foster curiosity and inspire your own ideas.



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Live presentation accompanied the film screening | Photo: Abigail Hills, ANU

What if aliens dressed as humans?

Science in cinema versus science in real life

Canberra has several unique museums, including Questacon – the National Science and Technology Centre, the National Dinosaur Museum, and the **National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA)**.

Since 2022, the NFSA has run a science film series in collaboration with the Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science and the Humanities Research Centre. During National Science Week, the NFSA screened the science-fiction comedy film, *Mars Attacks!*.

Guests were invited to a free screening of *Mars Attacks!* at the NFSA cinema, with an academic introduction, followed by a discussion led by Dr Anna-Sophie Jürgens,

a researcher of science in pop culture, and Dr Brad Tucker, an astrophysicist and cosmologist.

Dr Anna-Sophie Jürgens, from the Australian National University, said the post-film discussion offered guests a chance to ask questions about space and to think about science in the context of science fiction and humour.

'Most people are not scientists, so they get many of their ideas about science from popular culture, including films and comics. But we want to encourage them to think further than this and get excited about science, for example, science from outer space,' Anna-Sophie said.

'We had a lively audience who asked a lot of questions. That's why the cinema is special. It's an immersive space where people aren't distracted and instead open their minds and discover.'

NFSA Creative Producer and Program Coordinator Travis Green, said the event was very popular and almost sold out.

'Holding a National Science Week event saw a whole different crowd of people attend the archive,' Travis said. 'We normally get mostly film buffs, but we had uni-aged students and families with children attending the screening. It was really beneficial for the archive.'



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Keeping it real

Wing's Wildlife Park teaches young people about conservation and caring

Tasmania has many areas of untouched natural beauty. It is a haven for wildlife, including iconic Australian species such as the endemic Tasmanian Devil. In the north of Tasmania, **Wing's Wildlife Park** cares for over 150 species, including the largest collection of Tasmanian wildlife. The park focuses on conserving species by educating people and allowing them an up-close appreciation of the animals.

The family-owned business has been operating since 1986. The wildlife park has run the Junior Keeper Experience during National Science Week since 2018. Program manager Gena Cantwell said, while they started the event in National Science Week, it quickly became so popular that they began offering it at other times throughout the year.

'These events almost sell out within about 15 minutes of me releasing the dates,' Gena said. 'The kids absolutely love it. They learn to care for the animals behind the scenes, experience wildlife up close, make arts and crafts to take home, and get a themed hat and certificate. Some kids have five hats; they've been back that many times!'

Each year the Junior Keeper Experience has a specific theme. Last year it was bees.

'We taught the kids how honey is made, they got to construct bee boxes and learned how honey is used in the food for our native wildlife,' Gena said. 'We explained why bees are so important for our environment. Then the kids created mini bee gardens to take home.'

'While our events have a conservation focus, we also love seeing kids develop their caring skills and passions.'

'The park experienced some devastating flooding last year. One of our Junior Rangers was so upset by this that he arranged a fundraiser through



Participating in the Junior Ranger experience
Photo: Wing's Wildlife Park

his primary school to help us repair the park and care for the animals. The impacts of our program last so much longer than the one day.'

Gena said running these special events drew more people not only to Wing's Wildlife Park but also to the local area.

'When people bring their kids, they often stay a night or two either at our park or in the general area. They also eat in the area and it supports tourism across the region.'

Science on the biggest and smallest screens

Joining forces with local groups to attract bigger crowds to science

Darwin is a popular tourist destination to experience Top-End life, including fishing, Indigenous culture, spectacular scenery and access to the Northern Territory's World Heritage Sites and national parks. One of the many things to do in the city is watch a film at the **Deck Chair Cinema** with its tropical, waterfront backdrop.

In 2022, Science Coordinator at the Casuarina Senior College, Peter Ramsay, brought science to the Deck Chair Cinema.

'Previously I'd run National Science Week movies from Scinema, a science film festival, on the school oval. But last year, we wanted to expand our audience, so we partnered

with the cinema and ran a special screening of a film called *Carbon: The Unauthorised Biography*,' Peter said. 'Instead of having 50 people at the event, last year we had over 200.'

But Peter brought science to more than the big screen. He and the school's astronomy club also set up three telescopes outside on the

popular Darwin waterfront. They spent hours showing cinema guests, tourists and locals various planets, clusters and nebulae.

'Each time we get the telescopes out, everybody loves looking through them,' Peter said. 'It was great to see a mix of ages getting involved with National Science Week through this event.'



Telescope set up along the Darwin waterfront for viewing by all
Photo: Peter Ramsay, Casuarina Senior College, Science Coordinator



Top: Inside the lush aviary at the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary | Photo: Australian Butterfly Sanctuary
Bottom: Red Lacewing butterfly, a local Queensland species | Photo: Australian Butterfly Sanctuary

Butterfly botany

Talks, walks and free plants help insects

Far north Queensland is one of Australia's natural gems. While we often hear more about the inhabitants of marine ecosystems, including Nemo and friends, our rainforest ecosystems with all their bugs, are just as important. Rainforests are vital food sources not only for bugs but also us. Plus, their unique plants provide us with medicines and keep our planet healthy by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen.

In August 2022, the **Australian Butterfly Sanctuary** in Kuranda gave tourists a unique insight into what's on the menu for some local bugs.

Manager of the sanctuary, Suzy Buttar, said while the sanctuary always offered guided tours and education activities, during National Science Week 2022 they focused

on the importance of butterfly and caterpillar food plants.

'The plants are not only a food source, but they also provide habitat,' she said. 'It's amazing how well the insects can camouflage on their food plants.'

To encourage people to support their local ecosystem, the sanctuary used a National Science Week grant to buy 100 native flowering plant seedlings, which they gave to guests to grow at home.

'These plants are an important food source for butterflies, including the Cairns Birdwing butterfly,' said Suzy. 'We gave the plants to guests and explained that having more native plants in our gardens for insects helps the whole area to flourish.'

During National Science Week, the sanctuary also ran one-off tours of the food-plant gardens and had interactive activities, including microscope

investigating, plant arts and crafts, and insect poo guessing games.

The sanctuary joined forces with the local insect specialists **Mini Beasts**, who gave a hit presentation about spiders.

'We weren't sure if people would like the spiders, but everyone loved them,' said Suzy.

The sanctuary also live-streamed some of the expert insect presentations on Facebook. Schools from all over Australia tuned in.

Through their talks and guided tours, the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary tries to increase public understanding of why bugs are important for our ecosystems.

'We think butterflies are a good 'gateway' bug: most people like butterflies, so we use them to start educating people about the importance of bugs everywhere,' said Suzy.



Guests enjoy drinks and exhibits at Boola Bardip WA Museum

Photo: Michael Haluwana for WA Museum Boola Bardip

Wine and din-osaurs

Friday night drinks with a Jurassic twist

Western Australia's waterfront capital has many drawcards: stunning local beaches and access to winery regions and pristine islands. In the heart of Perth, **Boola Bardip (the Western Australian Museum)** is one of the city's major attractions.

Boola Bardip means 'many stories' in the Noongar language. The museum is renowned for telling stories of Perth's history, culture and people.

In 2022, the museum also told dinosaur stories through its Dinosaurus of Patagonia exhibition.

Dinosaurus of Patagonia was open to all visitors during the day, but every Friday night the Bar Before Time offered adults the chance to drink with the dinosaurs after hours, learn from specialist talks and participate in dino-themed quizzes.

During National Science Week, the Bar Before Time held specific talks centred around the evolution of dinosaurs. The talks explored how there was such a diverse range of dinosaurs and why birds are living dinosaurs.

Manager for Learning and Engagement at Boola Bardip, Ruth Morris, said the event

was a hit and regularly sold out its 300-ticket capacity.

'It was an incredibly popular way for adults to experience the exhibits,' she said. 'There was even a dinosaur-themed cocktail.'

Ruth said the museum is actively involved in National Science Week and holds events for all ages.



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Photo: National Science Week

TOP TIPS + RESOURCES

There are resources available on the [National Science Week website](#), including:



- instructions on how to run an event.
- logos and characters to add to fliers, posters and advertisements.
- a free workplace science quiz and activity instructions (Brain Break).
- events and other activities planned for National Science Week.
- information on grants that are available annually; large national grants (up to \$20 000, open around October for the following year) and smaller rounds of grants from states and territories (various, open around February to May, depending on the jurisdiction).

Contact your local Inspiring Australia manager or National Science Week coordinating committee – they can provide advice on becoming involved in science activities, find speakers and connect you with science experts, let you know about funding to seed local activities, and alert you to local opportunities and activities you can join.

[CLICK HERE >](#) for a list of contacts in your state or territory.

Register your events on the [National Science Week website](#).

CONTACT US

FOLLOW NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and tell us what you're doing by tagging [#scienceweek](#).  

For general information about National Science Week, contact the National Science Week Team at:

EMAIL scienceweek@questacon.edu.au

PHONE 02 6270 2880

POST Questacon, PO Box 5322
Kingston ACT 2604

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