

SEA MONSTER FIELD SCHOOL

AUSTRALIA'S
MOST COMPLETE
ICHTHYOSAUR

AUSTRALIAN AGE OF DINOSAURS
WINTON QUEENSLAND

Group one: 4 to 18 January 2026

Group two: 18 January to 1 February 2026



A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME ADVENTURE IN OUTBACK QUEENSLAND!

Help prepare Australia's most complete ichthyosaur fossil, stargaze in a Dark-Sky Sanctuary, fossick for fossils and work hands-on in the country's most productive Fossil Preparation Laboratory. Open to citizen scientists 18+ (no experience needed!). Accommodation, transfers, Honorary Technician certificate, some meals and sightseeing included!



SEA MONSTER FIELD SCHOOL

This field school, run by the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of Natural History in Winton, Queensland, offers participants the chance to help prepare Australia's most complete ichthyosaur fossil. Discovered in 2023 on Toolebuc Station by fossil enthusiast Cass Prince, this seven-metre *Platypterygius australis* is one of the best-preserved marine reptile fossils ever found in Australia.

Participants will gain hands-on experience in fossil preparation, working alongside Museum staff in the Southern Hemisphere's most productive Fossil Preparation Laboratory and the newly built Exhibition Development Facility. This guided program blends science, adventure and the Outback Queensland experience, with the ichthyosaur destined for permanent exhibition once preparation is complete.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

LOCATION	Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of Natural History, Winton, Queensland 1,356km northwest of Brisbane
DATES	Group one: 4 to 18 January 2026 Group two: 18 January to 1 February 2026
LENGTH OF EACH FIELD SCHOOL	Two weeks
APPLICATION DEADLINE	1 December 2025 (open to citizen scientists 18 years and older)
FIELD SCHOOL CO-ORDINATOR	Education & Astronomy Manager, Grant Salmond grant.salmond@aaod.com.au 0448 151 827
DESCRIPTION	This field school focuses on the large-scale preparation of a 100-million-year-old ichthyosaur excavated in 2025. Everyday people will have the opportunity to learn fossil preparation techniques and play a role in uncovering the history of this extraordinary animal, which will eventually go on display at the Museum of Natural History. No prior experience required.
PRICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> King single rooms (shared bathroom): \$4,000pp Queen room (private ensuite, twin share): \$7,000pp <p><i>A \$500 non-refundable deposit is required to secure each booking.</i></p>
MEALS	All meals are included: self-serve breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner. Limited alcohol and drinks supplied.
ACCOMMODATION	Accommodation is provided at the Museum's exclusive three-star Maloney Lodge Precinct – simple, clean and comfortable. Located just 100m from the Fossil Preparation Laboratory and Exhibition Development Facility, participants will stay close to the action. All accommodation is onsite fostering great camaraderie!
TRANSPORTATION	Once you arrive in Winton all transfers are included.
ACADEMIC CREDIT	Academic credit is not offered.

FIELD SCHOOL SCHEDULE

The Sea Monsters Field School will be held twice in January 2026, with two identical programs. Group 1 will run from **4–18 January**, while Group 2 will run from **18 January–1 February**. Both groups will follow the same two-week schedule outlined below.

WEEK ONE	ITINERARY
Sunday – Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive in Winton and meet the Field School Co-ordinator. • Settle into rooms at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. • Welcome dinner. • Ichthyosaur presentation by Laboratory Supervisor. • Receive your welcome pack, including exclusive Field School t-shirt. <p>Meals: Dinner</p>
Monday – Museum orientation & first Lab session	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private guided tour of the Museum. • Fossil Preparation Laboratory induction. • Get assigned your ichthyosaur fossil to prepare! • Dinner at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Tuesday – Lab work + optional night walk	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue fossil preparation in the Laboratory alongside Museum staff. • Optional evening night walk with Field School Co-ordinator. • Dinner at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Wednesday – Lab work + dinner in town	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day in the Laboratory, working on your fossil. • Dinner at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Thursday – Lab work + evening presentation	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue fossil preparation with Museum staff. • Evening presentation by the Collection Manager (6pm). • Dinner at Maloney Lodge Precinct. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Friday – Lab work + Deep-Time Astronomy tour	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fossil preparation in the Laboratory. • Deluxe BBQ dinner on The Jump-Up followed by the Deep-Time Astronomy tour at the Gondwana Stars Observatory (6pm). <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Saturday – Excursion to Richmond	<p>7.30am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day trip to Kronosaurus Korner in Richmond, Queensland (open from 9am to 2pm). • Explore the museum, have lunch at the Moonrock Café and try your hand at fossil hunting led by expert guide. • Return to Winton for dinner at a local pub. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>

WEEK TWO	ITINERARY
Sunday – Local explorations	<p>All day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day off! This is your chance to sleep in and explore town. BBQ dinner at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Monday – Lab work	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full day fossil preparation alongside Museum staff. Dinner at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Tuesday – Lab work + stargazing	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue preparing your fossil in the Laboratory. Dinner at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. Optional stargazing walk across The Jump-Up Dark-Sky Sanctuary with sky-quality meter demonstration. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Wednesday – Lab work	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full day fossil preparation alongside Museum staff. Dinner at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Thursday – Lab work + evening talk	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lab work: daily, preparing your ichthyosaur fossil alongside Museum staff. Evening presentation by Collection Analyst at 6pm Dinner at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Friday – Final Lab day!	<p>9am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your final day of fossil preparation in the Laboratory. Honorary Technician assessments! Dinner at the Maloney Lodge Precinct. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Saturday – Dinosaur Stampede & Carisbrooke Station & farewell dinner	<p>8am to 4.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day trip to Dinosaur Stampede National Monument and Carisbrooke Station. Explore the trackway and walking trails with the Field School Co-ordinator. Farewell dinner at a local pub with members of the Lab team. Honorary Technician presentations. <p>Meals: Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner</p>
Sunday – Departure & final group breakfast	<p>8am to 11.30am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final group breakfast! Pack up at Maloney Lodge Precinct. Depart Winton. <p>Meals: Breakfast</p>

TYPICAL WORKDAY

This is a typical day plan, however, as the day progresses, activities may vary. We will endeavour to maintain the routine as closely as possible.

WEEK ONE	ITINERARY
7am	Wakeup
7.30am to 8.30am	Self-serve breakfast
9am	Work begins in the Fossil Preparation Laboratory or Exhibition Development Facility
10.30am	Morning tea break (15 minutes)
12.30pm	Lunch (30 minutes)
2.30pm	Afternoon tea break (15 minutes)
4.30pm	End of work day
7pm	Dinner

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

- Money/banks/credit cards: ATMs are available and major credit cards (Visa, Mastercard) are generally accepted in shops and pubs but it is recommended to carry some cash for smaller purchases, fuel or remote excursions.
- Measurements: Metric units are used throughout Australia: temperature in degrees Celsius (°C), distances in metres/kilometers (m/km), weight in grams/kilograms (g/kg) and volume in litres (l)
 - Time zone: Winton operates on Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST, UTC +10:00).

PROGRAM ETIQUETTE

The Sea Monster Field School is based in Winton, Queensland, a small town in the heart of Outback Australia. Winton is best known as the home of Australian Age of Dinosaurs, Dinosaur Stampede National Monument and the rugged mesa country of The Jump-Up. The town has a long history of pastoral life, pioneering settlement and today it welcomes visitors from around the world to share in its unique fossil heritage.

This field school is in its first year and our intention is to continue building and expanding the program for many years to come. Participants represent the project both within the Laboratory and in the wider Winton community. Misconduct that reflects poorly on the project, Museum or that risks damaging ongoing relationships with the local community, may be grounds for removal from the program.

Participants are expected to respect the laws and customs of Australia, environmental responsibilities and workplace safety regulations. Disrespect for staff, community or the fragile fossil heritage of the region will not be tolerated.

Above all, participants are encouraged to learn, contribute and immerse themselves in the unique pace and values of Outback life. This is an opportunity to share in the extraordinary fossil heritage of Winton while developing skills, respect and appreciation for both the science and the community that make this work possible.

WHAT TO BRING

The Fossil Preparation Laboratory and Exhibition Development Facility are active working environments. Industrial fans ensure comfortable working conditions, and cold water, electrolyte drinks, sunscreen and all personal protective equipment for fossil preparation are provided. However this is the Outback, where conditions can be hot, dry and unpredictable.

Please ensure you bring the following

- Driver's licence or proof-of-age card.
 - Personal medication (bring enough for your stay, as supplies are limited in Winton).
 - Stationery for personal use (notebook, pens, etc).
 - Laptop or tablet – free high-speed Wi-Fi and air conditioning are available at our onsite accommodation.
 - Appropriate adaptors/chargers for electronic devices (Australian plug type I, 230V).
 - Telstra mobile SIM (other providers have no coverage unless using Wi-Fi).
 - Fly veils (can be purchased at the Museum Shop).
 - Light, comfortable clothing for hot days.
 - Long sleeves and pants for sun protection.
 - A warm jacket or jumper for cool evenings.
 - A wide-brim hat and sunglasses.
 - Old clothes for Laboratory work (clothes you don't mind getting dusty or dirty).
 - Comfortable, sturdy, closed-in shoes for daily use; thongs/flip-flops for showers.
 - Personal toiletries.
 - Reusable water bottle (essential for hydration in Outback conditions).
 - Small backpack or daypack (for water, sunscreen, notebook, camera during excursions).
 - Sunscreen (SPF 30+ or higher) and lip balm with sun protection.
 - A positive attitude for teamwork, learning and new experiences.
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TRAVEL

From Longreach, hire cars are available, or you're welcome to drive your own vehicle. The drive from Longreach to Winton is straightforward, with parking available at both the accommodation and the Museum. Please ensure your vehicle is suitable for Outback conditions and plan fuel or refreshment stops along the way.

Sunday is the designated arrival day – simply let us know your expected arrival time, and a staff member will meet you at the gate and show you to your room so you can settle in.

If you are delayed, please contact the Field School Co-ordinator immediately.

MEALS & ACCOMMODATION

All participants will stay at the Maloney Lodge Precinct in Winton. Each participant will have a private, clean, and comfortable room. The Precinct offers ten fully furnished cabin-style rooms – King Single (shared bathrooms) and Queen (private ensuite). All rooms are rustic yet well maintained, with access to shared kitchen and laundry facilities (laundry powder and soap provided), a barbecue area and free Wi-Fi. The relaxed setting overlooks the picturesque Channel Country, providing the perfect place to unwind after a day in the field.

The Field School provides breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner throughout the two-week program. Please advise us in advance of any dietary requirements (eg vegetarian, vegan, allergies) so meals can be planned accordingly.

Meals are hearty, simple and satisfying, with special dietary needs accommodated upon request.

PRICES



PROGRAM DATES

- Group 1: 4–18 January 2025
- Group 2: 18 January–1 February 2025

PROGRAM PACKAGES

- King single rooms (shared bathroom) – \$4,000 per person (6 available)
- Queen rooms (private ensuite, twin-share) – \$7,000 per pair (4 available)

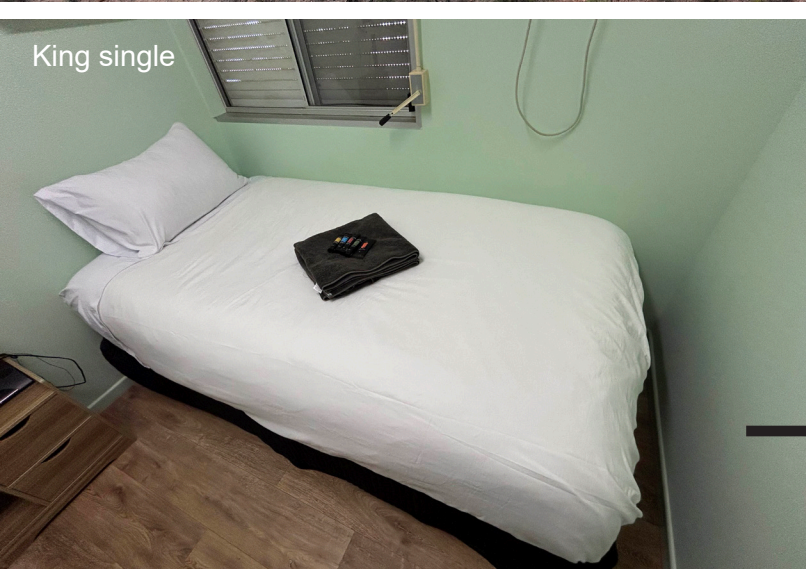
Single supplements available on request for Queen rooms, though priority will be given to duos.

A \$500 non-refundable deposit is required to secure each booking.

The program package includes two weeks of onsite accommodation at the Maloney Lodge Precinct, all meals (breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner), hands-on fossil preparation training in the Fossil Preparation Laboratory and a once-in-a-lifetime experience! Transfers to and from Longreach are not included.



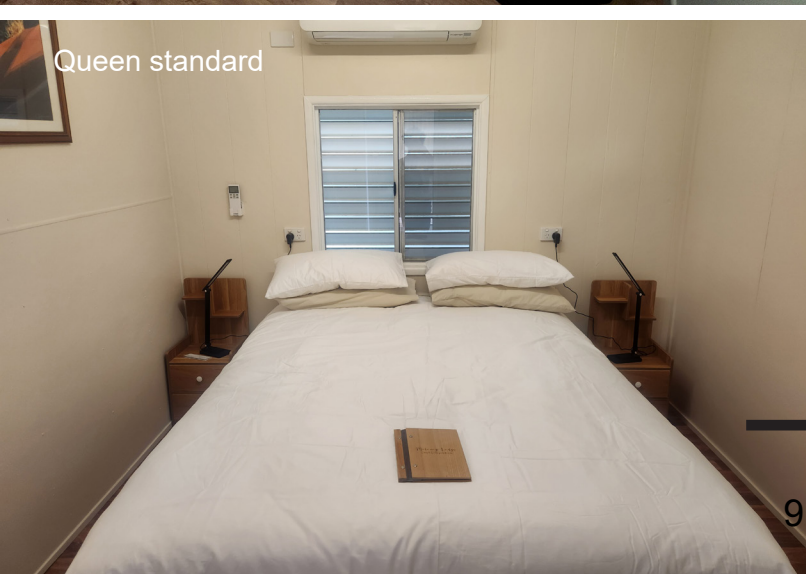
MALONEY LODGE PRECINCT



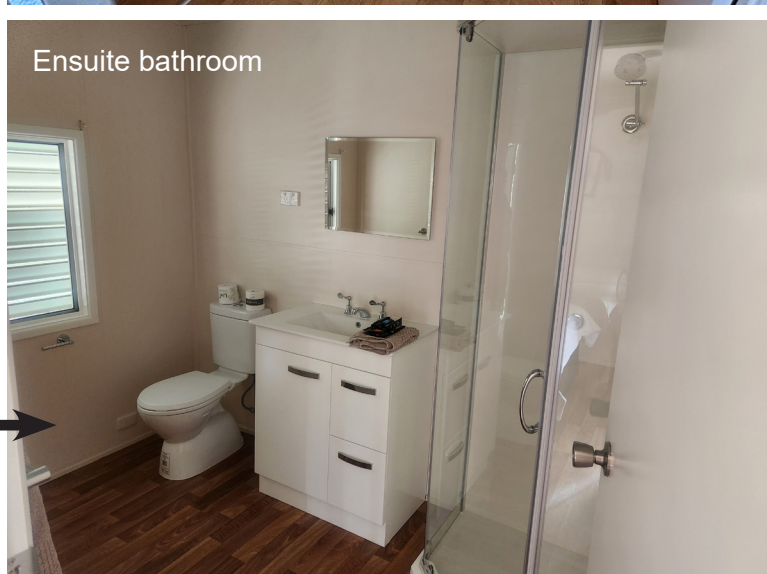
King single



Shared bathroom



Queen standard



Ensuite bathroom

OUR PAST **YOUR MUSEUM**

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