



OBSERVATORY TOUR INFORMATION

Thank you for your interest in our star gazing tour at the Blue Mountains Observatory. We hope that you will experience an amazing journey through our wonderful universe. At an elevation of 947 meters, the facility boasts pristine skies that resemble the conditions found in the Australian outback – but close enough to many shops and attractions in the area. The Blue Mountains Observatory is not simply “a tourist attraction” - it is a fully internet remote controlled professional research astronomical observatory, with world renowned large telescopes and imaging equipment.

For an additional fee on top of your accommodation, you will receive at least a night of stargazing through the telescopes (weather depending). A qualified astronomer will travel from Sydney to conduct your tour for you. However, as we can't be in control of the weather, the cost for the astronomy tour is non-refundable. Tours are only for visitors staying at the cottage - if you have another visitor, the cost is \$50/person but the maximum number we can accommodate in the viewing dome is 8 people.

Tour Start Times:

- **Your group must be present at the Observatory Cottage by sunset.**
- **The tour will commence when the sky becomes fully dark.**
- **If your group is not present by sunset, your tour will be cancelled.**

If you think you will not be able to arrive at the cottage on your first night and prepare for your tour by sunset, you need to notify us at the time of your booking via email to info@bluemountainsobservatory.com.au In this case, the astronomer will travel up from Sydney for your second night.

Access to the viewing telescope in the dome, is via a locked hatch in the Cottage Master Bedroom. For your security, the code for the front door key lock box for the cottage is changed for every booking. **The Astronomer must be able to gain access to the dome, just after sunset, to set up the telescope up for you at that time.** The astronomer will knock on the cottage door to greet you, turn off any heating in the master bedroom, open the dome, setup the telescope, turn on the red lights to “dark adapt you” and provide an orientation, before you enter the dome. When fully dark (or just before - if there are bright objects like the Moon or planets to view), you will be invited up to the dome. We strongly advise you to avoid bright lights, prior to the tour, to enable you to become “dark adapted.” **Leave all devices downstairs – blue light is the worst light to ruin your night vision!**

The Tour:

We cater for people 8 years and older, who have never seen through a telescope before, right up to visiting astronomers. A very personal experience offered by no other facility - entirely tailored to your group's interests and enjoyment! This is not an observatory where you are waiting with 40 other people for 2 hours and only see a few objects. Instead, we have structured our tours in such a way that there will be no rush during observing time and you will receive the maximum opportunity for everyone in your group to enjoy the experience of a variety of astronomical objects. The tour is very comprehensive and educational and directed at a High School level.

Ensure you are dressed warmly, as the dome is open to the night air and that you are wearing sensible covered shoes - no thongs or open sandals. Any alcohol consumed will constrict your pupil and you will not be able to see faint objects through the telescope. **The safety of our guests and the expensive telescope remains our top priority! The astronomer reserves the right to refuse entry to any person, for any reason.**

Check out just a small example of the hand written reviews in our visitor's book at:

www.bluemountainsobservatory.com.au/the-review.php

The large research telescopes are in another observatory, located behind the cottage. Staff sleeping quarters are underneath the research observatory. **Please do not approach the stairs or side door of the rear sliding roof research observatory**, as this will trip motion alarms and/or disturb the astronomer - he often works until dawn and requires sleep during the day.

As a personal request - your very kind consideration in reducing noise in the rear parking area during the day is greatly appreciated!

What happens if there is bad weather?

Of course, we have no control over the weather and there are expenses to enable the astronomer to travel up from Sydney and prepare the telescopes for you. The sky needs to be clear, winds below 29kms/h gust and relative humidity below 93%, to open the dome.

Generally, if the first night is cloudy, then the tour will be postponed to the second night. If the second night is also cloudy, it will be postponed to the third night and so on, unless if similar poor conditions occur on your last night, you will be given a "technical tour" of the research facility and a very educational and enjoyable multimedia presentation - be assured that you will still have a wonderful educational experience, in any event! When you have received your one night of visual star gazing or technical tour, that will be the end of the astronomer's commitment to you and he may then depart - depending on if there is another tour or if he has telescope maintenance duties.

Conditions of Entry to Observatories:



DO NOT TOUCH THE TELESCOPES



TURN DEVICES AND PHONES OFF
(The screens ruin your night vision)



CHILDREN UNDER 8 YEARS ARE NOT
PERMITTED IN THE OBSERVATORIES



NO PHOTOGRAPHY
NO HIGH BEAMS IN DRIVEWAY



NO ADMITTANCE IF AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL

Management reserves the right to refuse any person.