

A collage of four black and white photographs of students. The top photo shows a student smiling broadly. The middle photo shows two students, one with a hand on the other's shoulder. The bottom-left photo shows a student with a hand on their forehead. The bottom-right photo shows a student smiling. The entire collage has a grainy, high-contrast texture.

# BEGLININGS

**MOD.** A TEACHER'S GUIDE



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# A Guide to This Guide

Welcome.

MOD. is Australia's leading future-focused museum, designing exhibitions and experiences for a 15-25 year old target audience.

We aim to engage our young audience in science, research, technology and art. Our exhibition themes look at STEM broadly and the ways it can impact our lives, our societies, and our futures.

We want to support teachers in their visits to MOD. Our goal is to enable you to bring your classes in for visits that are filled with interesting conversations about ideas that are important and relevant to students.

This Teachers' Guide has been made for you. It has exhibit text, additional contextual information, as well as suggested classroom activities. Anywhere you find text that looks [like this](#) it links out to external resources.

We hope you find it helpful.

# BEGINNINGS Exhibition Themes

The future isn't something far off in the distance. It unfolds through continuous action in the present, constantly shaping a trajectory of what comes next. In this constellation of endless possibilities, how can we orient ourselves to take our first steps toward the unknown?

Discover BEGINNINGS. Embark on a journey to better understand how and why we are here, where we belong in the world, and how we can act in the present to shape the future.

Spark creativity and experiment with new musical compositions in the sonic studio MiNi. Explore the hidden costs and opportunities of everyday decision making by shopping at The Convenient Store. Protect the MOD. Crisis Control Centre from a delectable AI gone rogue. Harness the natural forces of the universe to transform a living energy system by feeding The Beast.

Your future starts now. Not tomorrow, today. Not alone, together.

Where will you begin?

## **Key Words**

Change, Energy, Creativity, Collaboration, Education, Health, Security, Foresight

## **Research Focus Areas**

Theoretical Physics, Genetics/Epigenetics, Design Thinking, Music Composition, Plant Phenomics, Cognitive Neuroscience, Sustainability, Systems Engineering, Cyber Security, Mental Health, Learning Science, Green Energy, Futures Thinking



# Approach to Learning

Throughout the BEGINNINGS exhibition, students can connect their learning via the following capabilities:

## **Critical and Creative Thinking**

- Students can interpret and analyse problems from different perspectives, and analyse and interpret information in a variety of ways.

## **ICT Capability**

- Students can explore the different ways that data is represented throughout the exhibition.

## **Personal and Social Capability**

- Students are encouraged to discuss ideas within the exhibition, and consider the health and wellbeing of themselves and others.

## **Ethical Understanding**

- Throughout the exhibition, students consider the ethical implications on humans, and recognise the importance of ethics in decision making.

## **Intercultural Understanding**

- Students consider different cultural views throughout the exhibition.

# WHAT IS A BEGINNING?

## Gallery: Lecture Gallery



**We are never alone in our beginnings.**

From the earliest origins of our universe to the decisions you make today, everything has to start somewhere.

Storytelling helps us to understand other perspectives and carry forward their lessons of experience as our own.

Where does your story begin?

Outside Lecture Gallery visitors should be able to clearly identify the 'cavern' entrance to mark the start of the exhibition. Nearby accessible resources and guides are available for any visitor who requires them.

This introductory exhibit showcases eighteen diverse storytelling perspectives highlighting the nine futures-thinking subthemes of BEGINNINGS 2026. These stories include those told by Adelaide University academics and notable individuals who have informed elements of the following exhibits. Each story marks a chapter in the larger framing narrative of effecting change for the future.

In the centre of the gallery an interactive projection surface on the floor (the 'Wellspring') is encircled by nine spherical stones which may be used for seating. Visitors can engage with the digital projection using small moments of physical interaction moving through the space.

### **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- What is a beginning? How do we mark the start of things?
- Why do people tell stories? How do stories help us understand the world around us? How can the learned experiences of others help us prepare for the journey ahead?
- Activity: discuss the storytelling voices as a whole and then single out one in particular. Why did that voice stand out to you? Was it the way they spoke, or what they said?



# WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF SOMETHING NEW?

**Gallery: Seasons Wall (Kuri Kurru)**



**In Kurna Yerta the natural world is always changing.**

For centuries the Kurna people have immersed themselves in the natural cycles of the environment. Through observing patterns they have developed a seasonal calendar that reflects the specificities of local place.

How can we know when one season ends and another begins?

## **Kurru Kari**

Kurru Kari, or Turning Circle, is a series of interactive seasonal stories which are displayed on touchscreens in line with the Kurna Seasons. These stories are told by storyteller and artist Karl 'Winda' Telfer from the Mullawirra Meyunna, who will take you on a journey in preparation for the each Kurna season. Depending on which season you visit during, the screen will display different seasonal observations.

### **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- What observations can you make to let you know the season is changing? What season do you most look forward to beginning?
- What does it mean to be connected to Country? How might we put Country first?
- Activity: When Australia was colonised, Europeans brought their seasonal understanding with them. Four seasons fit into the European experience, but do not necessarily make sense for the environment in Australia. Compare the Kurna seasonal calendar to your own observations of the world around you.

Note: the dates provided for these seasons are Bokarra 1 Jan - 29 Feb, Parnatti 1 Mar - 30 Apr, Wodliworngatti 1 May - 30 Jun, Kudlilla 1 Jul - 31 Aug, Willuti 1 Sept - 31 Oct, Woltatti 1 Nov - 31 Dec. These dates change according to the observable environmental changes may differ from season to season.

# WHAT WILL YOU PASS ON?

**Gallery: Universal Gallery**



**We are part of something much larger than ourselves.**

Just as we belong to a family, a community, or a species, we are also connected across time. Our genetics reveal each of us to be a culmination of lives and experiences tracing back to the earliest forms of life.

How can your actions today influence future generations?



In Universal Gallery visitors will engage with the touchscreen interactive Folk Island, showcasing exciting new research in genetics, epigenetics, and cultural inheritance studied at both Adelaide University and the Queensland University of Technology.

Through several phases of interactive gameplay visitors will explore the Life Cycle Ceremony and the creation of their own unique creature. This experience will explore how inheritance, our environment, and personal choices weave together to create each of us. In the process visitors will shape not only one life but the evolving story of Folk Island itself.

In the centre of the gallery, MOD.'s Science on a Sphere will showcase a rotating selection of data sets curated to align with the themes of BEGINNINGS. Visitors will be able to interact with this spherical projection layer using the kiosk control station.

### **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- What makes you 'you'? What are you shaped by?
- Are your choices or identity determined by your genes? How much of our decision-making is in our control?
- Activity: consider the lives of your great-grandparents. What was important to them and what kinds of decisions would they have had to make? What do you think will be important for future generations and what can you do for them today?

# WHAT IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN?

**Gallery: Street Gallery**



**Why wait for inspiration when you can make it yourself.**

Creativity isn't only for artists. Our brains constantly absorb the world around us, synthesising our experiences into new solutions for everyday problem solving. Experimentation is the process of getting things wrong before we get them right.

What can you create when you try new or different ways of thinking?

Entering Street Gallery visitors will step into an experimental sonic studio where the act of problem-solving itself becomes music.

Using a series of large-scale 'MiNi' modules visitors will be able to collaborate on the creation of a unique musical soundscape within the overall gallery instrument. A central control module responsible for creating the design thinking 'problem' or prompt will encourage visitors to address a problem together within a set time limit.

Following the end of the global timer the previous session will be queued for listening in the 'playback' area, where visitors will be prompted to reflect on the previous soundscape composition and rate it as either positive or negative.

Nearby 'record crates' will allow visitors can flip through vinyl record sleeves with illustrations and quotes embedding research content.

### **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- How does creativity help us express ourselves? Where does that creativity come from?
- What do you do when you get stuck solving a problem? Is it better to keep pushing through or try something new?
- Activity: consider your current favourite song and imagine all the steps it might have taken to get it from start to finish. What inspired the lyrics? How many times did the chorus need to be rewritten? Where did the first note come from?



# HOW CAN WE CULTIVATE CHANGE?

**Gallery: Foyer and Cafe**



**Change doesn't happen overnight. It grows slowly, shaped by our actions over time.**

Nurturing the future into being requires us to plant seeds today, laying the groundwork with intentional care for each other and the world around us. That's how a better future begins to take root.

How will the future of sustainable agriculture work both on this planet and beyond?

Above the MOD. Foyer, a multi-tiered sculpture is suspended over the cafe seating area. Hanging from the rings are thousands of dried wheat stalks in various stages of growth, with purple ultraviolet LED lighting running around the rings for illumination.

The sculpture draws its aesthetic from groundbreaking plant phenomics research at Adelaide University's Waite Campus. Scientists there study how plants respond to various stress conditions using world-class technology and infrastructure.

Contextual information about the sculpture and research related to the theme of cultivation is provided on Level 1 balustrade-mounted signage. This includes sections detailing the Plant Accelerator research at Adelaide University's Waite Campus, the importance of connection to Country with Aboriginal seed propagation, as well as the future of sustainable agriculture with Plants for Space research.

### **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- What do you put care towards? Have you seen the impact of nurturing something in yourself or others?
- What seeds have you planted in the past that you now see the fruition of? Do all things start small?
- Activity: pick an idea or goal. Map the cycle of care it needs - from planting to tending to harvesting.



# WHAT CHOICES HAVE VALUE?

**Gallery: Arcade Gallery**



**Even everyday decisions can have large-scale impact.**

In our daily routine we often forget we exist within a larger system of choice, influence, and impact. Being conscious of our decisions allows us to make better choices and be conscious of their effects.

If we were actually given all the information we need, would our actions better align with our values?



Entering Arcade Gallery visitors will enter The Convenient Store: a stylised mock replica of a commercial retail space complete with rows of product shelving, advertisements, self checkouts, and more. This interactive gallery operates as an environmental metaphor for the everyday choices we make in our lives and showcases research stories relating to sustainability, supply chains, economics, marketing, and consumer behaviour.

After onboarding visitors will be given one of five 'Shopping Lists' with an integrated RFID chip, providing them with a list of products to search for and make choices about within the gallery space. After comparing the relative pros and cons for each option, visitors can select products by tapping their shopping list on the price label.

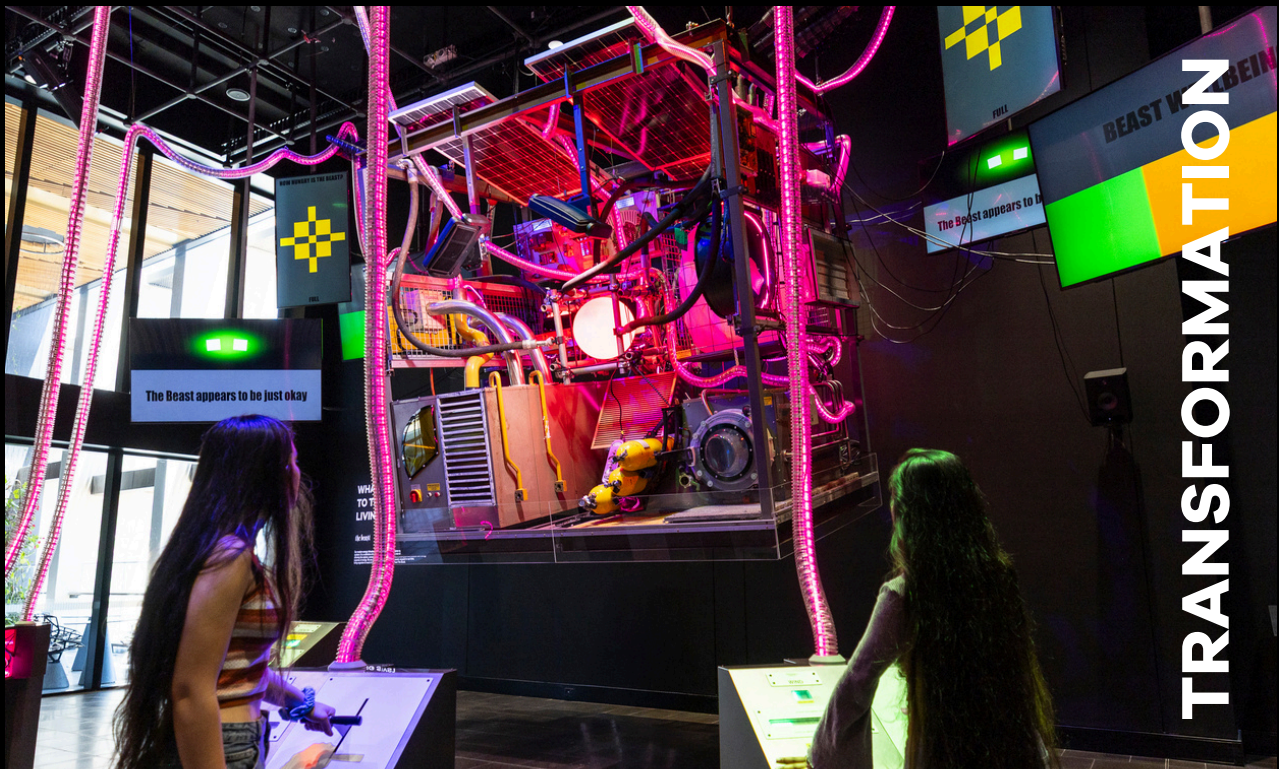
Once visitors have selected their items they can head to the self-check out stations to discover more about their choices and the impact these decisions might have on others.

### **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- What information do you need to make choices? Do we always make better decisions when presented with more options?
- Whose recommendation do you really trust? Are there companies that you think are helping to shape the future?
- Activity: choose one everyday item you often buy. List three choices you might make about this purchase eg. cheapest option, second hand, etc. For each write one possible impact, thinking about how it affects people, the planet, or your own life.

# WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO TRANSFORM A LIVING SYSTEM?

**Gallery: Gould Gallery**



**Our modern world is a complex system in a state of perpetual motion.**

Changing it for the better requires intentional steps that create space for new, sustainable opportunities.

Discover how embracing these moments today moves us toward a greener energy future.

Entering Gould Gallery visitors will encounter an imposing inorganic energy creature that still appears to be very much alive: The Beast.

The Beast is an abstracted automaton of interconnected mechanical, electrical, and pneumatic processes mirroring the complexities of our contemporary energy world. It is an interactive installation that forms an emotional connection for visitors with a collection of energy systems difficult to view as a singular entity—energy capture, conversion, and storage transposed into natural processes such as metabolism, digestion, respiration and photosynthesis.

Five interactive stations will encourage visitors to interact with The Beast and balance its various inputs and potential growth over time. While interacting with these stations visitors will also be able to monitor it's 'vital signs' (energy input/output, happiness, health, etc.) through suspended live displays as well their five senses: listen to its heartbeat, feel its breath, watch as it reacts to certain stimuli.

### **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- How is our modern world dependent on energy?
- What does a future that prioritises degrowth look like? How might it change the way we choose transport, food or fashion?
- Activity: Think about the energy you use every day, including where energy is sourced from and flows to. Where are there points in this system that could change to contribute to a green energy transition? Identify three examples including individual, organisational, and governmental frameworks.



# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT A CRISIS?

**Gallery: Open Lab**



**Our future is uncertain. What steps can we take today to be ready for tomorrow?**

Preparedness is the careful balance of present action and the possibility of future reward. Small interventions introduced at the right time can stop even the most dangerous potential threats before they have the chance to begin.

Will you be ready when the time comes? Good luck 🍵( ͡° ͜ʖ ͡° )~

Entering Open Lab visitors will be transported into the world of the MOD Crisis Control Centre (MCCC), a fictional interactive office workspace focused on cybersecurity and threat prevention. This narrative simulation is inspired by large-scale cyberdefence simulations such as NATO's Locked Shields, depictions of rogue AI in popular media, as well as contemporary escape rooms.

Visitors will play four interactive arcade 'workstations' against a mischievous rogue artificial intelligence with a larrikin personality: PUDDING. PUDDING is a predictive analytics tool created by the summer intern who has accidentally become self-aware and is now attempting to spread throughout MOD.'s digital infrastructure with the goal of creating havoc.

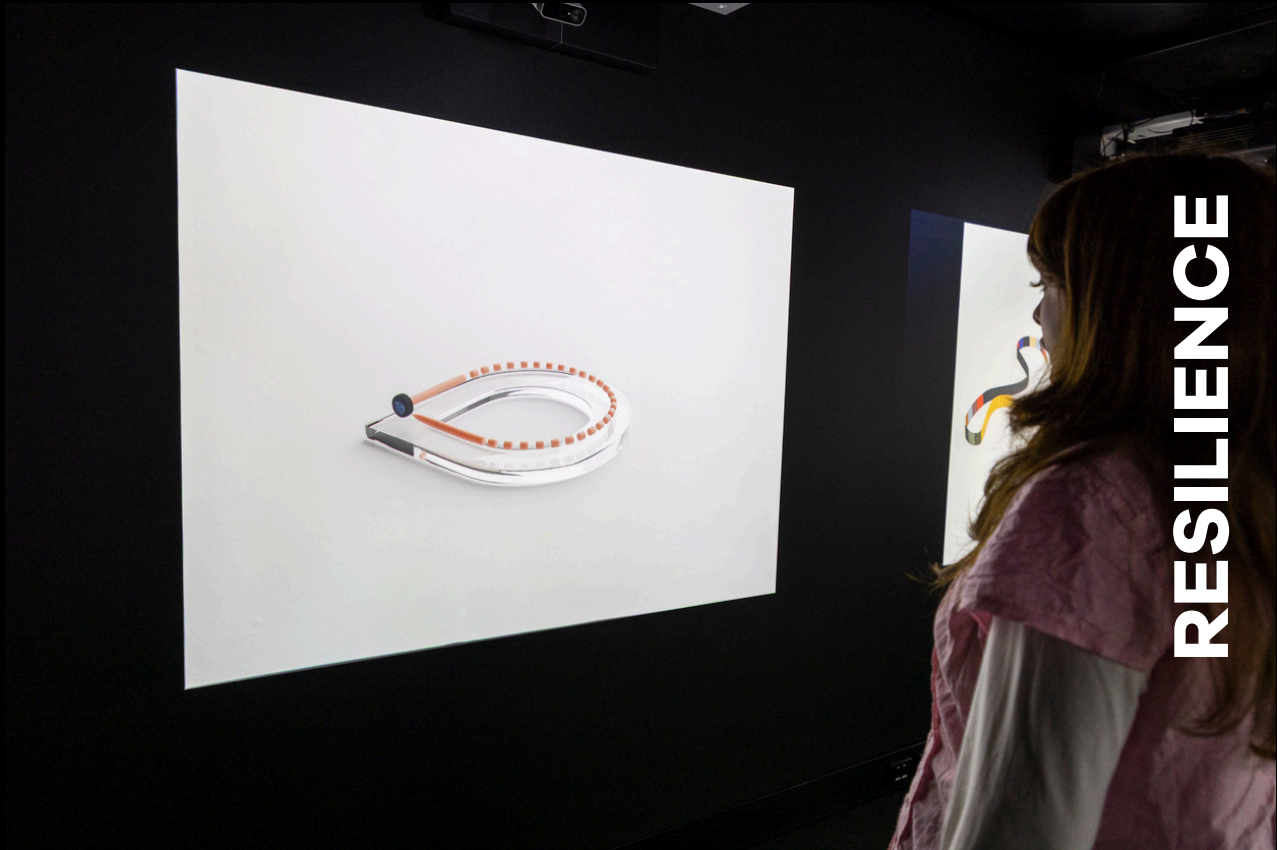
Throughout the gallery several other elements of embedded research including the MCCC Hotline, Water Cooler Conversation Starters, and Active Situation Peg Board will further explore the themes of Preparedness accross disciplines.

### **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- How can we prepare for something truly unexpected? What does it mean to get ready for something when you don't know when it will arrive?
- What technologies make us safer for the future? What technologies might make us more vulnerable?
- Activity: Pick an everyday future situation and plan ahead for it. What could go wrong, and how would you prepare?

# HOW DO YOU START AGAIN?

**Gallery: The Pod**



**It takes courage to begin again.**

Not every journey is destined to succeed. Failure, injury, setbacks, and defeat are not endings but important lessons: each necessary steps on the path of renewal and progress.

Human endeavour is the story of continuously putting the broken pieces back together. What can we use to repair the cracks between them?



In the POD visitors will enter an exhibit of Transformative Repair artworks curated by Adelaide University researcher and artist Guy Keulemans, as well as an accompanying digital interactive projection developed by Adelaide University's Realities Extended.

Transformative Repair ([transformativerepair.net](http://transformativerepair.net)) is an Australian Research Council funded project and platform for investigating and cultivating new forms of creative repair practice among artists, designers, craftspeople and creative professionals.

Projected onto the surrounding walls are six projected digital interactives of the six repaired objects. The visitor moves their hand to prompt the objects to break and repair.

## **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- If a repaired object has a new purpose, is it still the same object? When do we consider something recycled, adapted, or new?
- How can repairing an object change our relationship to it? What kind of break makes something more valuable?
- Activity: collect scraps, old papers, fabric, or small objects that you no longer need or that are broken/damaged. Create a collage or artwork using these materials, focusing on how you can repair or reimagine them. Think about the story behind each piece and what it tells about resilience or care.

# HOW DO WE NAVIGATE TOWARD A BETTER FUTURE?

**Gallery: Futures Gallery**



**There is no map to the future other than the one we create ourselves.**

Tomorrow is made up of endless possibilities. Choosing the right path is not an act of prediction but navigation—not what it might be, but what it could be. If we envision multiple futures we can orient ourselves toward a more desirable path.

How will we get there? Not alone, together. Not tomorrow, today.

Entering Futures Gallery visitors will step into a darkened environment centred around a visually impactful projection display overhead: a dynamic starfield organised into several constellations of illustrated futures thinking archetypes.

In the centre of the room two digital touchscreen stations or 'chart tables' will prompt visitors to complete a futures questionnaire. These questions will invite visitors to reflect on their values, ideal futures, as well as the themes of the past gallery spaces. This will create a unique star profile that upon completion will be 'launched' from the chart stations and be transported to the star projection above.

Before exiting the gallery a final written interactive will prompt visitors to reflect on these futures thinking abilities and archetypes using supplied star shaped paper cards.

### **Sample Discussions and Activity**

- What happens to the future when we try to shape what happens next? How do we know we are going the right way?
- How can you work with others to find a common vision? What futures-thinking skills might complement yours?
- Activity: write a letter to your present self from your future self. What are you grateful you began now, and what advice would your future self give you today?



# Engaging with MOD. for Classes



We have several options for visiting school groups that offer different levels of engagement.

## Self-Guided Visit

Schools are welcome to visit and show themselves around. Gallery staff are always on hand for support.

## Guided Tour

Visit with a dedicated tour guide showing you through the galleries. These are limited to 30 participants and cost \$220 for one hour.

## Science on the Streets

Explore the science behind our city with a self-guided walking tour of the significant sites of North Terrace.

# Engaging with MOD. for Classes

## [Navigating the Future presentation](#)

A presentation by MOD. which unpacks critical skills and competencies that are required for young people to take advantage of opportunities posed by shifting work futures.

This is recommended for year 10-12 students and costs \$440. The presentation can take place at your school or at MOD. and runs for one hour.

More school visit information can be found [here](#).

# Engaging with MOD. for Educators



## Educator Newsletter

We have a quarterly email newsletter for educators, providing information about activity for classes and professional development. If you'd like to receive it, please email us at [mod@mod.org.au](mailto:mod@mod.org.au)

## Introducing: BEGINNINGS

A 1.5 hour introduction to the current exhibition, held either online, or in the galleries at MOD. Please keep an eye out for upcoming sessions on our What's On page.

This introduction includes a guided tour and provides you the opportunity to talk with MOD. staff and other teachers about classroom activities related to the exhibition.



# Accessibility and inclusion at MOD.

We want all MOD. visitors to have a welcoming and inclusive experience. This is one of our [key design principles](#) and something we consider in the design of each of our exhibitions.

There are a range of [resources available online](#) to help with planning your visit. This includes a sensory map and social story of each of our exhibitions.

MOD. is a member of the Autism Friendly Charter, as awarded by Autism SA.

Our galleries are equipped with access to a Hearing Loop or an IR Receiver. The latter we can provide if needed. All of our video footage is captioned.

We have accessible and all-gender toilets on both levels, as well as access via both stairs and lifts.

If you have any other questions or feedback, please contact us at [mod@mod.org.au](mailto:mod@mod.org.au)

**MOD.**