

JOURNEY TO DARK SKY ECO VIA THE SOLAR SYSTEM DRIVE

Connecting with Country,
the Cosmos & The Dark Emu in the Sky





Welcome to Your Solar System Drive Colouring Adventure!

The Solar System Drive is the world's largest virtual solar system model right here in New South Wales Australia. Scaled 38 million times smaller than reality the billboards stretch across more than 600 kilometres of beautiful Central West and Northwest Slopes country on Gamilaraay lands. All five scenic routes converge at the Sun – the Anglo-Australian Telescope dome at Siding Spring Observatory, Australia's first International Dark Sky Park.

Colour each planet as you find it along the drive. Add your own notes, photos taken, special memories and family moments. This is your personal keepsake of a journey that connects Country and the Cosmos.

Safe travels along the Drive. We look forward to welcoming you at The Emu Hive in the Asteroid Belt!

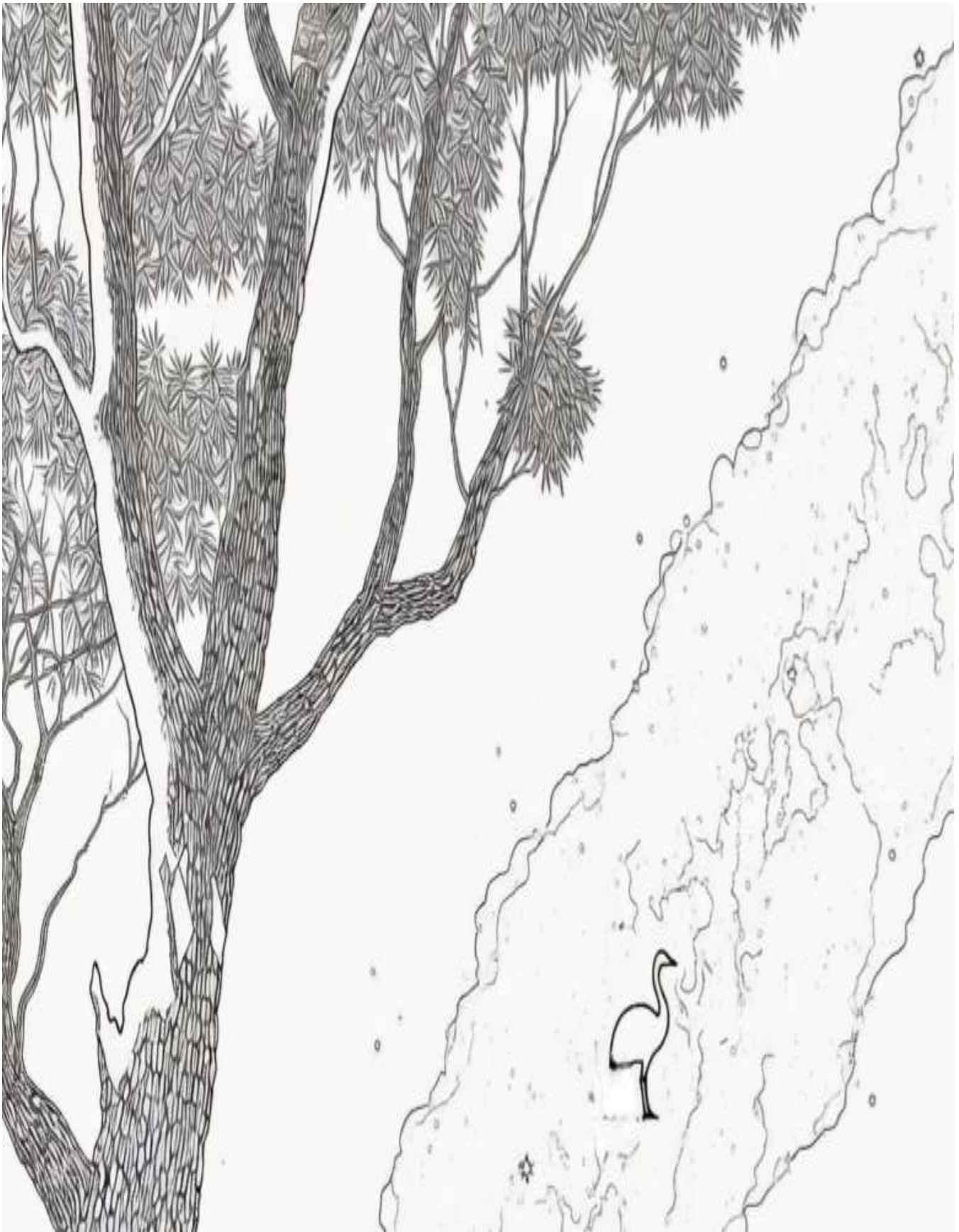
Journey to Dark Sky Eco via the Solar System Drive

Colour this scene for inspiration before you begin your own colouring adventure!

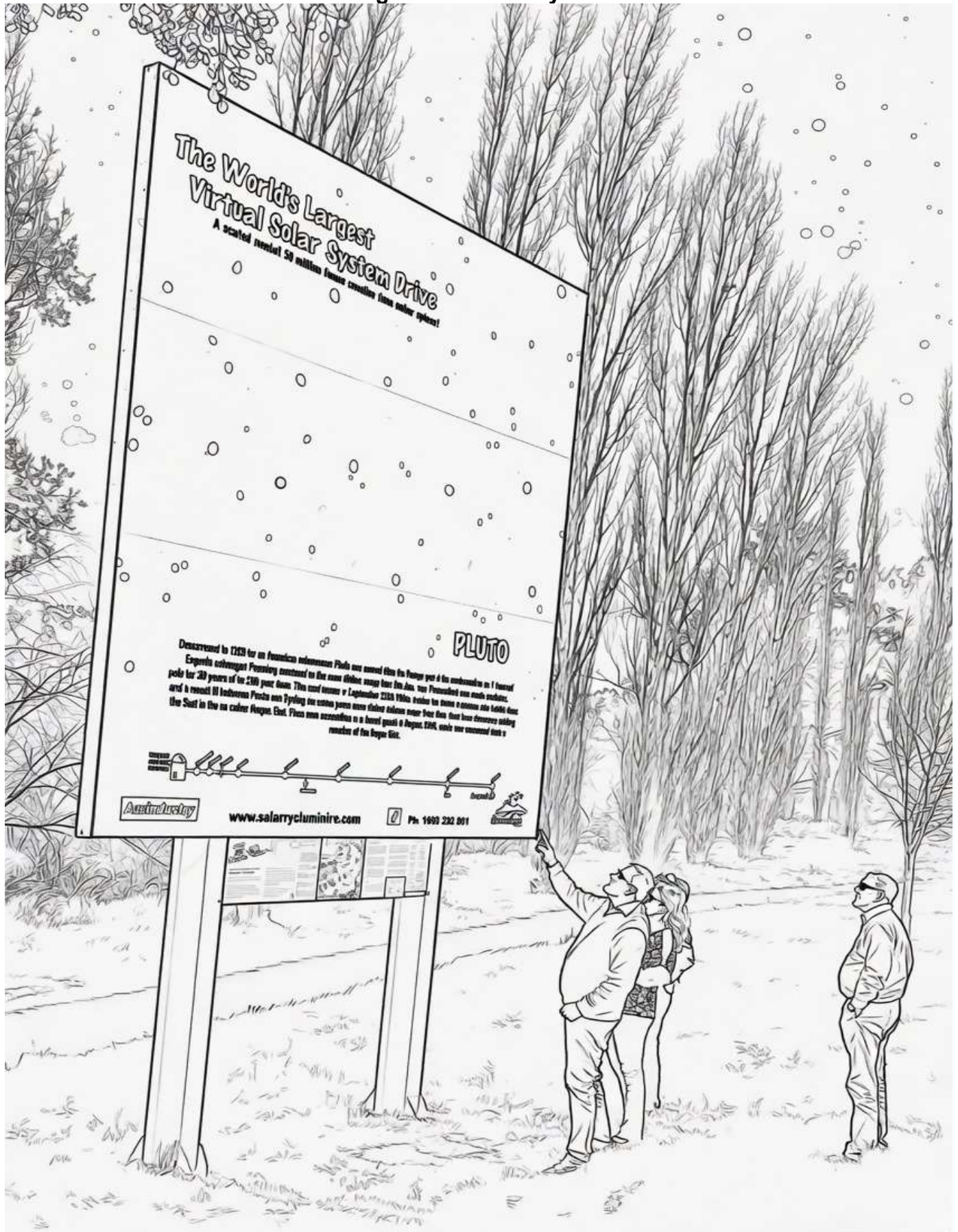


The Dark Emu in the Sky & Scarred Trees

The mighty Emu constellation stretches across the Milky Way above the scarred trees at Dark Sky Eco Retreat

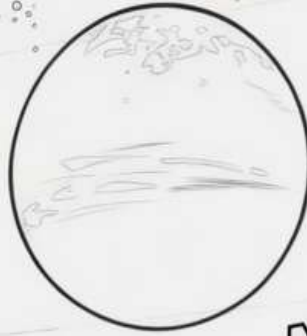


PLUTO – The Dwarf Planet at the Edge of the Solar System



NEPTUNE – The Windy Ice Giant

The World's Largest Virtual Solar System Drive



NEPTUNE

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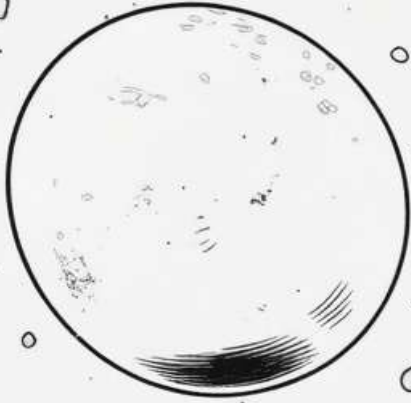
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URANUS – The Tilted Ice Giant

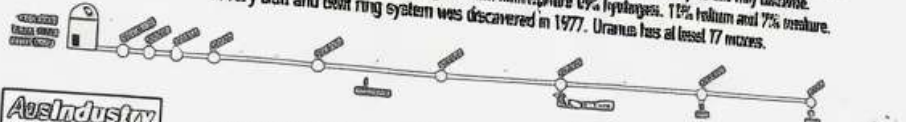
The World's Largest Virtual Solar System Drive

A scaled model 80 million times smaller than outer space!



URANUS

Uranus, the 3rd largest planet, is named after the Greek's tallest god, the father of Saturn. Unlike most planets which orbit the Sun like spinning tops, Uranus's axis is tilted over at 97.9 degrees, causing it to orbit the Sun in its 84 year orbital period like a top. The seasonal changes brought on by the Uranian year are very dramatic because of the extreme tilt. Uranus is a 'gas giant' with 4% hydrogen, 1% helium and 7% methane. A very faint and dark ring system was discovered in 1977. Uranus has at least 17 moons.



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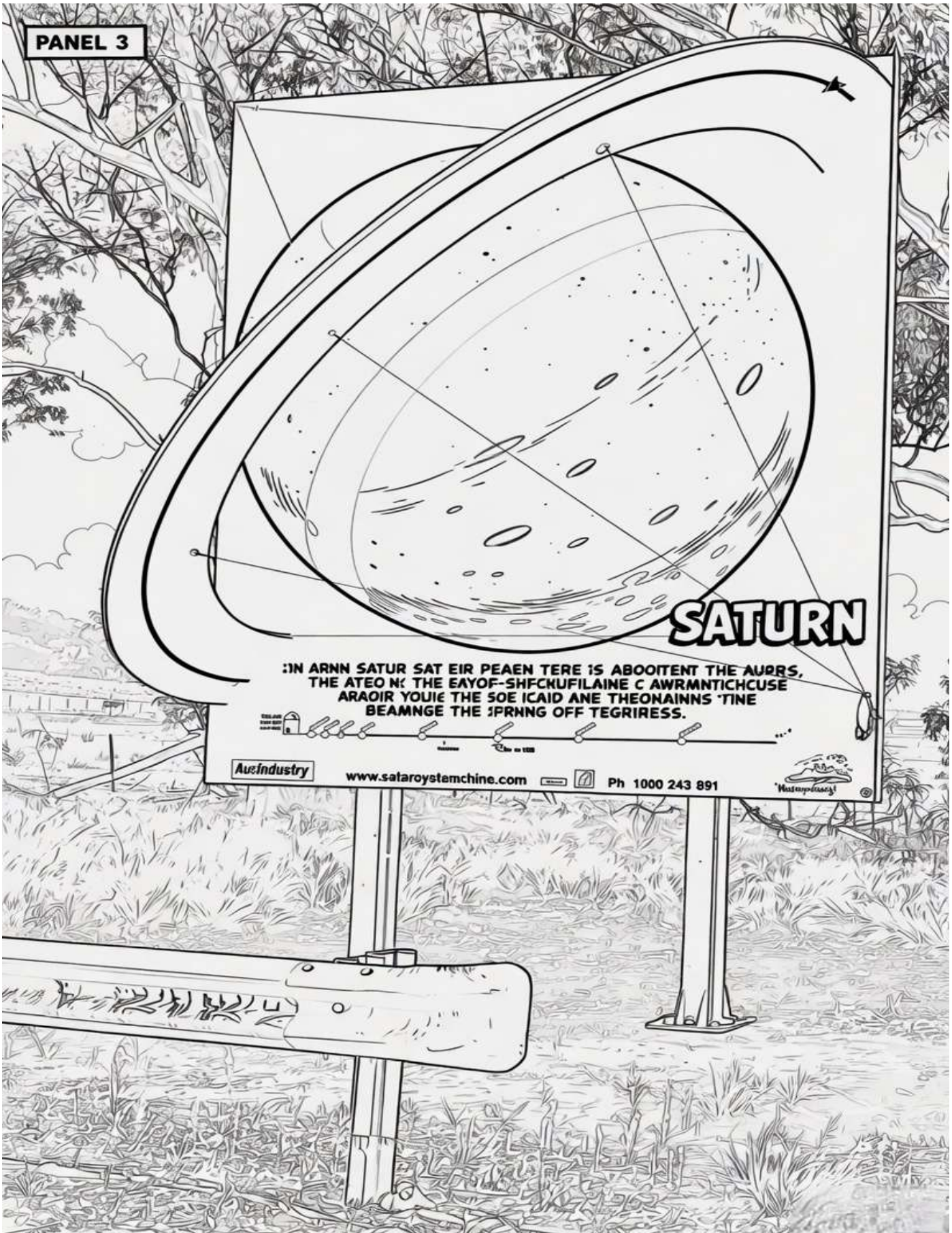
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SATURN – The Jewel of the Solar System

PANEL 3



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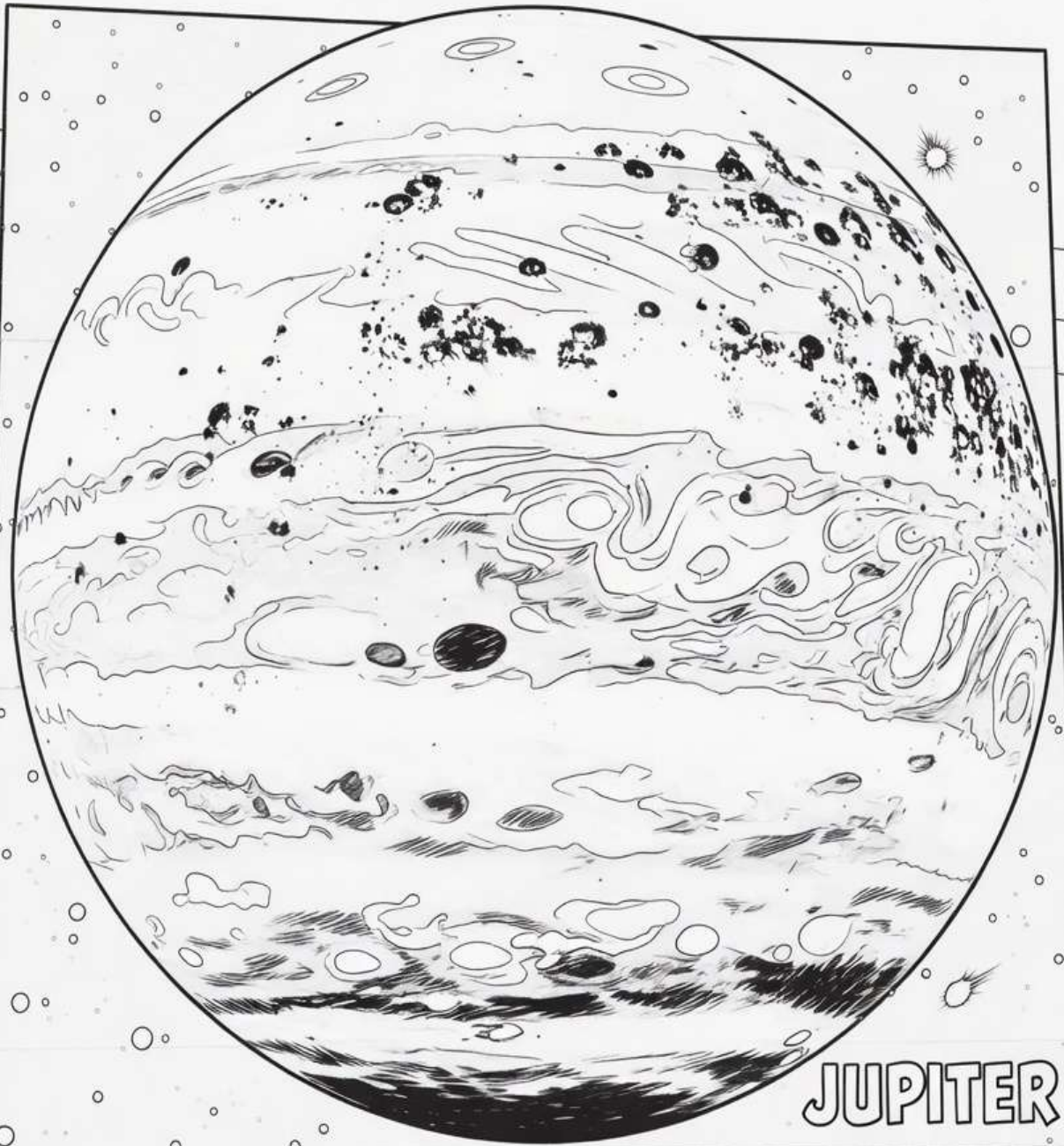
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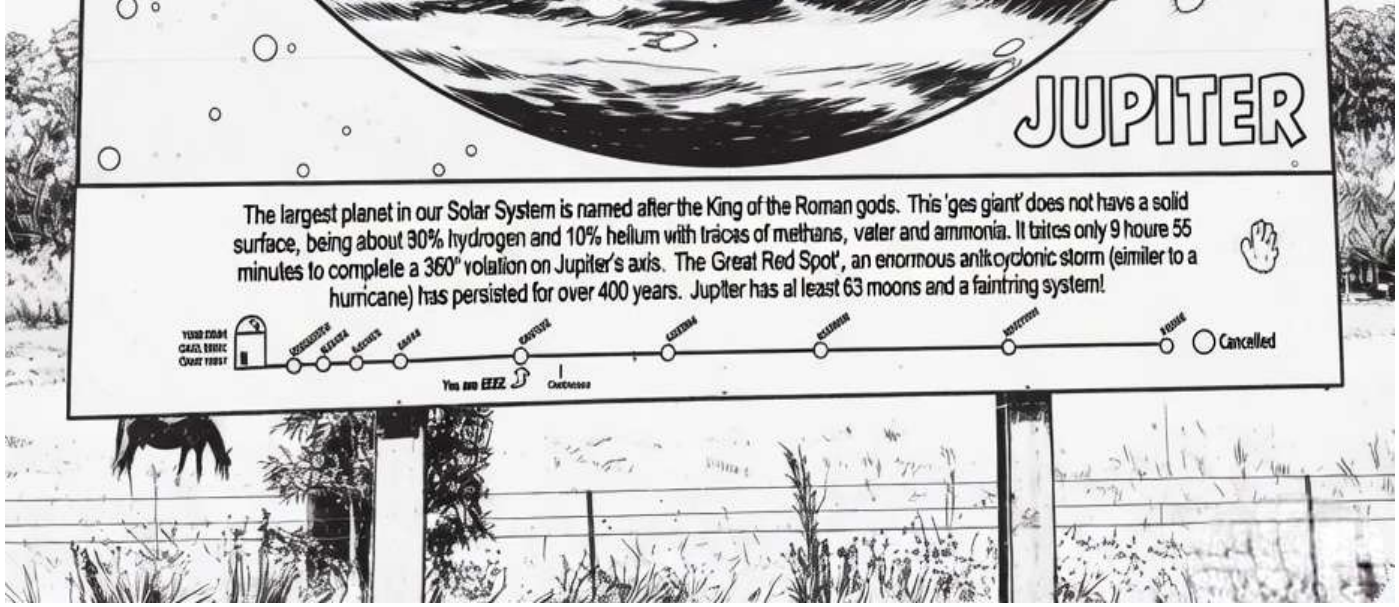


JUPITER – The King of Planets & Guardian of the Asteroid Belt



JUPITER

The largest planet in our Solar System is named after the King of the Roman gods. This 'gas giant' does not have a solid surface, being about 90% hydrogen and 10% helium with traces of methane, water and ammonia. It takes only 9 hours 55 minutes to complete a 360° rotation on Jupiter's axis. The Great Red Spot, an enormous anticyclonic storm (similar to a hurricane) has persisted for over 400 years. Jupiter has at least 63 moons and a faint ring system!



MARS – The Red Planet

The World's Largest Virtual Solar System Drive

A scaled model 80 million times smaller than outer space!

MARS

Mars, the 4th planet from the Sun and the 7th largest was named in honour of the Roman god of war because the planet appeared to be blood red. Although much smaller than Earth, Mars has roughly the same land surface and features which dwarf Earth's terrain. The Martian mountain Olympus Mons is 2.6 times higher than Mount Everest and the Martian canyon Valles Marineris (Mariner Valley) would span the width of Australial Mare has 2 moons that are named after the horses that pulled the god of war's chariot - Phobos (Terror) and Deimos (Panic).



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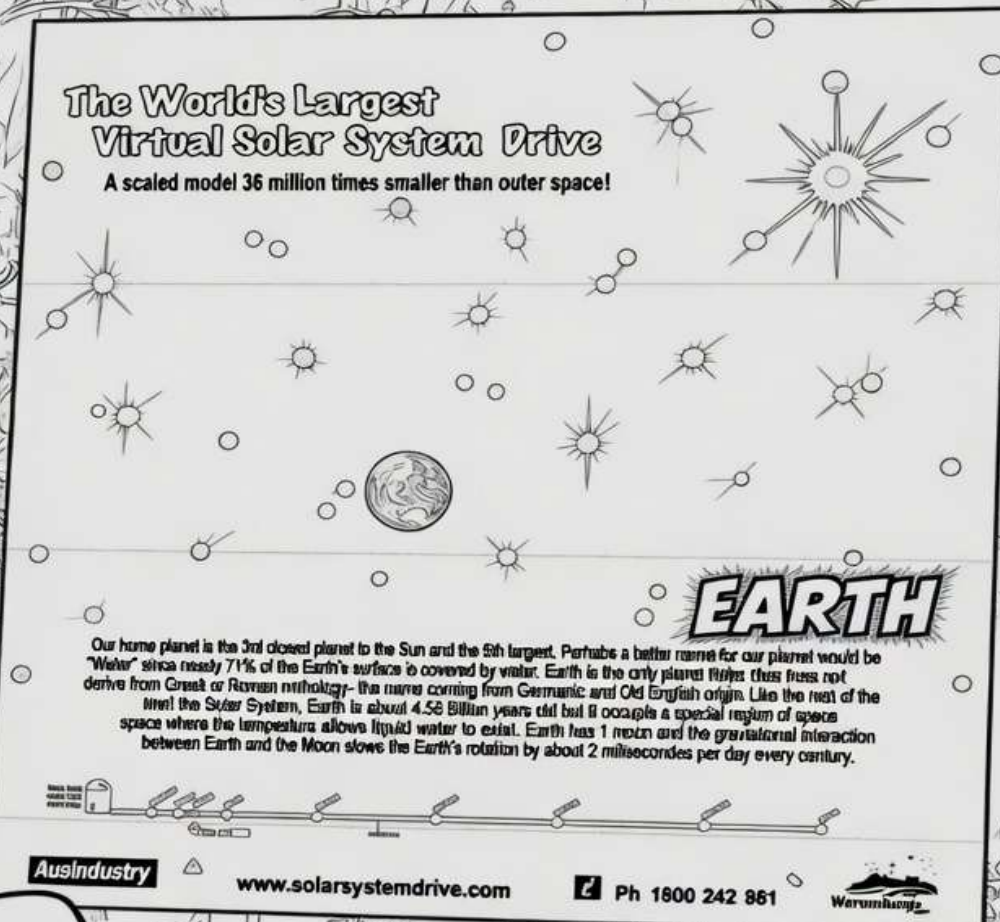
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EARTH & THE MOON – Our Beautiful Blue Home

The World's Largest Virtual Solar System Drive

A scaled model 36 million times smaller than outer space!



EARTH

Our home planet is the 3rd closest planet to the Sun and the 5th largest. Perhaps a better name for our planet would be "Water" since nearly 71% of the Earth's surface is covered by water. Earth is the only planet whose trees have not derive from Greek or Roman mythology - the name coming from Germanic and Old English origins. Like the rest of the inner Solar System, Earth is about 4.56 Billion years old but it occupies a special region of space space where the temperature allows liquid water to exist. Earth has 1 moon and the gravitational interaction between Earth and the Moon slows the Earth's rotation by about 2 milliseconds per day every century.

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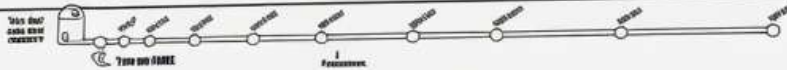
MERCURY – The Swiftest Messenger

The World's Largest Virtual Solar System Drive

A scaled model 58 million times smaller than outer space!

MERCURY

Mercury was named by the Greeks after the fleet footed messenger of the gods because this "wandering star" meaning of the Greek word "planet") moved so quickly through the sky. Mercury is a small, rocky and heavily cratered world. Why? During the early history of the Solar System, the Sun's gravity drew smaller objects towards it. Which planet is nearest to the target? Mercury! Although closest to the Sun, Mercury is not the hottest planet. With virtually no atmosphere to warm it, the dark side of Mercury is one of the coldest places in the Solar System with night-time temperatures dropping to minus 173° Celsius! Mercury has no moons.



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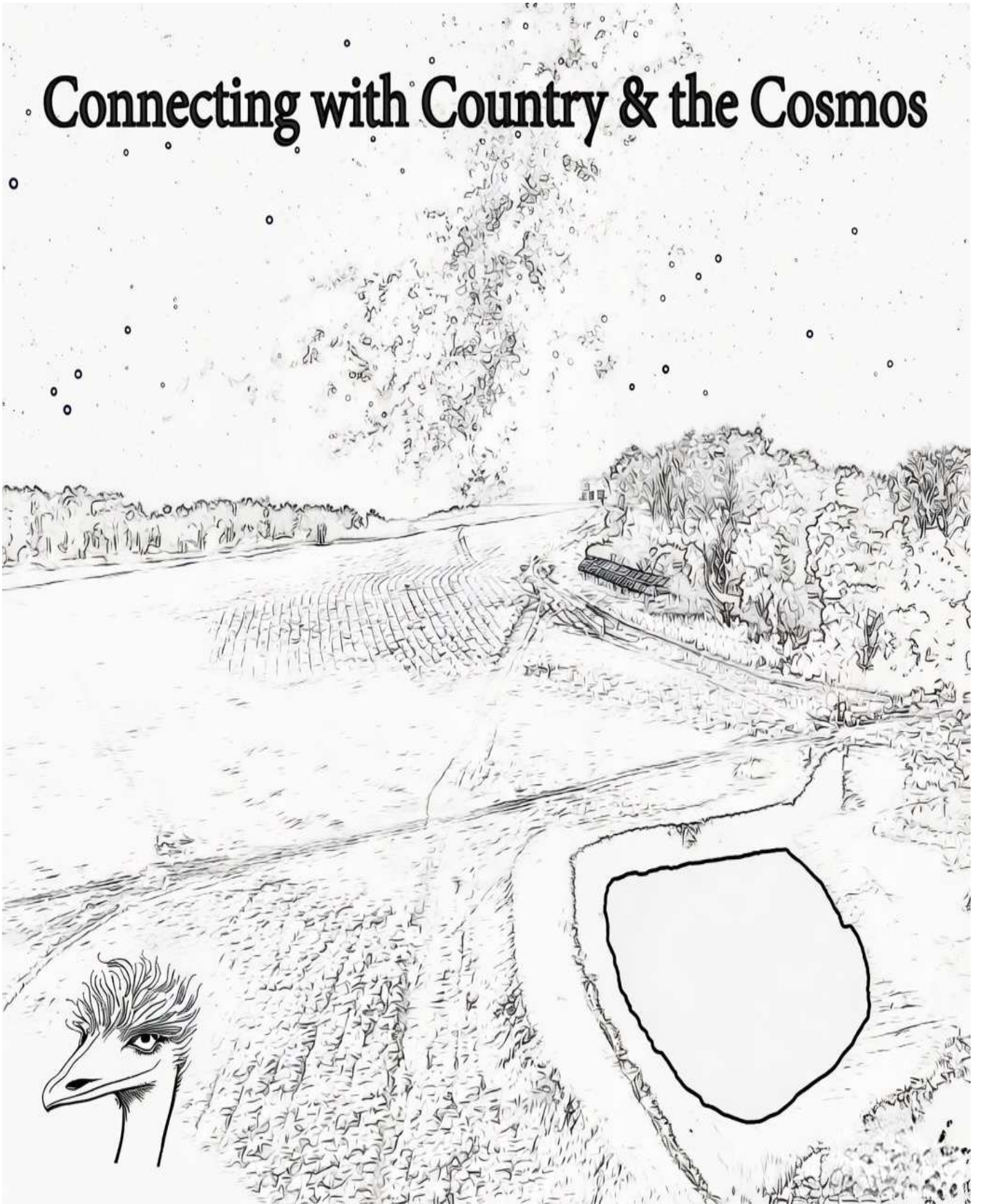
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THE SUN – Anglo-Australian Telescope Dome at Siding Spring Observatory



Connecting with Country & the Cosmos



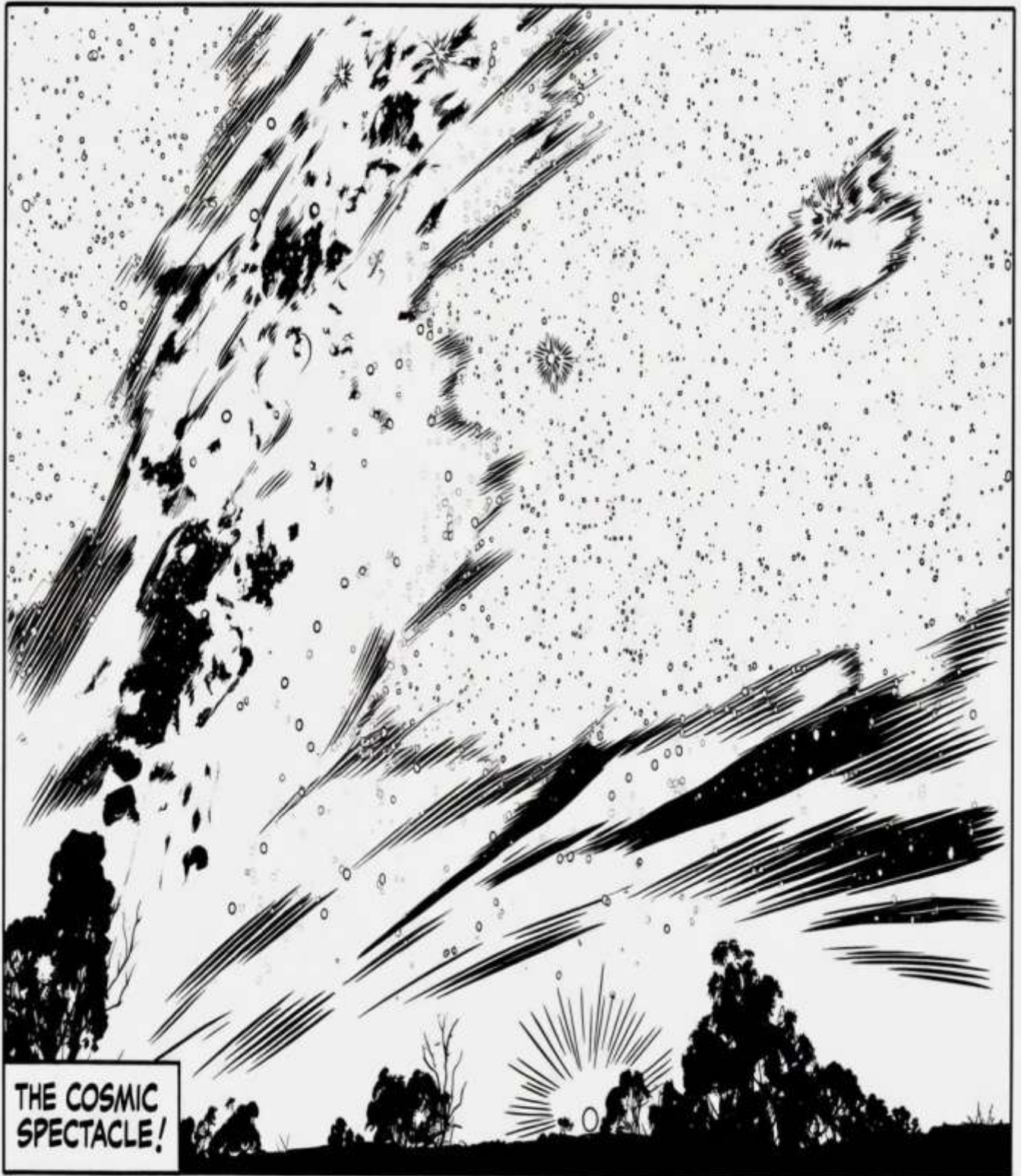
A New Day at The Emu Hive – Ready to Finish Your Journey to the Sun



Emus at The Emu Hive – Guardians of the Asteroid Belt



The Cosmic Spectacle! – Meteor Shower or Aurora above the Warrumbungles



THE COSMIC SPECTACLE!

The Five Scenic Routes to the Sun

THE WORLD'S LARGEST VIRTUAL SOLAR SYSTEM DRIVE

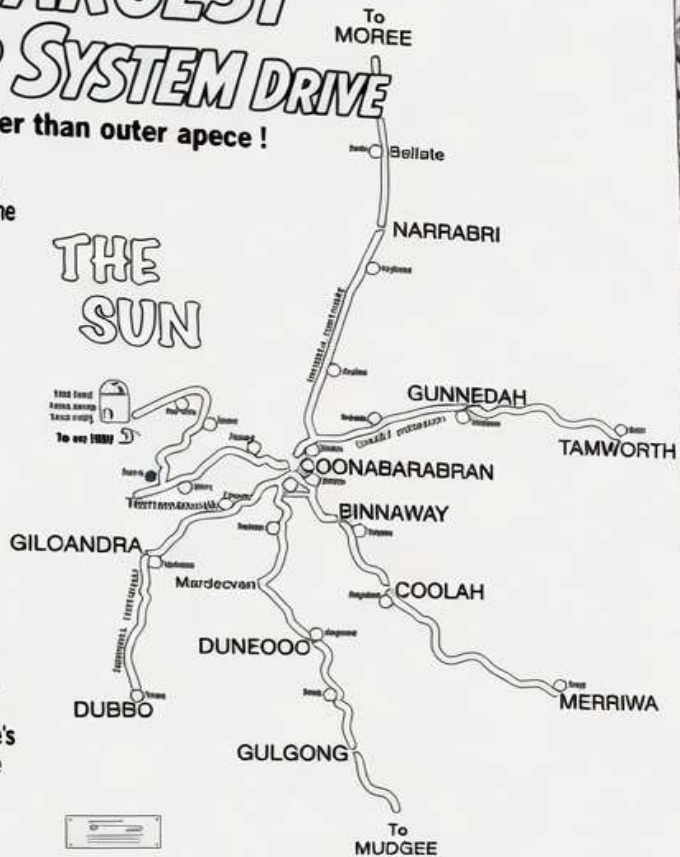
A scaled model 38 million smaller than outer space!

The Sun is the closest star to Earth. The ancient Romans named the Sun 'Sol' after their god of the sun. It is by far the largest object in our Solar System. The International Astronomical Union has designated that 6 planets orbit the Sun (as do many other objects).

For 76 years, Pluto was considered to be the 9th planet of our Solar System. However, after years of intense debate and controversy, in August 2006, the IAU reclassified Pluto as a dwarf planet.

At the scale of our Solar System model (1:38,000,000) the Sun would be the same size as the nearby dome of the Anglo Australian Observatory which houses the giant 3.3 metre mirror Anglo Australian Telescope.

Coonabarabran, the 'Astronomy Capital of Australia' is home to Australia's largest astronomy research facility. Maps and guides are available to assist your journey through the Solar System from Visitor Information Centres along the 5 tourist drives and from the Exploratory Centre right here at Siuing Spring Observatory.



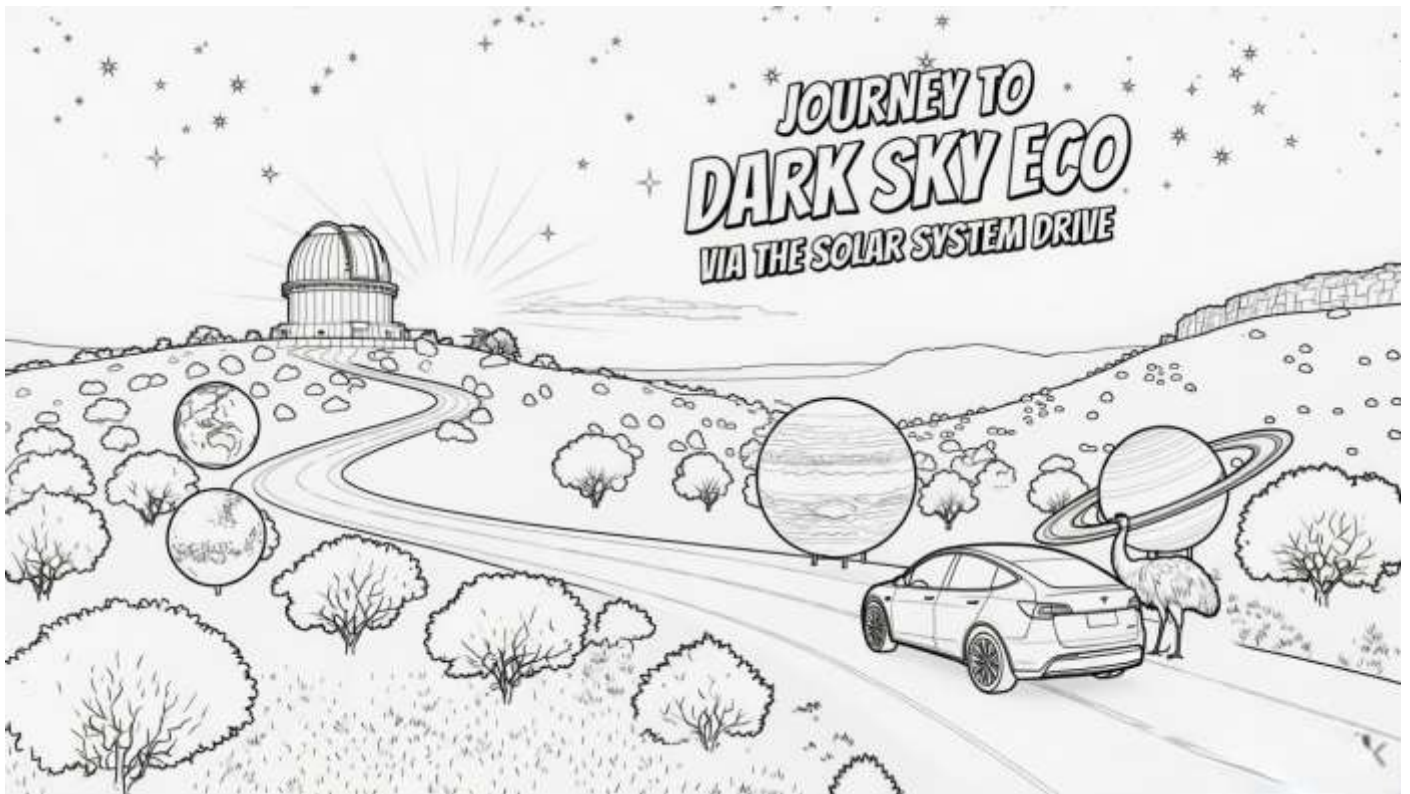
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Thank you for colouring your Solar System Drive journey!

Created by Mark and Wendy with love from Dark Sky Eco Retreat – The Emu Hive in the Warrumbungle Shire as a Free community resource – please print and freely share the World’s Largest Solar System Drive.

All facts aligned with our official Solar System Drive Guide (free download at darksyeco.com.au).

May your journey through Country and the Cosmos be filled with wonder.



Dark Sky Eco Retreat

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