

Msheireb Museums Hosts Screening of Australian-Qatari Pearling Documentary 'Al Nayla'



Published on January 14, 2026

Document Date: Thu, Jun 11 2026 09:41:22 am

Category: ,English, Qatar - ,Snippets

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Doha, Qatar – 14 January 2026: Msheireb Museums, in partnership with Qatar Television and the Australian Embassy in Doha, successfully hosted a screening of the documentary film “Al Nayla: A Journey to the Depths of Sea and the Secrets of Extracting Oysters and Pearls from the Coast of Australia.” The event took place on Tuesday at Stories in Msheireb Museums, gathering diplomats, officials, and members of the public to present the historical and cultural connections between Qatar and Australia through the pearling industry.

The film traced the development of Western Australia’s pearling industry, exploring the history of pearl diving along the region’s coasts, the stages of pearl cultivation, the secrets of selection, and the contributions of the venerable families who had established the industry since the last century. It showed how methods of harvesting oysters and cultivating pearls evolved over time. Through historical footage and interviews with key figures in the sector, Al Nayla exhibited how the introduction of cultured pearls reshaped the global market and influenced the industry’s cultural and economic significance.

The evening represented a cultural and diplomatic occasion of considerable significance, attended by The Honourable Dick Milton, Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives; His Excellency Shane Flanagan, Australian Ambassador to the State of Qatar; Qatar Television

leadership; in addition to several diplomats. The distinguished gathering underscored the depth of cultural and diplomatic ties between Australia and Qatar.

Msheireb Museums General Manager, Abdulla Al Naama, said: “Msheireb Museums works to safeguard and promote stories that link our history with our contemporary world. ‘Al Nayla’ serves as a connection between two countries whose cultures were influenced by the sea.

Msheireb Museums has long presented the story of pearling and the pearl trade in Qatar.

Screening ‘Al Nayla’ in this setting created a natural dialogue between local and international histories, offering audiences a broader understanding of how this industry developed across different regions.”

HE Shane Flanagan, Australian Ambassador to the State of Qatar, said: “In this year in which we celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the opening of the Australian Embassy in Qatar, tonight’s screening of Al-Nayla is a reminder of the human stories that bind our two nations. By sharing these stories, we bridge the 10,000 kilometres between Australia and Qatar. Al-Nayla celebrates a common thread in the history of Australia and Qatar. It is a reminder that, whilst we are separated by oceans, our histories are intertwined. We congratulate Qatar Television on the production of the documentary, which inspires greater curiosity about the threads that connect our two nations.”

Ali Saleh Al-Sada, Director of Qatar Television, said: “Several months ago, Qatar TV launched episodes highlighting the pearling trade and the cultural heritage associated with it. This screening extended that focus by introducing audiences to Australia’s pearling history and practices. By presenting the film in Msheireb Museums, where Qatar’s pearling heritage is already documented, the event created a clear connection between local and international narratives. The film ‘Al Nayla’ combined historical and contemporary perspectives, helping viewers understand how the pearling industry continues to influence societies today.”

Through the screening of ‘Al Nayla’, Msheireb Museums, Qatar TV, and the Australian Embassy offered audiences to engage with both local and international pearling histories. The event emphasised cross-cultural dialogue, showing how an industry shaped societies, economies, and traditions across continents. The documentary examined both the technical and human aspects of pearling, showcasing the experiences of divers and industry leaders. It also illustrated how economic, environmental, and technological changes influenced the industry, delivering an informative and educational experience for attendees.