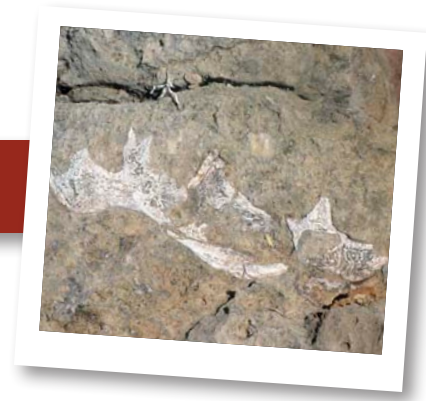


AUSTRALIA'S WORLD HERITAGE PLACES

AUSTRALIAN FOSSIL MAMMAL SITE (RIVERSLEIGH/NARACOORTE)



Quick Facts

- Riversleigh is in north-western Queensland.
- Naracoorte is over 2,000 kilometres away from Riversleigh in South Australia.
- Unusual animal fossil finds include large crocodiles, carnivorous kangaroos and enormous birds
- Each of Australia's 17 World Heritage Places are also on Australia's National Heritage List.

Why is the Australian Fossil Mammal site of World Heritage value?

The Australian Fossil Mammal Sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994 for their natural values.

- **They help us understand the important story of the evolution of mammals over twenty million years**

Scientists know that megafauna (very large animals) once roamed our continent because of the fossils they found at Riversleigh, Naracoorte and other places across Australia. These fossils tell us of how our unique animals evolved over a long period of time and how climate change and the arrival of humans affected them.

- **They help us understand how environments, plants and animals became the way they are today and how they continue to change over time**

Australia has other important fossil sites, but Riversleigh and Naracoorte are nationally and internationally significant places. This is because of the variety and quality of fossils here, and the important information they tell us about the ancestry of the Australian mammals we know today. The Pleistocene fossil vertebrate deposits at Naracoorte are considered to be one of the richest deposits in the world and Australia's largest and best preserved fossils. From the 3-4m deep fossil bed, tens of thousands of specimens were recovered, from very small frogs to rhinoceros-sized marsupials.

Challenges and Management

The Riversleigh site is managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (part of the Department of Environment and Resource Management). Naracoorte is managed by the South East Region of the South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage. Both are within National Parks.



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Challenges	Management
Tourism	Tourism brings many benefits to the areas including employment, funding and an exciting way for people to learn about Australia's past. However, Riversleigh and Naracoorte have to carefully manage the impacts of tourism. For instance, in Naracoorte, access to some caves is restricted. Where access is allowed, pathways, handrails and electric lights are in place for safe public viewing and to protect the value of the caves. To support the growing number of tourists, facilities have been developed including car parks, walking tracks and picnic areas.
Research	It is important for scientists to fully research and understand the area's importance. To achieve this, a destructive process of excavation must occur to remove fossils for analysis. A balance must be achieved to ensure that research does not have a significant impact on the environment. Research techniques should respect the Traditional Owners, local communities and World Heritage Values. Today, Indigenous people are involved in the land management of Riversleigh and are documenting their traditional and contemporary connections with the land.

Read more

www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/fossil-riversleigh/index.html



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