

RIVERSLEIGH ROCKS!

Unearth Australia's prehistoric past

The Riversleigh World Heritage Area stretches 10,000ha and sits within Boodjamulla National Park. Riversleigh is one of the world's most important fossil sites! A committee of Waanyi Peoples, palaeontologists, archaeologists, tourism and local government representatives, community members and neighbours provide advice on research, presentation, management and protection of Riversleigh.

Can you find all of Riversleigh's ancient animals?

Due to Australia's long separation from the other continents, some of the world's most interesting animals evolved here. Palaeontologists are fossil hunters, and have revealed amazing animals like carnivorous kangaroos, predatory pouched lions, giant flightless birds and tree-climbing crocodiles!

The limestone in which the fossils are found has protected the often delicate bones. After an animal has died, it is buried by the lime-rich sedimentary deposits and is preserved almost perfectly.

The many fossils found at Riversleigh show an ancient and mysterious world that existed between 15–25 million years ago when the area was a lush forest scattered with freshwater pools.

The environment at Riversleigh has changed dramatically over time, and understanding how and why these changes occurred will help us better manage the future of Australia's wildlife as climates change into the future.



This terror of ancient Riversleigh had a particular fondness for meat! Known as Australia's killer kangaroo, *Ekalatadeta* was able to slice through bone as well as muscle, and probably galloped rather than hopped. *Ekalatadeta* was just one of the strange kinds of kangaroos that lived in Riversleigh's ancient rainforest.



The *Yalkaparidon* had very strange back teeth shaped like a boomerang. The front teeth, possibly used for digging out insects from branches, were long and grew continuously to make sure they were always sharp.



Barawertornis tedfordi was a huge, cassowary-sized flightless bird. The fossilised vertebra and gizzard stones of an even bigger bird species *Dromornis murrayi*, affectionately known as 'Big Bird', can be seen in a large limestone rock beside the Riversleigh Fossil Trail.



The *Hypsiprymnodon bartholomaii* was a small rat-kangaroo closely related to today's rainforest-dwelling Musky rat-kangaroo, but far more primitive. Unable to hop, it used all four limbs to gallop. Eating fruits, nuts and seeds, they would occasionally eat other small animals such as insects.

Riversleigh lies within the traditional country of the Waanyi Peoples

The Waanyi Peoples know this region as their spiritual and sacred Boodjamulla or Rainbow Serpent country—this sacred Ancestral Being created many of the region's beautiful landscape features.

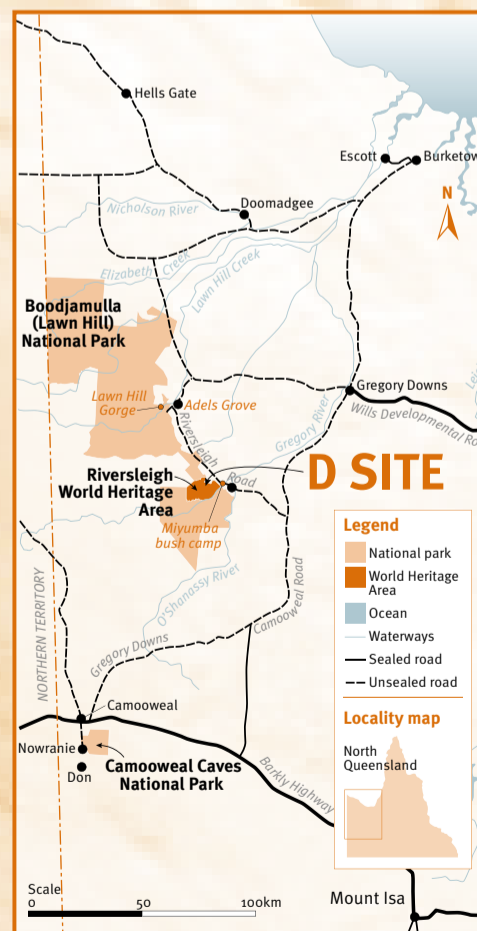
The Waanyi Peoples connection to the landscape is maintained through cultural activities and their strong link to this country was recognised through Native Title in 2010.



The *Diprotodon* is the largest pouched mammal that has ever lived, weighing up to 3000kg and measuring 2m tall and 3m long. *Diprotodons* closest living relatives are modern-day wombats and koalas.



Wakaleo oldfieldi was a pouched lion about the size of a German shepherd dog. These tree-climbing carnivores had moon-shaped blades on their premolars used for cutting up the flesh and bone of its prey.



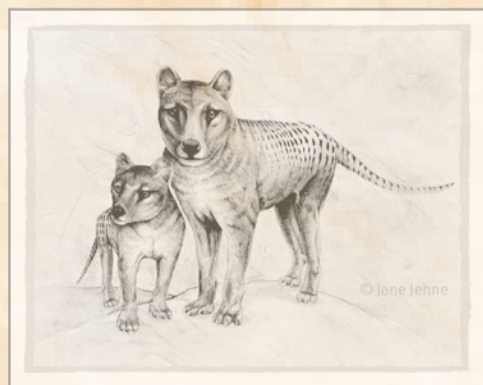
Walk on the wild side—check out D Site!

Riversleigh has provided an enormous amount of new knowledge about the evolution of Australia's unique animals. You can walk along the 800m Riversleigh Fossil Trail at D Site and imagine yourself in an ancient forest landscape.

Stand on top of the lookout there, once part of a large lakebed that now encases thousands of fossils—these rocks contain 25 million-year-old fossils of creatures that once lived in this amazing place.

Please help us look after D Site—if visiting, stay on the walking track to help protect the fossils.

Australia has 19 World Heritage sites with five in Queensland: the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, Fraser Island (K'gari), the Wet Tropics of Australia, the Great Barrier Reef and the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites—Riversleigh World Heritage Areas. These are called Queensland's World Heritage Family.



Numerous relatives of the now extinct Tasmanian tiger have been discovered at Riversleigh. One of them—*Nimbacinus dicksoni*—was a carnivore the size of a terrier dog that hunted through the rainforest that existed there.



The 5m-long, cleaver-headed *Baru wickeni* had huge dagger-like teeth and lived around Riversleigh's freshwater pools about 16–24 million years ago. A fossilised crushed skull of a crocodile can be seen along the Riversleigh Fossil Trail.

Further information

www.des.qld.gov.au

