

INQUIRY INTO PREHISTORIC, DINOSAUR AND PALEO TOURISM IN OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

Submission No: 2
Submitted by: Eromanga Natural History Museum
Publication:
Attachments: See attachments
Submitter Comments:



Thursday 28th of September 2023

Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

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Re: Submission on Prehistoric, Dinosaur, and Paleo Tourism in Outback Queensland

Dear Members of the Committee,

I write on behalf of the Eromanga Natural History Museum (ENHM) to express our concerns and recommendations regarding the ongoing inquiry into Prehistoric, Dinosaur, and Paleo Tourism in Outback Queensland. ENHM is a key stakeholder in this context due to our regional presence in Southwestern Queensland and our position as a custodian of one of Australia's premier dinosaur, megafauna, and natural history collections. This includes notable discoveries such as Australia's Largest Dinosaur, *Australotitan cooperensis*, 10 other dinosaurs currently being prepared for research and display, many more to be excavated, and an extensive collection of late Pleistocene megafauna fossils. These dinosaur and megafauna sites represent some of Australia's richest fossil fields and are supported by active preparation laboratories.

Prehistoric tourism, specifically dinosaur-related attractions, has long served as a robust economic driver within the state of Queensland. A commissioned study by the Dinosaur Tourism Collective, trading as Dinosaur Experiences Australia, has unequivocally demonstrated the significance of this sector to our state's economy. However, we are concerned about the current process, which we believe lacks proper consultation and exhibits a disregard for other stakeholders.

The ENHM, governed by the Outback Gondwana Foundation Limited, stands as a beacon of education, research, and community engagement. Its role as a bona fide museum repository, research facility, and tourist attraction perfectly positions it to enlighten both residents and visitors about the Lake Eyre Basin's geological, paleontological, and natural values.

Therefore, we wish to provide additional context for your consideration:

1. We are concerned about the current process due to its lack of consultation, research, and exclusion of critical stakeholders in the decision-making. This view is reflected by other notable fossil regions and



the Dinosaur Tourism Collective, which was seed-funded by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 2021/2022. The collective has commissioned economic studies relating to Palaeo tourism impacts as well as provides a united voice and authority on paleo tourism and development initiatives in the region.

2. Outcomes of the nomination and selection process for the state fossil: After observing the public hearing dated 25th of September 2023, we felt it was necessary to provide the exact voting figures from the voting process for the state fossil emblem. *Muttaborrasaurus* topped the ballot with 2409 votes, with *Australotitan* (held in the ENHM collection) 1179 votes in second place (Parliament, 2022). Notably, *Australotitan* was only formally announced 12 months prior to the campaign being conducted. Furthermore, the fossil emblem nomination was initially tabled in 2006 by Redbank State School in Ipswich (as referred to in Stuart Mackenzie's letter).
3. Attachment: We have attached an archival letter from Stuart Mackenzie, our Chairman of the Outback Gondwana Foundation, to the Premier, outlining our concerns and urging a reconsideration of the approach that was taken for the fossil emblem as well as stressing the importance of appropriate consultation in the regions that hold the significant fossil collections. Additional attachments include the museum Project Overview and significance statement from our lead researcher Dr. Scott Hocknull.
4. Request Rescheduling of Hearings in all Major Palaeo Tourism Centres/Regions: In light of the restricted regional approach to the proposed hearings and the significant importance of paleo tourism across the whole of Outback Queensland, we call on the committee to reconsider and reschedule the hearing (Winton Shire Hall) and forum (Muttaborra) within the region. This is on the grounds that both public engagements are being held in the central west region of the Outback and only reflect one stakeholder in the region and neglect the palaeo tourism organisations in the Northwestern and the Southwestern regions. This concern was raised in 2006 whereby, a very limited breadth of stakeholder engagement has been made. As mentioned in the letter attached from the Outback Gondwana Foundation (OGF) Chairman.
5. Provide Growth Figures Since 2020: We recommend reviewing the growth figures in the prehistoric tourism sector since 2020 and addressing the continued demand for such experiences. We can identify the ENHM hosted 15,000 visitors last year and a 27% average yearly increase when calculated over a three-year trend (ENHM, 2023).

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6. Accessibility to the region and international recovery: One of the key topics discussed in the public enquiry was accessibility to the region due to distances. This has been and continues to be a factor in itinerary and marketing development, most of which has been outlined in the Palaeo Tourism Road Map. Further, through the support from the region, with examples including the Quilpie airport upgrades (taking up to a Fokker 70 seat Plane) and the Southwest Region Hire Car initiative to enhance access to the region as well as build capacity. Road improvements in the Outback have been instrumental in the development and accessibility, State Government has already supported this through significant investment in shire and main road developments. This has resulted in regions like Southwest Queensland being primarily bitumen and all major routes being sealed and accessible in a two-wheeled drive sedan. The museum is also the closest dinosaur museum to Brisbane in Queensland with a sealed runway, capable of landing a small jet, 2km from the front door.
7. Establishment of a Trail: In alignment with the roadmap, significant feasibility and itinerary development is being conducted in this space relating to the establishment of a comprehensive trail that showcases the entire outback region. We believe that the Eromanga Natural History Museum should play a central role in this endeavour, given our diverse and significant dinosaur and megafauna fields and strategic location being the closest Dinosaur Museum to all capital cities in Australia (and closer to Brisbane than Longreach) and easily accessible by fully sealed roads and airports.
8. Spin-offs and product developments because of the industry: There are a number of initiatives and additional operators who are developing and increasing as a result of paleo tourism. In the Quilpie Shire near Eromanga, a new 20 room farm stay is opening to support the increased accommodation demand that the museum is creating. Additionally, paleo tourism is not confined by state borders and initiates interstate relationships including product in NSW and SA. The ENHM is perfectly positioned to facilitate this.
9. Outback Region Diversity: Outback Queensland is more than just Longreach and the Matilda Highway; it extends far beyond that, encompassing diverse and unique attractions and is broken down into three major regions, Southwestern, Central western and Northwestern. All of which have significant product and the majority of paleo related experiences are located in the North and Southwestern regions.
10. Paleo Tourism Specific Infrastructure and Funding Requirements: Southwest Queensland has been identified as one of the highest tourism

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growth areas, which results in the need for substantial infrastructure investment for paleo tourism. Additionally, infrastructure development provides a direct correlation to capacity building and operational sustainability. The ENHM is Outback Australia's premier natural history/dinosaur Museum. To attract and deliver international standard experiences, increased investment in line with the 2032 Olympics planning is required to compete on the world palaeo stage.

In conclusion, this submission conveys our concerns with the committee's decision to hold public hearings and forums exclusively in central western Queensland. We refer to the correspondence received from the committee secretariat on September 27, 2023, at very short notice, notifying us of these in-region hearings in Winton and Muttaborra, which we find economically unviable due to the extensive distances in Outback Queensland as well as being unrepresentative of the whole region.

We appreciate your attention to these concerns and recommendations and trust that they will be considered as you continue your inquiry into Prehistoric, Dinosaur, and Paleo Tourism in Outback Queensland. Further, we invite the committee to visit and conduct a public hearing in our region at the museum as part of this process.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Robyn Mackenzie OAM
Museum Director
Eromanga Natural History Museum
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Attachments:

Letter to the Premier – OQTA Chairman
ENHM Project Summary
Significance Statement

Cc Denise Brown, CEO OQTA
Cc Stuart Mackenzie, Mayor Quilpie Shire, Chairman OGF
Cc Simone Talbot, SWROC
Cc Justin Hancock, CEO Quilpie Shire
Cc Matt Bron, TEQ
Cc Ingrid Sellarulo, Dinosaur Experiences Australia

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18 February 2021

Honorable Anastacia Palaszczuk, MP
Premier of Queensland,
Minister for Trade

Dear Premier Palaszczuk MP,

I refer to the recent petition to government from Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum staff about readdressing the possibility of a Queensland State Fossil emblem. We apologise that we don't have a petition in time for this letter, if that was required, but we do have wide spread local, regional, Australian wide and scientific community support.

The Eromanga Natural History Museum (ENHM) has been contacted by the media for comment about the fossil emblem. In the past there have been suggestions that the fossil emblem would be won by a popularity vote alone. We would recommend against this as it risks being unfairly weighted towards higher populated areas, attractions with high profiles, the best lobbyists, or larger marketing budgets. This always risks overlooking the unsung fossil heroes.

We appreciate that there will need to be extensive community consultation across all the Queensland regions, and a short list collated. This will need to take a considerable amount of time. We felt that, if it was a single fossil emblem that's to be chosen for the state, then it is important to put in front of you the new dinosaur being described, Australia's largest dinosaur, to ensure that such an important specimen is on the top of the shortlist.

The ENHM would like to nominate Australia's largest dinosaur (nicknamed Cooper) and one of the largest in the world, as the front runner, if you choose a dinosaur for the fossil emblem.

Cooper is an iconic Australian dinosaur and represents a new genus and species of dinosaur from Australia, with the scientific paper currently under review in the international scientific open access journal PeerJ. The paper is being authored by palaeontologists from Queensland Museum and Eromanga Natural History Museum, with expectation of the new dinosaur species being formally announced in the first half of 2021. This new dinosaur's scientific name will then be formally announced to the world. It is significantly larger than any other described dinosaurs found in Australia, and is the first time Australia has had a new dinosaur to add to the elite group of dinosaur giants, predominately only found in South America.

ENHM has many other worthy dinosaur specimens awaiting scientific description, including the most complete sauropod in Australia (Zac) but this new gigantic Australian dinosaur is truly iconic and will bring more international and national attention due to its iconic status both in size and significance to science.

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The Queensland Government has already made a significant investment into the display of Australia's largest dinosaur. Through the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund, Queensland State Government has funded galleries to showcase the bones from Australia's largest dinosaur. These galleries are currently being built and due to be completed by August 2021. ENHM has also been funded by the Queensland Government Outback Tourism Infrastructure Fund to reproduce a full-sized skeleton (~28m long x 6.5m high) and supporting displays of the new dinosaur. All this will be showcased in the large dinosaur gallery at the ENHM. This gallery will house world-class exhibitions of the real bones and the story of discovery.

I believe the Honorable Stirling Hinchliffe MP, will lead the public consultation throughout the State, given the important link to outback tourism. I would strongly urge this consultation to take place in the regions that hold the significant fossil discoveries, such as South West Queensland where the Eromanga Natural History Museum is located. The ENHM not only holds collections of Australia's largest dinosaurs but also holds Queensland collections of beautifully preserved megafauna and microfauna from the Eulo area. The ENHM fossil collections are unique in their diversity and are collected from the South West Queensland region, covering many different shires and a huge area of Outback Queensland.

Given the important link to outback tourism, we feel that consideration should be given to having several regional fossil emblems instead of one. This will give each outback region the opportunity to nominate their own fossil icon to showcase their area. A single emblem will cut opportunities out for the other nine tenths of the state and potentially create division. Regional emblems add tourism value through product development and marketing and will also align perfectly with the Outback Queensland Paleotourism strategy, currently being pursued by TEQ and key stakeholders such as ENHM. Imagine the educational and economic value of families travelling through the outback to collect the fossil emblem from each region.

In 2006 during the Bligh government, we were involved with the last attempt to nominate a Queensland State Fossil and put forward a proposal to support this. At this time it was an Ipswich Primary School who put the request forward to nominate their local fossil icon, who I am sure will still feel strongly about their fossil icons. As it turned out at the time it became apparent that it was extremely difficult to work out what defines a State Fossil emblem. Nothing was resolved at the time.

The problem for fossils is that there are new fossil icons still being found and there are so many types - plants, dinosaurs, marine reptiles, megafauna, fish, early reptiles, invertebrates etc. This is unlike an emblem for a modern-day plant or animal, which exist currently or may have disappeared but new research won't change what they look like. There are many questions to address when defining what a fossil emblem is, such as is it based on one real fossil, which means it needs to be easily photographed for the fossil emblem image. This is easy for small complete fossils but difficult for dinosaurs as they aren't complete specimens, they are generally very big and you would then only be able to choose a single bone to represent the

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dinosaur. Is the emblem based on the species name and a reproduction which, with new research, will be outdated and could possibly look different to the emblem?

We thank you for your time to read this letter and we are happy to engage further on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Mackenzie,
Mayor Quilpie Shire
Chairman, Outback Gondwana Foundation Ltd (governing NFP for ENHM)

Cc Denise Brown, CEO OQTA
Cc Trudi Bartlett, CEO RDA DD-SW
Cc Matt Bron TEQ
Cc Dr Scott Hocknull QM, Paleontologist
Cc Mel Wilkinson OGF Director, Geologist
Cc Sam O'Toole SWQROC Chair, Mayor Balonne Shire
Cc Robyn Mackenzie ENHM Museum Director
Cc Justin Hancock, CEO Quilpie Shire

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A home for Australia's largest dinosaurs

Eromanga Natural History Museum Stage Three

PROJECT SUMMARY

PREPARED BY: Outback Gondwana Foundation Limited

DATE: June 2023





An iconic attraction serving as a catalyst project for future growth, education and prosperity in South West Queensland.

The **Eromanga Natural History Museum (ENHM)** vision was initiated in 2004 after the discovery of the internationally significant Eromanga dinosaur fossil fields and later followed by the Eulo megafauna and microfauna fossil fields and many other fossil sites. The region is now one of the richest and diverse fossil localities in Australia.

The ENHM collections are founded on these sites and are the largest Australian dinosaur and megafauna collections held in an accredited museum in their region of discovery.

“The Eromanga Natural History Museum collection represents the most significant regional collection of fossils from central Australia, including type and significant specimens of dinosaurs.”

Dr Scott Hocknull, Senior Palaeontologist, Queensland Museum, 2022





Proximity

Strategically located in the heart of the Australian outback this premier museum is the closest dinosaur and natural history museum to all the state capital cities in Australia.

It is connected by sealed state roads in all directions, and in three years will be the major Queensland attraction on the newly fully sealed Strzelecki Track, which will provide direct access for Adelaide and Perth visitors, tapping into up to 60,000 travellers on this interstate highway and bringing new visitation into the state.

Upgrades in coming months to the Quilpie airport and current refuelling facilities will facilitate large commercial flights and charters.

The ENHM is on direct flight paths to Lake Eyre and Uluru, which, combined with the fully sealed, fenced and Dash 8 capable Eromanga airport two kilometers from the ENHM and its 4-star luxury accommodation, makes this museum one of the most exciting and accessible destinations in the Outback!



Many may still be unfamiliar with South West Queensland's compelling natural beauty of the inland rivers, lakes, weathered mountain ranges, channel country, endless horizons and now as promoted by National Geographic, Australia's most exciting dinosaur discovery. To them, a new natural history museum in the Australian Outback, in an area with low local population density, currently not on a major highway and in a region previously not well known as a tourism destination, may not make sense. The reality is quite the contrary, this is an iconic Australian Natural History Museum which just happens to be located in the heart of Australia, will be on a major highway in three years and is now one of the highest tourism growth areas and fast becoming a 'must see' on everyone's bucket list. The journey or the road trip to this new destination are all important parts of the experience, bringing the economic and social benefits vital to these remote communities.

The ENHM sits as a central lynchpin on Southwest Queensland's Natural Sciences Loop. This one-of-a-kind tourism drive has an amazing potential to draw visitors beyond the major centres of Charleville and Cunnamulla – heading further west, staying longer and spending more while in regional and remote townships that continue to tackle drought, population decline and the impacts of pandemics. When Stage Two of the ENHM is completed, the Natural Sciences Loop's reputation will skyrocket, helping attract more of our growing family drive market.

The ENHM is a catalyst museum for all Australia, bringing benefits similar to what the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame (ASHOF) brought 32 years ago before tourism was an industry for Central West Queensland (CWQ). Like the ENHM, ASHOF brought thousands of new visitors into the area to enable the CWQ attractions we see today to confidently establish and thrive. In just five years, we are seeing new tourism businesses and partnerships growing across the country because of the continuing development of the ENHM and its international and domestic appeal.

“Investment such as what is planned for the ENHM is an example of the sort of activity that will ensure that Australia will be able to deliver high-quality tourism products and experiences now and into the future”

Pip Harrison, CEO, Tourism Australia 2023



AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST DINOSAUR

New genus and species – *Australotitan cooperensis*

- One of the largest dinosaurs in the world growing up to 30 m long x 7 m high.
- One of the heaviest dinosaur in the world at 67 tonnes.

(Image copyright Eromanga Natural History Museum, Artist Vlad Konstantinov)



Eromanga dinosaurs on the world stage

- 7 June 2021 – Eromanga Natural History Museum/Queensland Museum official scientific announcement at the Eromanga Natural History Museum, of Australia's largest dinosaur, *Australotitan cooperensis*, a new genus and species of dinosaur and one of world's largest.
- #2 *Australotitan cooperensis* in the 10 most amazing dinosaurs discovered in 2021 – National Geographic! <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/10-of-the-most-amazing-dinosaurs-discovered-in-2021>
- TOP 5 viewed published article in 2021 in Biodiversity, Evolutionary Studies, Paleontology, Taxonomy and Zoology – *A new giant sauropod, Australotitan cooperensis gen. et sp. nov., from the mid-Cretaceous of Australia.* <https://peerj.com/articles/11317/>
- \$68 million potential media value for Australia from *Australotitan cooperensis* announcement.
- Over 4 billion people world-wide potential media reach.
 - TV: Complete coverage across breakfast TV and nightly news programs including The Project, A Current Affair and Behind the News.
 - Print: A front page pointer on The Australian & page 3 story, front page of The Age, The Courier Mail, syndicated Fairfax pieces in Sydney Morning Herald, Perth and Adelaide papers.
 - Radio: Multiple interviews with ABC Radio, Radio National, Triple J and more.
 - Online: Coverage from around the world including New York, London, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Ireland, USA, France, Poland and more.
- Queensland Museum's most successful species announcement ever!
- ENHM is currently preparing and researching 10 dinosaurs and many more wait to be excavated.
- *Australotitan cooperensis* puts Australian dinosaurs on the world map. It is the first time Australia has had a dinosaur that is big enough to be part of the elite group of world giants found in South America.
- Tourism & Events Queensland - The announcement of *Australotitan cooperensis* is perfect timing on the back of the Queensland State Government's announcement of approximately \$500,000 over three years for a roadmap to drive dinosaur tourism across outback Queensland.



Formal scientific announcement at the Eromanga Natural History Museum on 7 June 2021

1. Twilight drinks at the museum preceed an historic announcement.
2. The scientific announcement – *Australotitan cooperensis* – by Dr Scott Hocknull, Senior Palaeontologist, Queensland Museum.
3. The authors – Robyn Mackenzie, Mel Wilkinson, Dr Scott Hocknull, Stuart Mackenzie. (Absent: Rochelle Lawrence and Vlad Konstantinov.)
4. The people who made it possible.

“Australotitan cooperensis has created the kind of exposure for Outback tourism that money could not buy. Dinosaur tourism has great potential to create jobs and generate millions of dollars for businesses in west Queensland. This discovery and scientific finding will put outback Queensland on the map as one of the world’s leading destinations for dinosaur tourism.”

Annastacia Palaszczuk
Premier of Queensland



View *Australotitan cooperensis*' taking a walk at – <https://vimeo.com/559332177>



Help build a home for Australia's largest dinosaurs, *Australotitan cooperensis* and drive tourism growth.

Your contribution will build dinosaur galleries to showcase some of the largest dinosaurs in the world; help complete Stage Three of the Eromanga Natural History Museum; and bring new jobs, economic growth and social benefits.



Eromanga Natural History Museum

Stage 3

The Outback Gondwana Foundation Limited is raising funds to complete Stage Three of the Eromanga Natural History (ENHM), building three dinosaur galleries with supporting amenities and plant rooms, totalling 1691.5 m². This project will join the front visitor reception to the live viewing galleries at the rear to complete Stage Three to allow the ENHM to function as a fully operational museum from one main building. These galleries will allow the museum to realise the potential of its world-class dinosaur exhibitions of one of the world's largest (and Australia's largest) dinosaurs, *Australotitan cooperensis*. The entire 30 m x 6.5 m life-sized skeleton waits in storage at the ENHM until its gallery is funded and built, denying the museum the opportunity to deliver the economic benefits this exhibition will bring to Australia.

Funding this project now will ensure the museum is best placed to showcase some of Australia's most significant dinosaur discoveries to international and domestic visitors. The new galleries planned for the ENHM are an example of the sort of activity that will ensure that Australia will be able to deliver high-quality tourism products and experiences now and into the future, elevating Australia's tourism experiences and in particular, in time for the 2032 Olympics.

The project will deliver significant economic and social benefits not just locally but more broadly throughout the South West Queensland region and across the country. Dinosaur tourism is universal, and with a discovery as globally significant as *Australotitan cooperensis*, the world now knows Australia has some seriously large and exciting dinosaurs and they will demand to see them. The scientific announcement was worth \$68,763,000 in media value alone, and this new dinosaur is now recognised by National Geographic as the second most amazing dinosaur discovery in the world for 2021, and the top five most viewed published scientific paper in Biodiversity, Evolutionary Studies, Palaeontology, Taxonomy and Zoology.





The ENHM has seen an average of 46% growth over the past 5 years since it was opened to the public and a 165% increase in visitation from 2019 to 2023 at the ENHM.

With further investment, employment at the ENHM will increase from 12 to 22 jobs in the next four years; drive regional economic growth; create additional jobs in the region and in the wider Australian economy; and help mitigate the effects of population decline, pastoral and resources industries downturns, and drought in the South West Queensland region.

During the project period, it will bring at least an additional 60 FTE jobs, and in 4 years time this project will enable an extra regional income of \$5 million p.a.

This project has a strong international focus and is critical for the success of the rapidly developing dinosaur tourism opportunities, designed to help broaden the benefits of dinosaur tourism and geotourism across the entire country.



Australia's world-class dinosaur museum

- 2020 – Eromanga Natural History Museum is one of five 'Iconic Attractions' recognised by the Queensland State Government in the Outback – key attraction for Queensland Outback dinosaur tourism.
- 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 – Achieved 100% in the Queensland Tourism 'Best of Queensland' program, one of the few Outback attractions to achieve this standard in consecutive years.
- An independent cost benefit analysis has been prepared by Hall Chadwick. AEC Group Pty Ltd have been engaged to provide an updated CBA as the ENHM is currently exceeding previous projected visitation number. This is due to be ready in October 2023.
- Widespread support for the project across state (Queensland) and national tourism bodies; RDA's; scientific communities; education sector; and all levels of government. Key component of Queensland Tourism's broader strategy and goals.
- Tier one tourist destination, second to none for delivering a high quality educational tourism facility.
- Internationally significant fossils held in context enabling the development of a new tourist destination that personifies the concept of 'cathedral thinking'. This is a visionary long-term project that has required decades of foresight, purposeful design and generations of motivated workers and supporters.



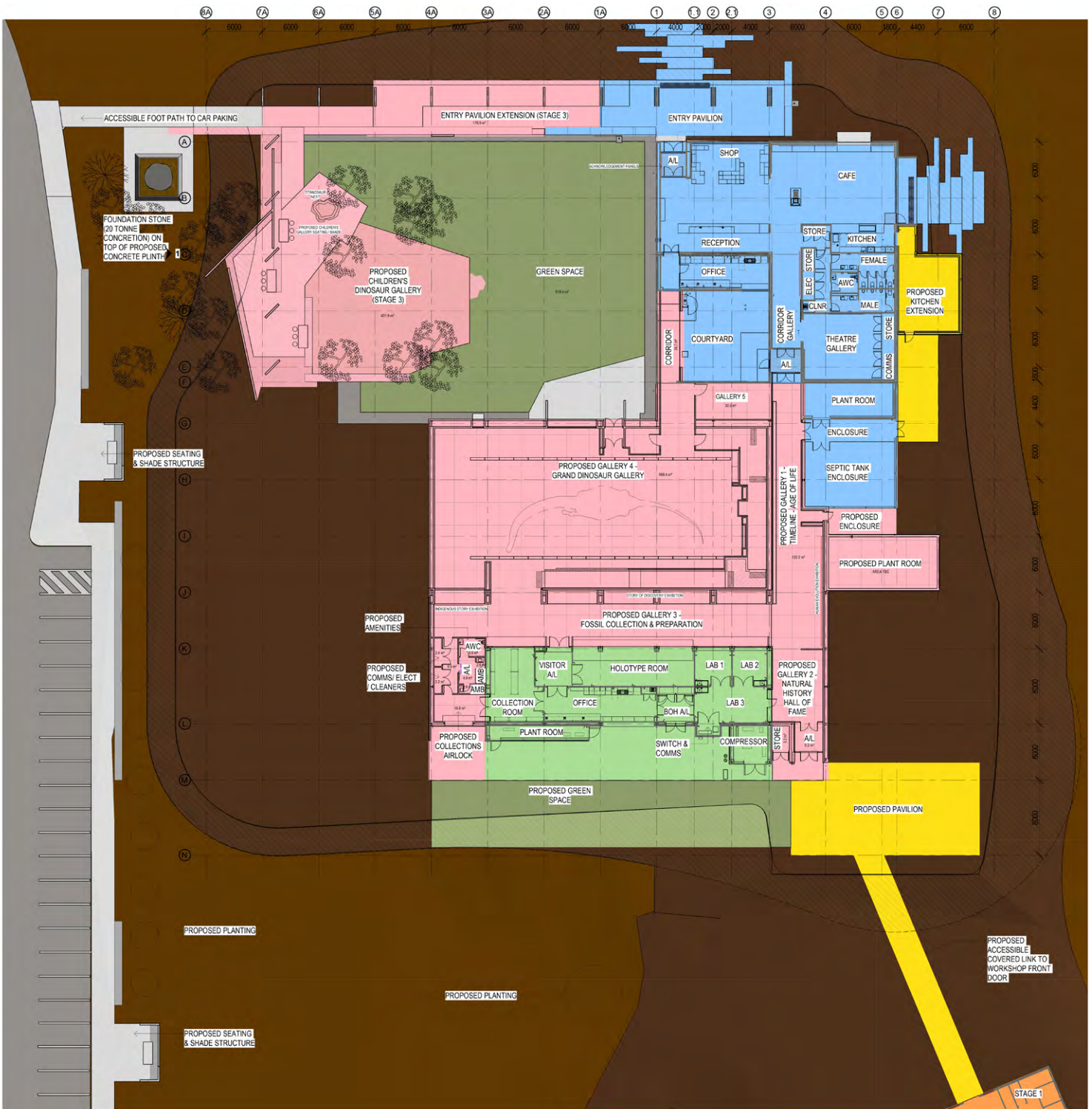
1. Tour group standing in front of tour guide Robyn Mackenzie as she explains the holotype room.
2. Participants prepping megafauna in the megafauna lab.
3. Super Seniors group enjoying preparation in the Palaeo Learning Laboratory.



View the Queensland Weekender segment about visiting the ENHM – <https://vimeo.com/230387894>



ENHM Floor Plan



STAGING LEGEND	
	STAGE 1 (EXISTING)
	STAGE 2 PHASE 1 (COMPLETED)
	STAGE 2 PHASE 2 (COMPLETED)
	STAGE 3 (PROPOSED)
	STAGE 4 (FUTURE)

THE MUSEUM - Reception Gallery (completed 2020)

Part of Stage Two, this is public space and includes:

- Museum Shop
- Café
- Multi-media theatre
- Amenities, courtyard & office
- Stardust to Supercontinents (early Earth) timeline
- Interpretative corridor.



THE MUSEUM SHOP (completed 2020)



STARDUST TO SUPERCONTINENTS TIMELINE (completed 2020)

This section of the timeline is from the beginning of Earth to the age of life. It showcases original geological and fossil specimens from Western Australia including the Pilbara and Jack Hills.



THE MUSEUM CAFE (completed 2020)



THE MUSEUM THEATRE (completed 2020)

The ENHM has produced an award-winning 20 minute documentary “Deep Time Dinosaurs to Today” which places the age of dinosaurs within the overall history of planet Earth, and is played to all visitors at the beginning of the guided tours.

This production recently took out GOLD at the Australian Effects & Animation Festival Awards (AEAF) in the Education & Infographics category.



VIEWING GALLERIES – PREP LABS, HOLOTYPE AND COLLECTION ROOM (completed 2021)

These galleries cannot be fully utilised until the adjoining unfunded dinosaur gallery is completed.

The viewing galleries will include the display and special access to of the real bones from *Australotitan cooperensis*, viewing of active fossil and natural history preparation labs, viewing into the Fossil Collection Room.



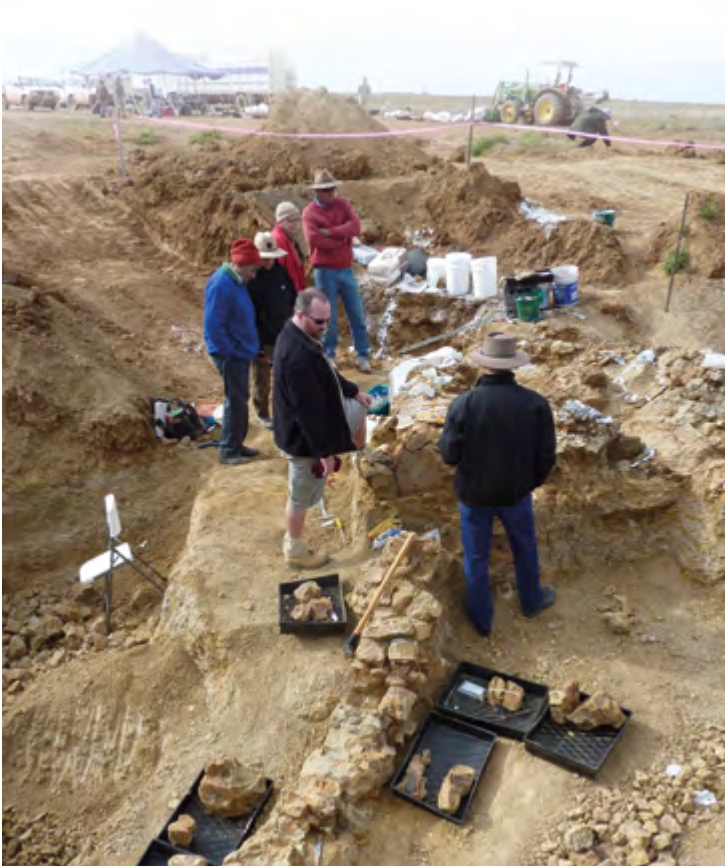
Annual Eromanga dinosaur digs

- These are the Eromanga dinosaur aged soils, flat open black soil plains.
- 92-96 million years ago some of the worlds largest dinosaur giants walked around on these clays.
- At this time the landscape resembled a massive version of the Cooper Creek flood plains but all year round.

Future dinosaur galleries

Below: Australia's most complete Titanosaur 'Zac' and many more Eromanga dinosaurs.

Below right: Unique trackways with dinosaur bones and teeth embedded in them.





Outback Natural History Collections

THE SPIRIT OF THE DINOSAURS

The vivid greens of the budgerigars fill our skies, a striking sight linked with our Outback, a clear sign of abundant seasons. As they reign over ancient dinosaur graveyards, one may wonder if they are the 'spirit of the dinosaurs', bridging a spiritual connection to our prehistoric heritage through their avian lineage.





Outback Natural History Collections

MICROSCOPIC MARVELS: Unraveling the enigmatic myxomycetes for sustainable solutions

The enigmatic myxomycetes, microscopic recyclers akin to ancient ancestors from the age of dinosaurs, exhibit unparalleled beauty and complexity yet remain largely unexplored and under-researched. The ENHM's collection of myxomycetes is set to become one of the few specialised arid region assemblages worldwide. Could there be valuable lessons to learn from these highly intuitive microscopic organisms by adding to our waste management practices or breakthroughs in medical sciences?





Australotitan cooperensis

(Image copyright Eromanga Natural History Museum, Artist Vlad Konstantinov)

30th December 2021

National and International Significance - Eromanga Natural History Museum Collection

The Eromanga Natural History Museum collection represents the most significant regional collection of fossils from central Australia, including type and significant specimens of dinosaurs. In terms of the diversity and geochronological age range of its collections, the ENHM collection spans vertebrate, invertebrate and plant fossils from the Mesozoic and Cenozoic Eras, and houses the type specimen of *Australotitan cooperensis*, Australia's largest dinosaur species. The collection also holds several new internationally significant dinosaur skeletons, including one of the most complete sauropods known from Australia. The megafauna fossil collection boasts some of the best-preserved specimens of *Diprotodon optatum*, the world's largest marsupial and the most diverse collection of mud-spring and mound-spring vertebrate fossils in the country. These spring fossil deposits include microfossils of endemic invertebrates and fish, the only fossil record of their kind, alongside the remains of megafauna, likely using the springs as refugia during a period of major continental aridification. Therefore, the collections held at ENHM represent key points in geological and past climatic periods of time poorly represented in central Australia and thus are of national significance. The combination of these new site collections and specimens that are unique to the ENHM collection, elevates this collection to international significance. The significance will grow due to this region being a new frontier of discovery that specifically impacts our understanding of global diversity and palaeobiogeography of Cretaceous dinosaurs and Neogene fauna, along with determining their responses to past climatic change.

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