



Australian Fossil Mammal Sites - Riversleigh World Heritage

Advisory Committee Meeting Communiqué July 2017

1. The Riversleigh Community and Scientific Advisory Committee (RCSAC) welcomes the opportunity to continue to respond and offer advice to the Minister to support World Heritage obligations for the Riversleigh section of the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (AFMS) (Identification, Presentation, Conservation, Protection and Management).
2. The Committee was pleased to note the Minister's letter to RCSAC Chair Dr Graeme Potter (dated 4 July 2017) and welcomed the potential for NPSR to enable guided tours to Bitesantennary Valley (subject to due process) and the possibility of additional funding to improve D Site.
3. During a field visit to Bitesantennary Valley and D Site, the Committee reaffirmed that the protection and conservation of the OUV is in good condition, and that this condition is likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future, provided that current measures are maintained.
5. The Committee reiterated its recommendation that the presentation of Riversleigh as a World Heritage site should be improved to better convey the OUV and improve the Riversleigh visitor experiences through:
 - a. finalising and delivering the '*Vision for D-site strategy*'
It was noted that safety issues have been addressed and that a final capital investment of approximately \$250,000 is required to complete the visitor experience at Riversleigh through the '*Riversleigh Concept Design: telling the story of an Ancient land*' document; and
 - b. opening the Bitesantennary Valley to commercial operators to undertake tours
This would require minimal trail development and management from QPWS, and would be dependent on tour operators negotiating access consent and permit approvals.
6. The Committee recommends that NPSR (with support from EHP) investigate viable options for securing long-term access to the of the World Heritage area, in particular access consent protocols for Bitesantennary Valley.
7. The Committee was delighted with the success of Stage 2 of the Site Marker project which saw an additional 83 fossil sites marked to better identify the sites positions and to adhere to accepted standards of best practice.
The Committee recommends that additional funding (approximately \$8,000) be allocated to support Stage 3 to be undertaken in mid-2018 to mark a further 50 fossil sites.
The Committee recommends that a condition be included in Scientific Research and Educational Purposes permits issued under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* to require applicants undertaking extractive research activities in Riversleigh to provide prescribed locality data and site marking.

9. The Committee commended Mount Isa City Council for the success of the 'Archer and the Fossil Window' local community event at the Outback at Isa Centre on 6 July 2017. The event proved very popular with over 50 local community members attending and Professor Mike Archer and WTMA staff presenting.

10. The Committee recommends that EHP liaise with NPSR, the Queensland Museum and the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy to determine opportunities to reduce 'red tape' and develop an appropriate application protocol for research activities at Riversleigh.

11. The Committee agreed to offer a standing invitation to Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) as an Observer for the remainder of the three year term, noting that closer engagement between TEQ and the Committee will strengthen interagency relationships and enhance promotion of Riversleigh.

12. The Committee wishes to extend an invitation to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection to attend the next meeting in Brisbane on 21 November 2017.

13. The Committee extends its thanks to the Minister for reinstating and attending the annual Ministerial World Heritage Chairs meeting scheduled held on 3 August.