



## Riversleigh World Heritage Advisory Committee #2 – Communique

8 November 2022

*The Riversleigh World Heritage Advisory Committee acknowledges and respects the strong connections that Waanyi people have with Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park, which includes the Riversleigh World Heritage Area, dating back at least 37,000 years.*

The second meeting of the Riversleigh World Heritage Advisory Committee (RWHAC) was held in Cairns. The resignation of The Hon. Tony McGrady from RWHAC was acknowledged and his ongoing interest noted.

### First Nations Partnerships

- RWHAC congratulated the Waanyi Cooperative Management Committee (CMC) on the submission of an Australian Heritage Grant application for the Riversleigh Fossil Dreaming project.
- RWHAC acknowledged that Waanyi CMC had commenced work to progress towards National Heritage listing for cultural values across the Boodjamulla National Park, which includes Riversleigh.
- RWHAC members Dr Judith Field and Dr Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy provided an overview of historic anthropological and archaeological work focussing on Aboriginal cultural values of Riversleigh and the Boodjamulla National Park. This process was informed by Aboriginal lore, early European historical accounts, and archaeological and scientific evidence. A rich tapestry of cultural values was revealed, reflected in a broad range of sites that tell the story of Aboriginal people in this area during approximately 40,000 years. The range of archaeological and historical research in this area is acknowledged, however much more work is needed to uncover information about the deep past.
- RWHAC discussed the current lack of protocols for naming of fossil discovery sites and will seek advice from the Waanyi People about traditional names of areas within the World Heritage Area that might appropriately be applied to future fossil sites.

### Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Values

- Terry Carmichael from WTMA presented the deep connections over time that link Queensland's five World Heritage areas through shared biological, evolutionary, and geomorphological histories that underlie their Outstanding Universal Values. A large percentage of the fossils at Riversleigh have furred and feathered descendants still present today living in the ancient and relict rainforests of the Wet Tropics of Queensland and Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Areas.
- RWHAC discussed the need to reprint the Riversleigh information brochure in addition to content being made available electronically. It was noted that promotional fliers and brochures remain very popular with tourists to Outback Queensland Visitor Information Centres where Wi-Fi and phone connectivity is often limited or non-existent. Information will be sought from Tourism and Events Queensland before any decision to reprint.
- Given the absence of significant mammal fossils along D-Site interpretative trail, a proposal to relocate a fossil-rich boulder from nearby Bitesantennary Valley to an appropriate location at D-Site was agreed. This would be subject to accompanying signage stating the original location and reason for relocation.
- A proposal to replicate and install a cast of the *Wabularoo naughtoni* jaw excavated from D-Site in 1976 and 1979 requires further investigation.

- Professor Mike Archer provided an overview of the rationale for inclusion and subsequent removal of the privately owned Murgon (Queensland) fossil sites in the original World Heritage nomination process and the significance and importance of these sites in the evolutionary story of mammals in Australia.

### New Initiatives

- RWHAC discussed opportunities presented by Sydney hosting the ICOMOS General Assembly in August/September 2023 and recommends the Department considers a trade stall to promote Queensland's World Heritage properties.
- A draft three-year RWHAC business plan was presented for feedback. RWHAC agreed to review the document out of session and provide input to establish a list of priorities.
- RWHAC noted that the yet to be released report developed by CSIRO on impacts and mitigation strategies for Australia's World Heritage properties might not have considered climate impacts on the condition of World Heritage collections and increased costs for collecting institutions associated with maintaining environmental controls. An Australian Government representative will provide advice at the next RWHAC meeting.
- RWHAC clarified the process for reporting potential damage or theft of fossils and agreed that QPWS&P procedures were appropriate.
- RWHAC noted that the Riversleigh and Naracoorte Executive Officers had commenced the drafting of the Serial Property Statement for consideration at a subsequent meeting.
- RWHAC noted that the Cairns Aquarium has sought an Australian Heritage grant to develop a Riversleigh Fossil Trail within the facility. RWHAC expressed concern that the proposal had been developed without Waanyi or RWHAC involvement.
- RWHAC supported a Queensland Museum initiative to commence a review of legislation relating to the protection of fossils within the State.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

- RWHAC recommends the Department considers a trade stall at the 2023 ICOMOS General Assembly to promote Queensland's World Heritage properties.