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.

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.

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 Room 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.

Further information

www.des.qld.gov.au