



***Diamantinasaurus* for Queensland state fossil emblem**

Outback community rallies behind iconic sauropod.

- Today the Queensland government announced voting was open to the public to decide their state fossil emblem.
- *Diamantinasaurus* has received strong support from the Winton community as a contender for the state fossil emblem.
- *Diamantinasaurus* is the most complete sauropod found in Australia and is only found in Queensland. *Diamantinasaurus* has links to Queensland's prehistoric and cultural past and lived in Outback Queensland around 95 million years ago.

After state-wide consultation the Queensland government shortlisted 12 fossils that reflect Queensland's rich fossil record and diverse paleontological history. **From 11 April to 10 July 2022 Queenslanders will be able to vote for their preferred state fossil emblem at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8rpwfd>.**

In 2020 Grace Elliott, Education Co-ordinator at the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum (the Museum), presented 775 signatures to the Queensland government requesting consideration of *Diamantinasaurus matildae* for Queensland's state fossil emblem. Following today's announcement Miss Elliott said, "This is a unique opportunity for Queenslanders to choose a state fossil emblem that captures their imagination and best represents Queensland."

"I am voting for *Diamantinasaurus* because it was larger than life, social, liked to travel and its selection as a state fossil emblem would be a boon for all the folks in Outback Queensland," said Miss Elliott.

Sauropod bones are some of the most abundant vertebrate fossils in Queensland. These fossils are from long-necked long-tailed dinosaurs that roamed Queensland millions of years ago. Sauropods are one of the most recognisable groups of dinosaurs and have become a fixture in popular culture due to their impressive size. The holotype specimen of *Diamantinasaurus matildae*, nicknamed Matilda, was described and named in 2009 by palaeontologists at Queensland Museum based on fossils found near Winton, Queensland.

The holotype specimen of *Diamantinasaurus* was found intermingled with the bones of Australia's most complete carnivorous dinosaur, *Australovenator*. Fossils from other *Diamantinasaurus* specimens include skull bones, teeth, skin and probable gut contents, along with numerous limb bones and vertebrae. These specimens, together, represent a virtually complete *Diamantinasaurus* skeleton, making it the most complete sauropod in Australia.

Palaeontologist Dr Stephen Poropat, a research associate at Swinburne University, has studied numerous Queensland sauropod specimens since 2010. Dr Poropat said, "*Diamantinasaurus* has only been found in Queensland. This huge titanosaur exceeded 20 metres in length and weighed as much as 30 tonnes! *Diamantinasaurus* is significant because it is known from more than a dozen different specimens in various stages of preparation, development and study. In fact, there

are more bones known from *Diamantinasaurus* than all other Australian sauropod species put together,” said Dr Poropat.

Winton Shire Council Mayor, Gavin Baskett, believes *Diamantinasaurus* is a fitting choice for the state’s fossil emblem as the dinosaur was found in Outback Queensland and named after the Diamantina River and the song *Waltzing Matilda*.

“*Diamantinasaurus matildae* means (Waltzing) Matilda’s Diamantina (River) lizard. The Diamantina River was named by explorer William Landsborough in 1866 after the first Governor of Queensland’s wife, Lady Diamantina Bowen,” he said. “The species name *matildae* refers to Australia’s unofficial national anthem, *Waltzing Matilda*, written by Banjo Paterson in western Queensland in 1895. Also, *Diamantinasaurus* was found on Elderslie station, one of the first pastoral stations in the Winton region. Notably, the Elderslie woolshed was burnt to the ground during the Great Shearers’ Strike in 1891.”

“I am voting for *Diamantinasaurus* because this dinosaur provides an indelible link to the state’s prehistoric past and cultural present”, Mr Baskett said. “*Diamantinasaurus* was found in Outback Queensland, surrounded by sheep and cattle stations, in an area known as the home of *Waltzing Matilda* and the birthplace of QANTAS. What more significance can a Queensland state fossil emblem have?” asked Mr Baskett.

Co-founder of the Museum, David Elliott OAM, describes *Diamantinasaurus* as the perfect candidate for Queensland’s state fossil emblem, now and into the future. “It is important that we inspire the next generation to value our fossil past by capturing their imagination and piquing their curiosity,” Mr Elliott said. “Choosing a state fossil emblem that represents and connects us to our prehistoric past is essential, but it is also very important that it is embraced by Queenslanders of all ages. Over the past 20 years hundreds of volunteers, from all walks of life, have been involved in digging and preparing the fossils of *Diamantinasaurus* and today this exceptional dinosaur attracts visitors to the region from around the world.”

“I am voting for *Diamantinasaurus* because I believe this dinosaur represents the rich fossil heritage found in Queensland and that it will inspire future generations to learn about Australian natural history,” Mr Elliott said.