

Australian Age of
Dinosaurs

museum
newsletter

March 2023, Issue 45

INTRODUCING THE

**HURLEY
COLLECTION**



NEWS FROM THE JUMP-UP



WELCOME TO THE MUSEUM TEAM

Over the last few months the Museum has welcomed some new faces and positions to the team. Pictured, top to bottom, General Manager Donna Maxsted, Astronomy & Education Manager Grant Salmond and Curator of Palaeontology Dr Matt Herne. Mackenzie Enchelmaier has been promoted from Tour Guide to Laboratory Co-ordinator/Tour Guide.



Since starting at the Museum Donna has taken each new challenge in her stride. She says, "I never thought I would work at a museum but I love being part of the team and appreciate that each day is different."



Grant developed a fascination with science and the natural world from a young age. He says, "From asking why birds don't get electrocuted when they land on powerlines, to first seeing Saturn in a telescope, I have always enjoyed learning about the world. I am looking forward to helping the Museum develop its education and astronomy programs."



Dr Matt is a multi-skilled palaeontologist. His background includes making dinosaur skeletal mounts, preparing fossils for display, researching dinosaurs and curating museum displays and collections. He is looking forward to raising the profile of the Museum as a centre of scientific research.

Mackenzie decided from a young age that she wanted to work behind the scenes at museums. "I am fascinated with rocks, animals and uncovering the history of the world that has been lost to time", explains Mackenzie.

NEWS FROM THE JUMP-UP

CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE

In 2022 the Museum team collected 4,654 containers and raised \$496 through the Containers for Change environmental scheme! Each year the proceeds of the initiative are donated to a community program or organisation in Winton. This year the Winton Bowls Club was chosen. The certificate and cheque were presented to Sandy Gillies (pictured), Jacob Mutton and Karen Shaw.



AUSTRALIA DAY AMBASSADOR

The Museum hosted Australia Day Ambassador Gerrard Gosens OAM as part of Winton's Australia Day celebrations. Gerrard is a three-time paralympian having represented Australia in goalball and distance running. He is also a successful businessman, running two chocolate shops, and is a leading advocate for people with a disability. Gerrard is pictured here with Gavin Baskett and Jessie Trump.



GREY NOMAD AWARDS

In February the Museum was awarded silver for Best Grey Nomad Attraction at the Grey Nomad Awards! Of the Museum's annual visitation, those visitors who identify as 55 years and older represent 40% of all visitors.

The Museum's over-55s market segment is primarily from intrastate, usually from southeast Queensland, with the largest proportion of interstate travellers visiting from NSW/ACT. The Museum is thrilled to be recognised at the Grey Nomad Awards.



AAOD STAFF VILLAGE REFURB

By Donna Maxsted

In February 2022 the Museum purchased Banjos Overnight and Holiday Units in Winton to provide long-stay accommodation options for Museum staff. Renamed the AAOD Staff Village, the private residential community consists of a three-bedroom house and eight ensuite units. While minor repairs to several rooms and verandahs, and renovations to the pool and garden, have been underway since 2022, the major refurbishment has only just begun.

Over summer the interior and exterior of each building was painted by Daniel Caston. The colour theme includes shell white for the outside walls, Indian red for the gutters, sills and landing balustrades, and vivid white for the doors and window trims. The colours were chosen to compliment the Museum's overall look.

While the buildings are being painted the team have also removed several corroded drums being used as cooling tanks. These were housed in storerooms between each unit pair. With these now removed the storerooms will be converted into shared laundries. The cooling tanks will be replaced with a new 3,000L water tank and pressure pump outfitted on a cement base. A new filter has been installed for the pool and, further down the track, there are also plans to provide a shade structure for the pool and barbecue area.

After a year of occupancy the AAOD Staff Village has become a wonderful place for staff to relax and socialise outside of work hours. This is an invaluable asset to the Museum, providing affordable housing for seasonal staff while freeing up space at the Maloney Lodge Precinct.



IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT?

While many members are up to date with their membership fees, to ensure you do not miss out on the next AAOD Journal and another year of quarterly newsletters, please check your membership status [here](#).



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WINTON – LONGREACH



DARK SKY SERENADE
19 May 2023

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DINOSAURS TO DUNNARTS

By Karen Corkill

VARANUS PANOPTES

The distinctive yellow-spotted monitor (*Varanus panoptes*) is the most common monitor lizard found in the Winton region and is often spotted on The Jump-Up by staff and visitors.

The yellow-spotted monitor often grows over a metre in length and has an elongated head and neck. These monitors can be identified by their large cream or yellow spots with a dark centre, surrounded by a dark rim. This light-coloured spotting overlays a brown body colouration and the tail is marked with narrow dark bands.

The fingers and toes of the yellow-spotted monitor end in well-developed claws that

are used to dig out nests and shelters when hunting prey, such as insects, reptiles, small mammals, birds and fish.

Like all monitors, the yellow-spotted monitor has a forked tongue that is highly sensitive to smell and taste. The tongue is extended to pick up scent chemicals and then retracted into the mouth where the scents are analysed using an organ on the roof of the mouth.

Interestingly, yellow-spotted monitors will often appear standing on their hind legs, supporting themselves on their tail. This unusual behavior helps to spot potential prey or enemies from a distance or to appear larger when they feel threatened.



CCC PROJECT UPDATE

By David Elliott

On 14 October 2022 the Queensland government announced that funding for the Museum's Create, Captivate and Consolidate project (the CCC project) had been approved through the Tourism Experience Development Fund.

The CCC project commenced on 1 November with the acquisition of the Hurley Collection and its relocation from South Australia to the Museum.

Onsite activities connected to this project are also progressing. In January two 13m-diameter helipads, located near the Reception Centre, were sealed with 28 cubic metres of concrete to create all-weather helicopter landing pads. It is expected that these helipads will attract adventure tourism and provide new development opportunities for regional travel operators. A safety barrier and gravel base around the helipads will be completed shortly.

At the Reception Centre, additional concrete seating on either side of the complex has been completed. The architecturally designed seating includes a wheelchair-accessible seating deck shaded by two 4m x 4m commercial umbrellas plus café tables and chairs. Additional seating on the opposite side has also been built for visitors waiting for their shuttle-bus transfer to Dinosaur Canyon. A large shade sail over the Noble Express shuttle-bus seating area will be installed over the next few months.

The CCC project is valued at \$1,150,000 and is being funded by the Queensland Government's Tourism Experience

Development Fund (\$200,000), Winton Shire Council (\$100,000) and the Museum (\$850,000). The goal of the CCC project is to create an inclusive and sustainable attraction in the heart of the Outback, by captivating visitors, driving demand for Queensland tourism, attracting new markets and continuously consolidating growth.

Clockwise from top right: The Café extension will accommodate an additional eight tables and 32 chairs. The concrete seating will also include a concrete plinth.

Concrete seating between the Café and the Noble Express shuttle pick-up zone has been completed to ease congestion at the Reception Centre.

To attract the adventure traveller market to the Museum, two circular concrete helipads pads have been installed close to the Reception Centre.





INTRODUCING THE HURLEY COLLECTION

In late 2022 David and Judy Elliott spent six weeks and several trips packing and relocating a large fossil collection from South Australia to Winton. Largely donated to the Museum by Tom and Sharon Hurley, the collection includes significant fossils collected over several decades.

The Hurley Collection was relocated to the Museum via the Birdsville Track, using a five-tonne truck towing a three-tonne trailer. A total of 40 pallet crates were filled with 15 tonnes of carefully packed fossils for the long trips to Central West Queensland. These relocated fossils will be moved to the soon-to-be completed Exhibition Development Facility, close to the Fossil Preparation Laboratory, in April. The facility will be a hive of activity as the Museum team commences the industrial preparation of the fossil specimens and the development of large exhibits for the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of Natural History.

This amazing fossil collection represents every geological period from around Australia and is a testament to the passion and dedication of Tom and Sharon. Over several decades they have worked tirelessly to amass this unique collection and we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for their generosity and support.



Crossing Sturt Stony Desert in northeast South Australia with fossils being transported to the Museum.



Sharon and Tom Hurley at their property in the opal mining town of Andamooka, South Australia.



Cretaceous-aged opalised shells from Andamooka, South Australia.



Judy guiding a petrified log from a house window before it was loaded onto a truck.



DINOSAURS TO DUNNARTS

By Sairs Minehan

CRINUM FLACCIDUM

Crinum flaccidum has many different common names depending on where it is found. In Winton, it is referred to as the Murray lily or desert lily, but in other locations it is known as the Darling lily or Macquarie lily. However, no matter what it is called, it is a beautiful flower.

These eye-catching lilies are usually one of the first plants to spring up in Winton following the first summer rain. Clusters of 5 to 16 large white flowers stand out boldly about 60cm above the ground.

The plants have large bulbs buried deep in the thick clay of the plains and thrive with seasonal flooding. They reproduce by seeds, which form in globular fruits 2cm across, and by natural division of the bulb underground.

Keep an eye out for these stunning white flowers on the drive to the Museum following summer rain.



LABORATORY UPDATE

By Steven Lippis and Mackenzie Enchelmaier

At the end of 2022 the Museum celebrated a total of 300 Honorary Technicians completing a ten-day program! The Museum's Prep-A-Dino participants come from all walks of life – from high school and university students to retired scientists and teachers. The program is for anyone interested in Australian fossils. Without the longstanding passion and drive of participants to uncover and share Australia's natural history, animals such as *Australovenator* and *Diamantinasaurus*, may never have been known to science.

At the end of 2022 Museum staff and program participants in the Fossil Preparation Laboratory had completed the preparation of the Ann, Leo and Doolan site material. The preparation of the dorsal vertebrae from the Judy site is expected to

be completed in 2023 and the completed cervical vertebrae moved to a more prominent area for display. Preparation of material recovered from the Pete site in 2013 is now 80% complete with only two plaster jackets and some small specimens close to being finalised.

After two decades the plaster jackets recovered from the Elliot site (2002 to 2005) will be fully prepared over the next few months. The Elliot material includes a small conical tooth, sauropod ribs, vertebrae and the ulna from a juvenile sauropod.

For regular updates from the Laboratory follow the Museum on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).



The recently prepared sauropod vertebra from the Elliot site.



Supporting a lasting
legacy to Australia's
natural heritage.

THE AAOD LEGACY FUND

was established to build an investment portfolio that will provide ongoing and permanent income for operations and development of the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of Natural History.

Tax-deductible donations are a great way to contribute to a worthy cause. Every time you make a gift to the AAOD Legacy Fund, provided your donation is \$2 or more, you will most likely be able to claim the full amount of your charitable donation on your tax return (check with the ATO if you are unsure). The AAOD Legacy Fund relies on the generosity of Museum supporters to ensure a lasting legacy to Australia's natural heritage.

To donate, visit *make a donation* and select [AAOD Legacy Fund](#).

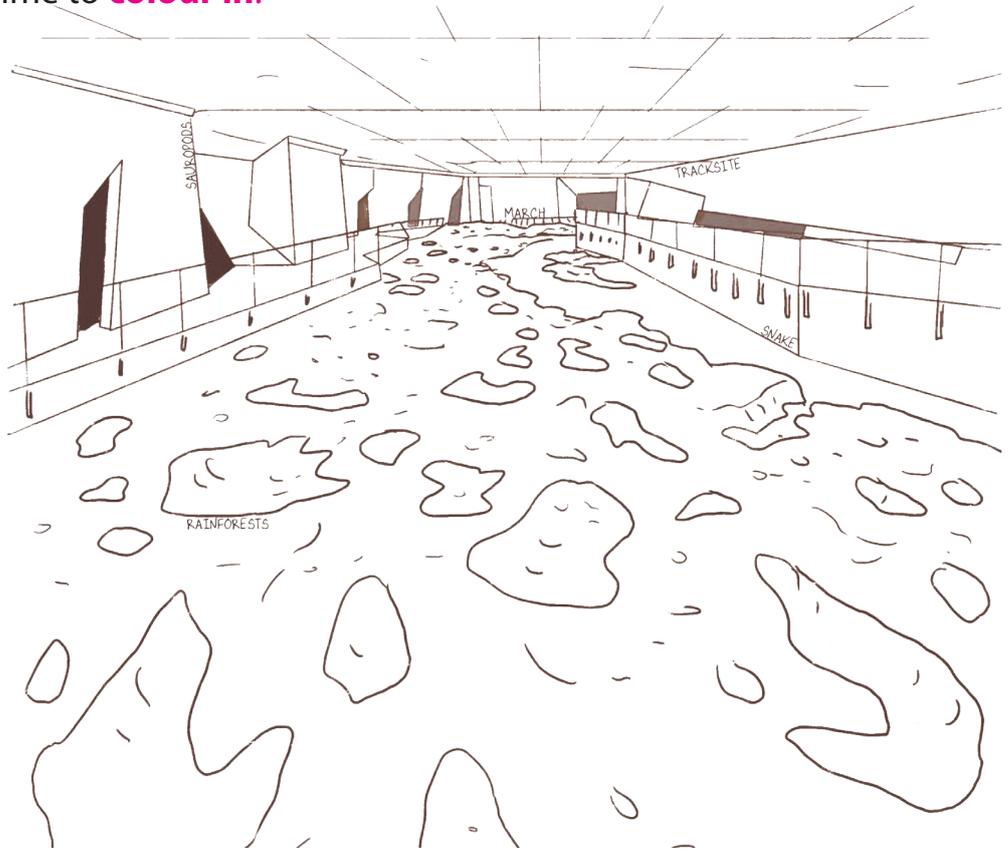
P A L A E O P E T E F U N



COLOURING-IN CHALLENGE

Can you find all the **orange** words on the left hidden in the picture below? Shhh! One word is missing... Once you have found the words it's time to **colour in!**

The **March** of the Titanosaurs exhibition displays the 54-metre-long **Snake** Creek tracksite discovered on a property near Winton. The **tracksite** was made when herds of **sauropods** roamed western **Queensland**, when the landscape was covered in temperate **rainforests** and muddy billabongs.



Deep-Time Astronomy wheel chart

NEW

An invaluable resource that connects objects in the night sky to the events on Earth, delving into time and space and our collective understanding and search for our place within it. This wheel chart features incredible facts about all 30 night-sky objects, from where they are found, when they formed and the best time to view them in the Southern Hemisphere.

On the reverse of the Deep-Time Astronomy wheel chart are constellations where the night-sky objects can be found and explanatory text.

