



Megafauna themed playground brings natural history to life





## Exciting megafauna playground on site of fossil remains

A megafauna themed playground with a life-size Diprotodon statue and fossil dig was the natural choice when redeveloping Cormorant Drive Reserve at Hallett Cove near Adelaide. Why? Because fossils of the extinct *Diprotodon optatum* – the world’s largest known marsupial – were found there. This direct connection makes the redeveloped nature playground extra special.

### Bringing natural history to life

Fossil remains found at Hallett Cove in 1992 were identified as a juvenile Diprotodon that lived in the area around 55,000 years ago.<sup>1</sup>

Believed to be the largest marsupial to have lived, the Diprotodon roamed Australia in the Pleistocene (150,000-25,000 years ago). It looked like a giant wombat, and was herbivorous, eating up to 100-150kg of vegetation a day. Diprotodons coexisted with Australia’s First Nations people for thousands of years before becoming extinct.

Today, the extinct Diprotodon comes to life in the imagination of people visiting the megafauna playground!



The Diprotodon sculpture is a lifelike replica of megafauna that lived in the area



A child plays on the Diprotodon sculpture at the opening of the Reserve in July 2023 (All images copyright City of Marion or Natureworks)

*“The Diprotodon is the largest-known marsupial to have ever lived, and to have found fossil remains of this rhinoceros-sized wombat in our own backyards is pretty special.”*

Kris Hanna, Mayor of Marion



The Diprotodon looks toward the sandpit and seating area

1. “A late Pleistocene occurrence of Diprotodon at Hallett Cove, South Australia”. Pledge, Prescott & Hutton, 2002)



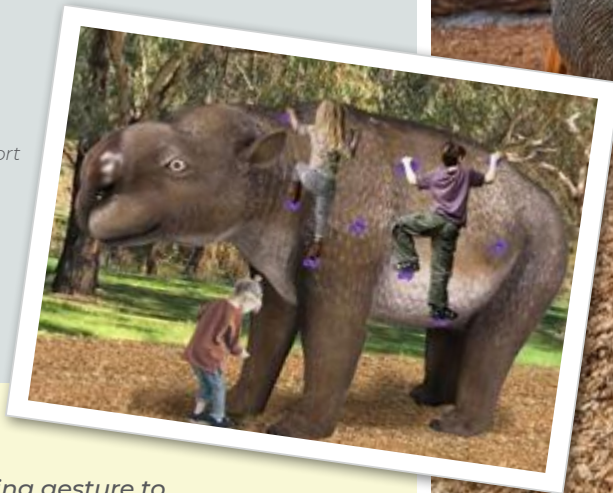


## 'Wartu' the friendly Diprotodon

To support the launch of the upgraded reserve, the City of Marion Council held a community naming competition for the Diprotodon. Also known as the 'Giant Wombat', it has officially been named 'Wartu' (the Kaurna word for wombat). The Kaurna people are the original people of the Adelaide plains, and their ancestors are likely to have seen Diprotodons.

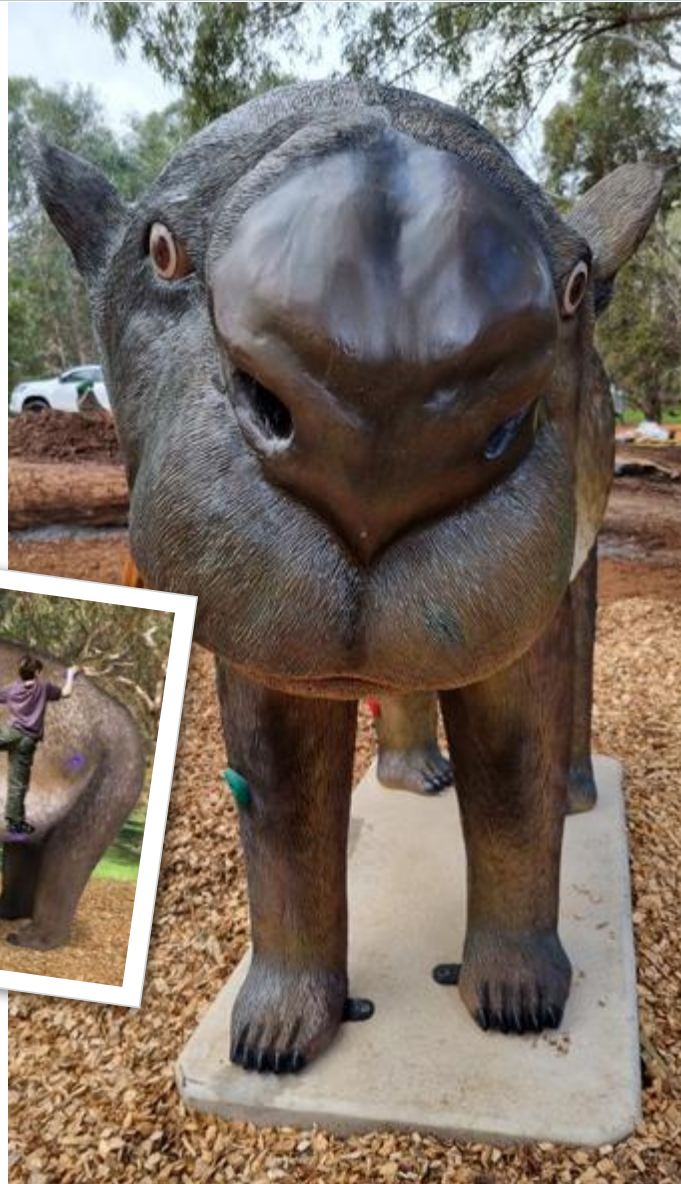
As you can see from the images, the Diprotodon is quite a character, appealing to young and old. With pegs for climbing on, the sculpture can be scaled, hugged or ridden on by young adventurers!

*Natureworks provided concept art simulating the climbing structure to support the Council's community consultations about the redevelopment.*



*"The City of Marion thought it was a fitting gesture to pay tribute to this ancient creature in this playground upgrade and we hope the wider community can enjoy it as well and will come to this hidden gem of a reserve."*

Kris Hanna, Mayor of Marion



*'Wartu' the Diprotodon is quite a lovable character!*



*The Diprotodon waits excitedly at Natureworks before going to Adelaide*



*Colourful pegs help children to climb on the sculpture*





## Fossil dig for budding archaeologists

To continue the Diprotodon theme for this megafauna themed playground, the nature play reserve also includes a Diprotodon fossil dig.

Buried in the sandpit, the replica fossil bones of the extinct Diprotodon emerge as children scrape away the sand. It's a creative, educational nature play experience for children, developing their cognitive, physical and social skills while encouraging them to learn about our ancient natural history.

## Educational nature play

Nature play spaces like this inspirational megafauna themed playground encourage children to explore and interact with the natural environment. As the City of Marion Council said in their community consultation, "Playing outdoors grows resilience, self-confidence, initiative, creativity and more".

We agree! Natureworks loves creating quality theming elements that connect kids to the natural world. We also love helping people of all ages discover the wonder of nature past and present. Promoting an understanding of natural history raises awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity for the future of us all.

*"It's fantastic to see funding being used to create such imaginative, engaging spaces in our local area. I'm sure this reserve will be well-loved by local children for many years to come."*

Amanda Rishworth, Local Federal Member for Kingston and Minister for Social Services



In the sandpit, children can dig to discover replica fossil bones of a Diprotodon

## Engaging nature play experiences

The Natureworks team helps landscape architects, developers, local councils, childcare centres, schools and others create sustainable, engaging nature play spaces.

With a deep understanding of playground safety and construction, we can provide a design service if you need it.

Please contact Natureworks to enquire about our range of megafauna, dinosaurs, modern animals, nature play equipment, climbing rocks and other nature theming products.