



Megafauna sculptures promoting our rich natural history



A captivating display of natural history evolution

The Riversleigh Fossil Discovery Centre in Mount Isa has evolved over the years to reflect new fossil discoveries and enhance the visitor experience. Natureworks is proud to be part of the centre's evolutionary process.

Approximately 25 years ago, the Mount Isa City Council commissioned Natureworks to create a range of dioramas for the Riversleigh Fossil exhibit at their new Visitor Information Centre. The dioramas featured extinct megafauna animal sculptures housed in displays with artificial rocks, caves and plants to set the scene.

More than twenty years later (in 2020), the council once again called upon Natureworks' expertise in natural history displays. The Fossil Discovery Centre, which became part of the comprehensive Outback at Isa tourism complex, was upgraded to include interactive exhibits, refurbished displays and information about recent fossil discoveries.

For the upgraded centre, Natureworks refreshed older exhibits, created new megafauna animal sculptures and built a dramatic entry statement. We also provided an unusual sculptural feature designed to draw attention from passers-by and promote the centre's unique appeal.



The leaping Thylacoleo is a central feature of the exhibits



Three Dromornis murrayi attract attention outside the Centre

Riversleigh is home to significant fossil deposits that tell a story of the evolution of Australia's unique wildlife, including megafauna that lived in the Pleistocene epoch. Some of these large animals are believed to have co-existed with Australia's First Nations peoples for at least 30,000 years.

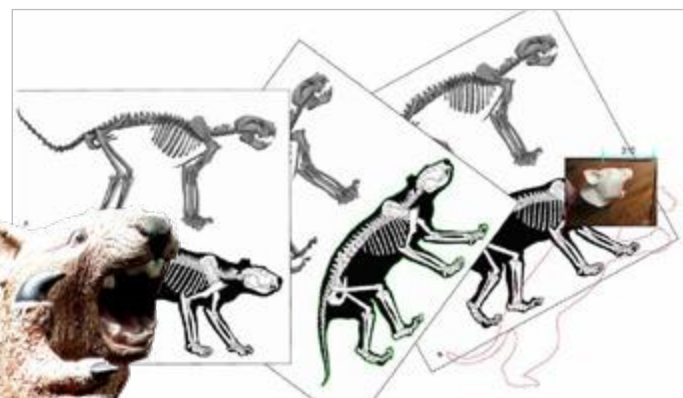


Dynamic leaping Thylacoleo sculpture

As a way of bringing dynamic energy to the exhibit, Natureworks artisans sculpted a life-size leaping *Thylacoleo Carnifex*. Known as the largest carnivorous mammal to have lived in Australia, the Thylacoleo was widely distributed across the country during the Pleistocene epoch.

Standing at an impressive 1.8 metres tall, the sculpture seems to be leaping out into the exhibition space. It certainly catches visitors' attention!

Images on this page show Thylacoleo concept sketches, working drawings and the final sculpture.





Memorable entry statement

Natureworks designed and built a magnificent entry statement for the Fossil Discovery Centre.

'Marsupial lions' greet visitors

At the entrance, two 'marsupial lions', prominent carnivores of Australia's megafauna era, proudly greet visitors. A *Thylacoleo* stands atop a 2.5-metre-tall limestone rock plinth beside the laser cut metal entrance sign. Next to the large plinth is a slightly smaller plinth with a *Wakaleo schouteni* sculpture.

Solid construction

The *Thylacoleo* is constructed from heavy-duty fibreglass with an internal steel armature, while the *Wakaleo* is made of glass-fibre reinforced concrete (GFC). Both have a realistic 2 Pac paint finish and are bolted securely onto metal plates embedded in the plinths.

The custom rock plinths add height and drama to the entry statement. They're practical too. Constructed of light but robust GFC over a steel frame, the large plinth includes an internal access door for future servicing needs.

Promotional photo opportunities

Strategically placed stepping stones in front of the plinths make it easy and safe to pose for photos. By taking and sharing selfies inside or outside the centre, visitors help to promote not only the fossil centre but also Mount Isa as a tourism destination.



Thylacoleo



Concept sketch



Internal structure of the plinth



View of rear access door in the rock plinth



The crouching *Wakaleo schouteni*



Look out for the Demon Ducks of Doom!

As another attention grabber, Natureworks created a small flock of *Dromornis murrayi* (nicknamed 'Demon Ducks of Doom'). The *Dromornis* was an enormous flightless bird (about 1.7m high) that lived in northern Australia from around 5 to 24 million years ago.

Positioned in front of the building adjacent to the street, these eye-catching sculptures draw people to the Visitor Centre and provide a photo opportunity. In doing so, they highlight the megafauna connections and help to raise awareness of the region's rich natural history heritage.



Children playing on the sculptures at the Centre

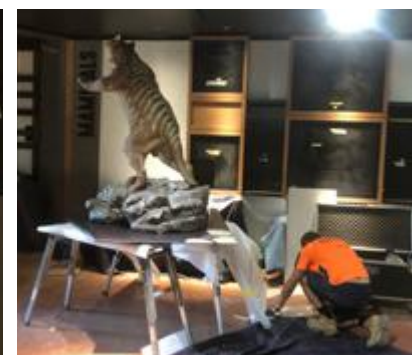


Dromornis skeleton image from the Discovery Centre exhibit



Constructing and installing the megafauna sculptures

The images on this page show the leaping Thylacoleo and the entry sculpture of the Thylacoleo and Wakaleo at various stages of production at our studio and installation on-site at Mt Isa.





Sculpting the 'Demon Ducks of Doom'

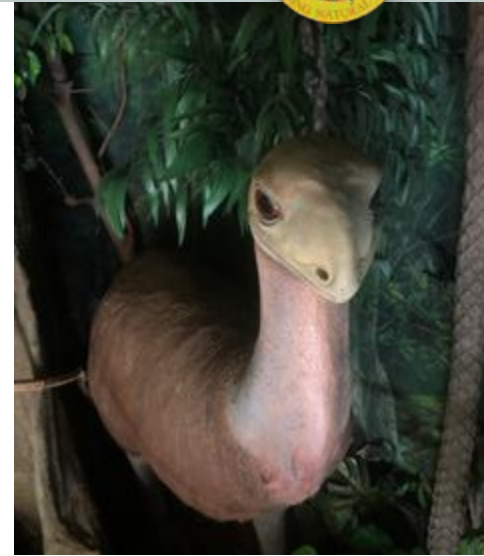
The images on this page show the Dromornis murrayi sculptures in the Natureworks workshop at various stages of production.





Natural history displays

The images on this page show the dioramas, animal sculptures, artificial caves, rocks and habitat reconstructions Natureworks implemented for the Riversleigh Fossil Discovery Centre.





Megafauna sculpture collection

The remarkable sculptures shown in this case study are part of Natureworks' extensive megafauna collection. Designed for indoor and outdoor display, they offer an opportunity for the public to experience the scale and diversity of prehistoric animals in a reconstructed living landscape.

You'll find many more Australian megafauna sculptures on our website – explore 'prehistoric' products or download our megafauna catalogue.



Natural history & cultural displays

To create a memorable visitor experience, ask the Natureworks team! We can advise on custom designs and cost-effective stock products.

Contact Natureworks to bring your project to life!

