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Photo: Steve Bourne

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Time travelling in South Australia: developing opportunities for regional fossil tourism and education.

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Environment
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South Australia...
Beautiful one day, fossilised the next.



The greatest story ever fossilised



Museum as a 'gateway'



South
Australian
Museum



University of Adelaide

Emu Bay Shale – Cambrian (~520 myr)



Naracoorte Caves – Quaternary (~1 myr)



A World Heritage Site

Are people really interested in this stuff?

Daily Mail AUSTRALIA
Less Skippy, more Ploddy! Kangaroo's ancient ancestor couldn't hop and instead lumbered along on two legs

These roos were made for walking



BUSINESS INSIDER AUSTRALIA
Giant Kangaroos Look Like They Were Hop-Less

YES!

'Executioner' marsupial lion bones scanned in Naracoorte Hospital help provide answers

ABC South East SA, By Kate Hill
Updated 31 Aug 2015, 1:02pm

NEWS



PHOTO: PhD student Michael Curry arranges the bones of a 50,000-year-old marsupial lion in the Naracoorte Hospital's CT-scanner. (ABC South East SA, Kate Hill)

THE CONVERSATION
Academic rigour, journalistic flair



New analysis finds no evidence that climate wiped out Australia's megafauna

Ancient DNA found in SA caves

news
.com.au

Australian Age of Dinosaurs



- Winton – outback Queensland.
- Rapid growth in tourism at site, despite remote location.
- Links with other fossil attractions across Queensland.



Archaeological site of Atapuerca, Spain

World Heritage listed in 2000.

Similarities with Naracoorte - ~300km from capital city, located in a small regional area looking to regional economic development opportunities - tourism. 2010 to 2012 €53 million

Focus on supporting science to boost site profile. Co-operative management strategy.

Large collaborative research centre set up to boost scientific profile.



Fossil-based tourism: challenges and opportunities

- The majority of fossil localities occur in regional areas, providing significant economic and social benefits through tourism and education.
- Empower communities to develop the unique stories of their region and play a role in the management and conservation of their heritage.
- Value add to existing offerings – geotourism, cultural tourism.
- Conservation of fossil sites is critical! High risk of theft and damage to some sites making them unsuitable for direct visitation.
- Diversification of experiences needed – don't have to visit all sites – the story is key!
- Ongoing scientific research vital and underpins sound interpretation of the values.

Case study: Naracoorte Caves World Heritage Area

- World Heritage listed in 1994 – Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh/Naracoorte).
- Cave deposits preserve exceptional record of biodiversity and environment over the past 500,000 years.
- Formal tours conducted since 1880s
- Current annual visitation around 45,000 (10% international)
- Aim to increase visitation – finite limit on how many people can physically go through the caves without compromising values.





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- Over 135 vertebrate species.
- Frogs, birds, reptiles and mammals.
- Around 20% became extinct during the Pleistocene.
- Nearly half of species found are locally extant.
- Understanding the past ecology of these species is critical to their conservation.



Guided and self-guided tours





Adventure caving – strong cave conservation message.



Educational programs





Participatory ecotourism
&
Special interest tours





Community & Special events, conferences, visiting scientists





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Caves Connections project

- Initiative of Naracoorte Lucindale Council
- Issues:
 - ‘Disconnect’ between caves and local community.
 - Need to build opportunities from having a World Heritage site on their ‘doorstep’.
 - Increase tourism and length of stay while maintaining conservation of caves, and scientific integrity of core messages
 - Diversification of offerings to include the township and region.
 - Promote and maximise benefits from scientific research – making Naracoorte a ‘science tourism’ destination.
- First step:
 - Bring back a sense of ‘ownership’ within the community and re-engage interest in the caves. Show them the possibilities.

Caves Connections project

- Project group formed to develop 10 year concept plan.
 - Members from local business, education providers, science (Uni. Adelaide), DEWNR, Council, industry.
- Three core areas -:
 - Business and commercial – support for tourism ventures, improving services, potential commercial opportunities at the caves.
 - Community and cultural – branding, promotion, education, integrating the cave story into art and social activities, Indigenous culture, encourage and support scientific research.
 - Infrastructure and place development – visitor facilities, signage, services, town entrances, bicycle trail, fossil museum in town, stronger connection between caves and town.

What is the Caves ConnectionProject?

It is a key part of Naracoorte Lucindale Council's economic development plan.



The Naracoorte landscape is home to a unique network of caves, which hold Australia's richest fossil record of megafauna. The Naracoorte Caves is South Australia's only World Heritage site.

The Caves Connection project is bringing community and business leaders together to generate ideas to maximise the benefits to Naracoorte of this unique natural asset.

It includes exploring opportunities for Naracoorte that are complementary to the World Heritage values of the Caves.

- New & expanded visitor facilities & services
- New businesses/Expand existing businesses
- Events
- New Infrastructure
- Marketing and promotions
- Science and educational ideas



The Caves Connection Concept Statement

Do you have an idea?

The Concept Statement is a 10-year document proposing ideas for bringing economic and community benefits to Naracoorte, building on the iconic Naracoorte Caves. It is currently in draft form.

Add your own idea, or tell us what you think of the ideas listed.



Naracoorte Lucindale Council
Better by Nature



The Naracoorte Lucindale Council with Inspiring SA will be hosting

FREE CHILDREN'S ART WORKSHOPS

"Naracoorte Caves – World Heritage on our Doorstep"

SCIENCE AND ARTS WORKING TOGETHER

with local artist Karen Burow &

Vertebrate Paleontologist Dr Liz Reed

Tuesday 18th & Wednesday 19th July 2017

Sessions each day: 10am to 12pm and 1:30pm to 3:30pm

@ the Naracoorte Town Hall

Children 8 years and over welcome

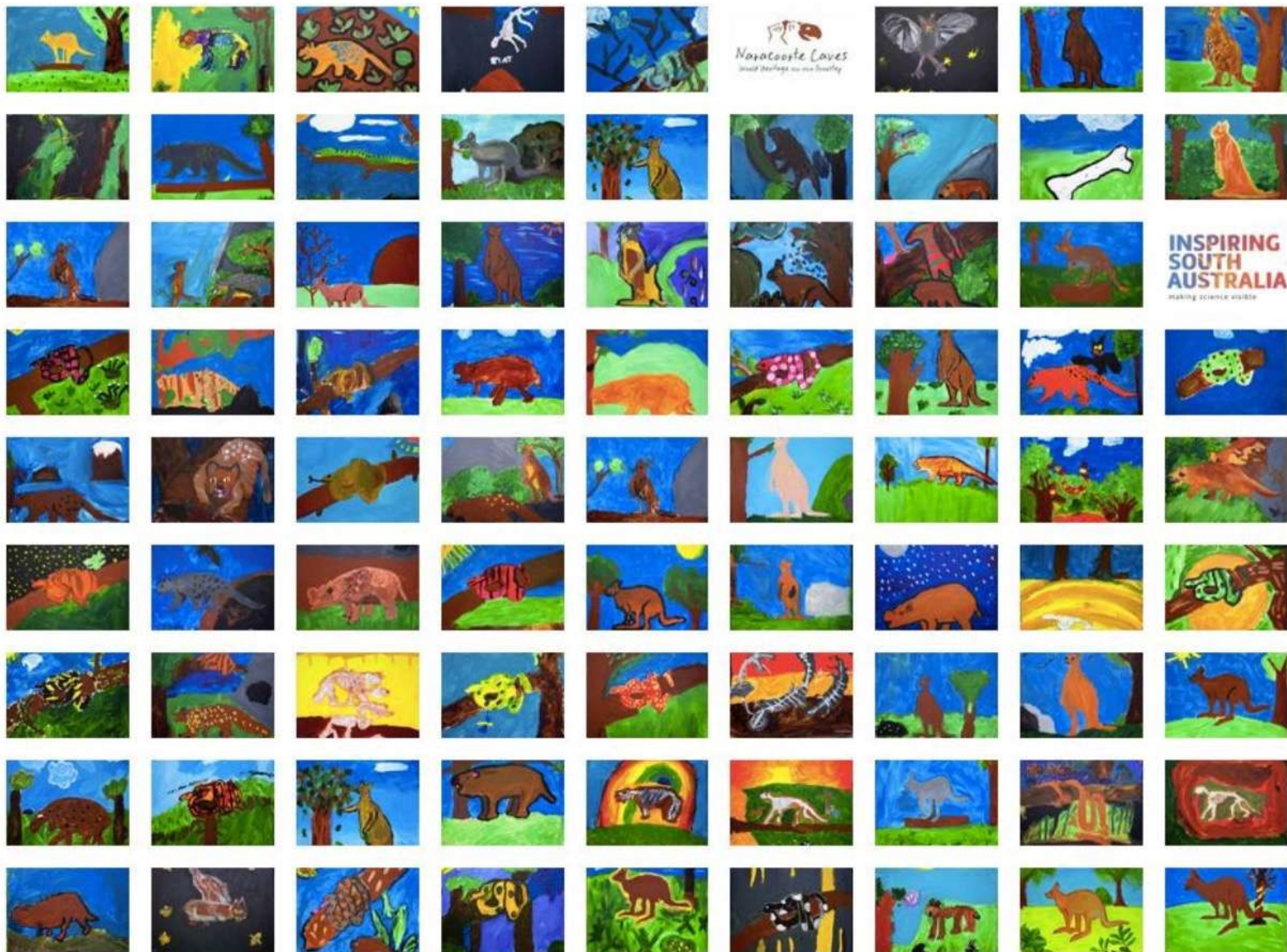
Bring old clothes, shoes, smock, water bottle and snack

Places are limited. Bookings essential - phone 8760 1100 or

email council@nlc.sa.gov.au or

online www.naracoortelucindale.sa.gov.au







Naracoorte Caves Connection Business Workshop

Thursday 9 November, Registrations 5.45pm
Workshop 6.00pm to 8.00pm,
Naracoorte Town Hall

Innovative and passionate local people are invited to this workshop to generate ideas that leverage value from the Naracoorte Caves and grow tourism and the visitor economy.

Peter Joy, Executive Chair of Brand SA, with 30 years in marketing and advertising will lead the discussion

As home to South Australia's only World Heritage site Naracoorte is a unique destination for visitors in the Limestone Coast. The Naracoorte Caves are World Heritage listed due to the importance of the fossils – the Caves contain Australia's richest record of megafauna fossils. By leveraging value from the Caves and making the most of what we have at the Caves, we attract more visitors and everyone's business can benefit.

For seating and catering purposes please RSVP –

87601100 or council@nlc.sa.gov.au

www.naracoortelucindale.sa.gov.au



Naracoorte Lucindale Council
Better by Nature



the
**LIMESTONE
COAST**
Underneath our treasures

Naracoorte Caves Local Business Open Night

Tuesday 21 November, at the Naracoorte Caves
from 5.30pm until 7.30pm

*Innovative and passionate local business people are invited to
rediscover the Naracoorte Caves.*

**Join an interactive walking tour of the Naracoorte
Caves and hear about the latest scientific research and
Caves experiences on offer.**

*As home to South Australia's only World Heritage site Naracoorte is a
unique destination for visitors to the Limestone Coast. The Caves are
World Heritage listed due to the importance of the fossils – the Caves
contain Australia's richest record of megafauna fossils and provide
unique experiences to around 55,000 visitors annually. The Caves
provide opportunities for businesses to leverage economic value by
developing other products and services. By doing this we attract
more visitors for a longer timeframe and everyone's business can
benefit.*

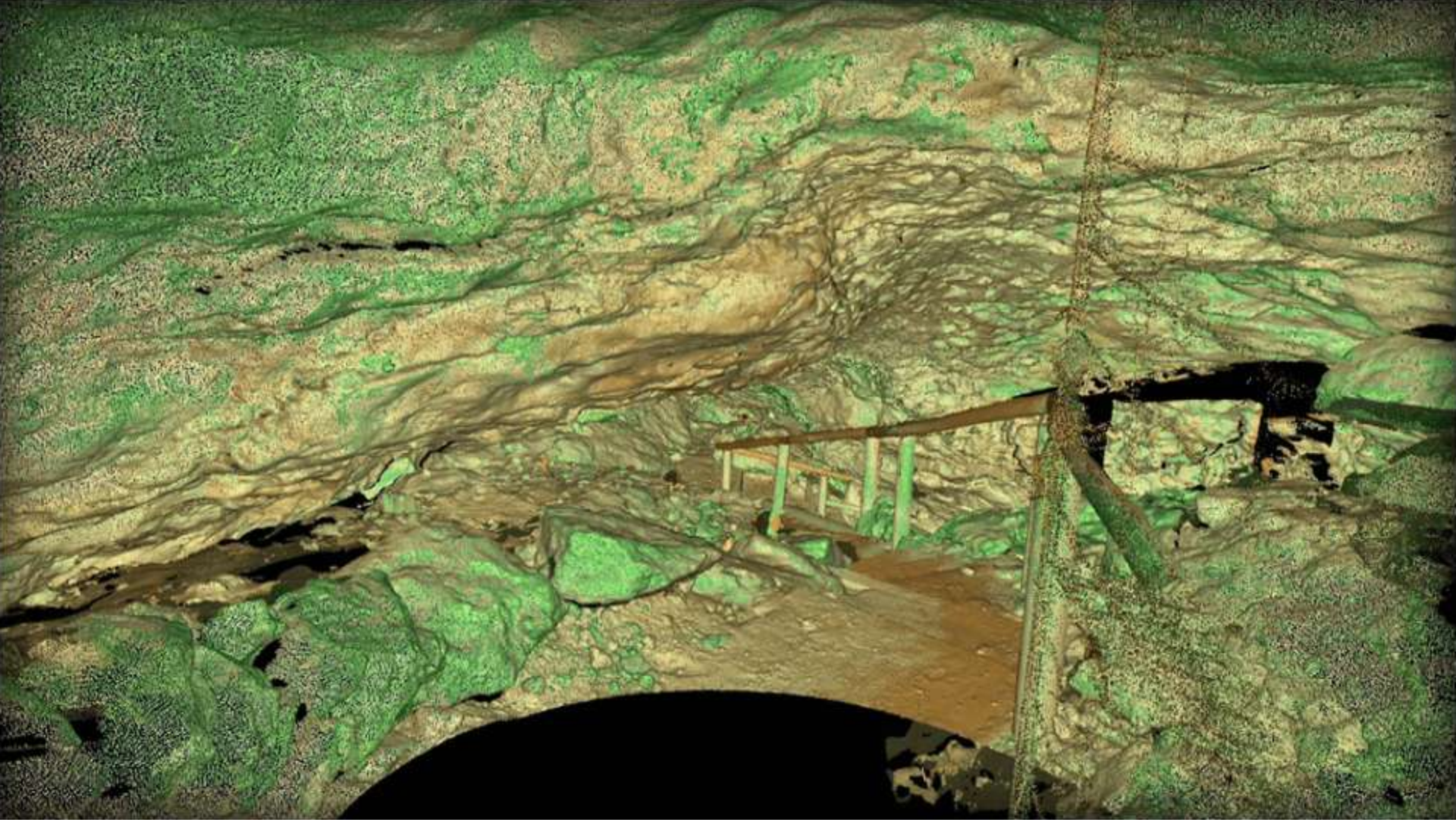
**For group tour and catering purposes please RSVP –
8760 1100 or council@nlc.sa.gov.au
www.naracoortelucindale.sa.gov.au**



The project is very timely...

- Recent research has revealed new, exciting directions for science at the caves, providing the foundation upon which to now build a major research program.
- Critically, we now have a strategic alignment of a world-class group of scientists with complementary expertise, ready to tackle the big questions.
- University of Adelaide awarded ARC Linkage grant this year - funded next four years of research at the caves – total project value around \$1.8 million.
- Linkage partners are Naracoorte Council, DEWNR, SA Museum, Wrattenbully wine region, Terre a Terre and DSTG.
- Alignment with State Government initiatives in fossil tourism and heritage.
- A key aim of the research project is communication, outreach and informing management of the site – endless possibilities!





Take home messages

- Early days for the Caves Connections project, but already seeing results.
- The past is the key to the present and future – Naracoorte's fossil record has relevance to many of the 'big questions' we face today e.g. climate change, conservation, biodiversity etc etc.
- The Naracoorte Caves are vital to regional development and the local community.
- Naracoorte is part of a bigger picture relating to SA's ancient heritage.
- Science is the key to adding life to old fossils – it underpins heritage significance, interpretation, presentation and tourism of these values.
- Conservation of fossil sites must be at the forefront of any potential fossil tourism initiatives.



Current funding for Naracoorte research via :



Our research partners:



Thank you!