



Naracoorte Lucindale Council

Naracoorte Caves Trail

STOP 5

Giants once roamed the forests and grasslands of Naracoorte.

The marsupial heavyweight *Diprotodon optatum* (2,500 kg) once walked where you now stand. A host of short-faced leaf eating kangaroos, including the enormous *Procoptodon goliah* (250 kg), foraged in the abundant bushland alongside the giant monitor lizard *Varanus priscus* which scoured the land in search of prey. Known as megafauna, these animals became extinct around 45,000 years ago. Prior to this, First Nations People lived beside them for at least 15,000 years.

A scene from Naracoorte, 60,000 years ago.

Painting by Dr Julian Hume, commissioned in collaboration with The University of Adelaide, Australian Landscape Trust and Country Arts SA.

The Naracoorte Caves have preserved the fossil bones of more than 130 species, many of which still live here today. How did so many bones accumulate in the caves? Some animals fell in by accident, while others used caves as dens or roosts. Predators such as owls and Tasmanian Devils accumulated the bones of their prey.

Palaeontologists continue to excavate cave sites at Naracoorte. Their careful work has revealed a fossil record that spans more than 500,000 years, providing a rare glimpse into the past. Visit the Naracoorte Caves to hear about the latest research!



Western Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus fuliginosus*). Grey kangaroos lived beside the megafauna.
Source: Steven Bourne

Grey kangaroos shared this land with the extinct giants. Keep a lookout for kangaroos as you ride the trail!

