



# ANCIENT LANDSCAPES GALLERY VOTED 'JUDGES CHOICE'

The state-of-the-art Ancient Landscapes Gallery, opened in May 2021 and located in Dubbo Regional Council's (DRC) Wellington Caves, has been awarded the Judges Choice Award at the 2021 Interpretation Australia Awards of Excellence.

The Ancient Landscapes Gallery offers a large-scale immersive experience that allows visitors to interactively explore a Devonian reef, as well as engage with megafauna from the Pleistocene. Objects on display include a life-size, 3D-printed Diprotodon fossil skeleton. Another feature of the gallery is the creation story about the caves, shared for the first time by the Wellington Wiradjuri community.

In recognising the local attraction for the award, judges said, "This project demonstrates excellence through planning, research and use of a range of interactive devices along with eye-catching graphics and displays." While another felt that "The exhibition makes good use of the curiosity created through interacting with these interpretation devices by drawing us in further."

“This is terrific recognition for a truly fantastic exhibition,” said Natasha Comber, Director Culture and Economy. “Given COVID-19 has presented the added challenge of closures during lockdown, many visitors haven’t yet had the opportunity to explore the Ancient Landscapes Gallery. Currently, we’re only offering tours to the Cathedral Cave; the Ancient Landscapes Gallery and Discovery Lab sessions will recommence from 1 December.”

“When the gallery reopens to visitors, people will be exploring an award-winning gallery – which is terrific given it was only officially opened to the public in May this year.”

The Ancient Landscapes Gallery was made possible through funding via the NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Fund, the Australian Government Drought Assistance Fund and Dubbo Regional Council. The gallery was curated, designed and constructed by Thylacine Design and project partners.

“This small regional gallery is punching well above its weight,” said Thylacine Design curator Isa Menzies. “We had the privilege of working with passionate subject experts from across Australia, including the Wellington Wiradjuri community, who were so committed to sharing the story of how the Caves came to be. It was an absolute joy to be a part of this project.”

“As part of the interpretation delivered for the Ancient Landscapes Gallery, Dubbo Regional Council worked with Indigenous representation including Auntie Connie, Auntie Glenda, Louise Austin, Mick Peachy, members of the Wellington Aboriginal Action Panel (WAAP) and community. These valuable community members were critical in helping

incorporate First Nations cultural themes as part of the exhibition,” said Ms Comber.

Wellington Caves is one of the Dubbo region's premiere tourism attractions, and as the state edges closer to fully reopening, visitors to the area are encouraged to maximise what the caves have on offer. Visitors to Wellington and the Ancient Landscapes Gallery can stay onsite at the holiday complex; book a cave tour; immerse themselves in the science of the caves in the modern Discovery Labs, while soaking in the whole experience over a great coffee and food at the café.

For more details on planning a visit to the Wellington Caves and the - award winning - Ancient Landscapes Gallery, visit [www.wellingtoncaves.com.au](http://www.wellingtoncaves.com.au)

Last Edited: 17 Jul 2023