

Nilpena Ediacara National Park

Stabilising and Maintaining Fossil Beds



The Ediacaran fossil beds in Nilpena are globally significant and provide unique insights into the dawn of complex life on Earth.

The discovery of fossils in the Ediacaran Hills helped shape a new epoch on Earth – the Ediacaran Period. The discovery of a second fossil field in the adjacent Nilpena station helped expand on this discovery, providing new insights into how complex animal life first evolved. Both these sites are now encompassed in Nilpena Ediacara National Park.

The fossil beds of Nilpena are iconic, as large slabs of sea bed lying across the desert floor. They have been inspected by researchers, tour groups, and even David Attenborough.

These fossil beds were not found arranged in such a way. Instead, these slabs are painstakingly pieced together on site by dedicated palaeontologists. Layers of sea bed are carefully extracted and flipped on site, to be pieced together like a giant jigsaw.

The result of this effort is that whole ecosystems from the Ediacaran period can be reconstructed, providing a window into the sea floor from over half a billion years ago.

The fossils are naturally well protected from the elements; their stable stone is not easily eroded by exposure to wind, rain or sun. While the fossils themselves are unlikely to suffer erosion in the short term, the re-constructed beds can be impacted by the erosion of the hills around them. It is important that these beds are stabilised, to help protect them in perpetuity.

What needs to be done?

Fossil beds at Nilpena Ediacara National Park are truly unique. Preserving and maintaining the beds as active 'in situ' scientific research sites in the

remote Ediacaran hills, while also supporting sensitively managed visitor access requires well managed investment in conservation and maintenance. While generous private donors have already contributed, further work needs to be done. The Foundation has a \$50K fundraising target in 2025/26, which will ensure this vital work continues. A number of higher value sponsorship opportunities are available, or you may wish to make a smaller contribution to the greater fossil bed conservation effort!

How can you help?

You can help protect Ediacaran fossils through a tax deductible donation to the Flinders Ranges Ediacara Foundation. Large donors will be recognised through the installation of a small plaque acknowledging their contribution at the fossil bed site.

Visit the Flinders Ranges Ediacara Foundation website, or follow the QR Code below to learn more.

What does the Flinders Ranges Ediacara Foundation do?

Established in 2018, the Foundation is a key supporter of Nilpena Ediacara National Park in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It aims to protect the world's single greatest fossil record of first animal life through site conservation and by supporting education and tourism to make the fossils and their significance accessible to everyone.



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