

Experience Western Downs

It's the
people that
make it.

FOSSICKING ON THE WESTERN DOWNS

What is Petrified Wood?

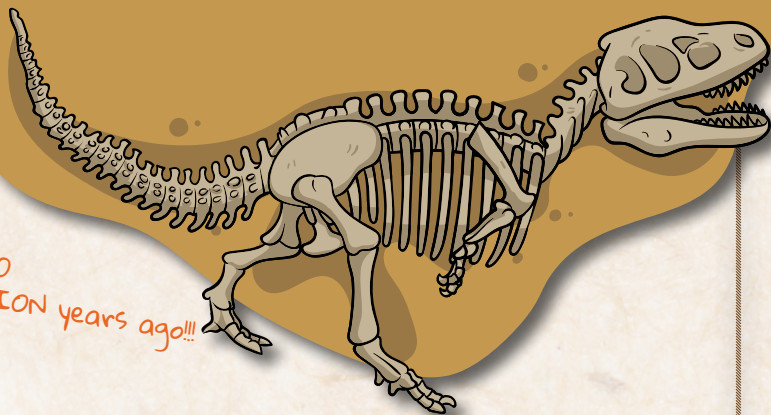
Petrified Wood dates back to the Jurassic period when dinosaurs walked the Earth.

→ 140-180
MILLION years ago!!!

The process occurs when trees are covered by massive amounts of volcanic ash and buried in a lava flow or mud flows.

There are two essential conditions required for a tree to become petrified. It must firstly be buried in an oxygen free environment and secondly, becomes petrified when the cell structure of the tree is infiltrated by mineral laden solutions over a long period of time. Basically it is the result of a tree having turned completely into stone by the process of mineralization.

Silica in the volcanic ash gradually replaces the wood cells, and different minerals such as manganese and iron oxide are responsible for the various colours.

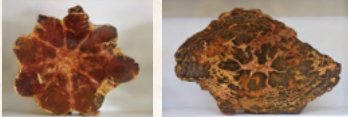


Fun Facts!

- Chinchilla petrified wood is considered as being the best in Australia in regards to colour, hardness and quality. → THAT'S AWESOME!!
- “Chinchilla Red” is the petrified wood common to this area - with its unique colour and quality of preservation.
- The types of trees petrified in this area belong to the Araucaria family of cycads, conifers and ferns - which are all either cone bearing or spore bearing trees.

Did you know?

- When the rare tree fern is cut across the grain the centre resembles a star which is surrounded by small eyes.
- Pentoxylon is a very rare type of petrified wood found in the Chinchilla area. When cut across the grain it exposes a heart shaped design which resembles flower petals surrounded by small veins. Each petal of the flower reveals its own growth rings under a microscope. The Pentoxylon is thought to have been extinct for 100 million years and traces are only found in Australia, South America and India from when these countries were once joined.



→ VERY RARE!!

- Petrified Wood is very hard, being rated between quartz and topaz in hardness. Diamond saws and drills are needed for cutting and drilling the stone. It cannot be scratched with a knife blade.

- Flat surfaces of petrified wood are polished by a Lap Vibrator which uses a series of rough and fine silicon carbide grits. The polish is then completed on a powder impregnated carpet for a mirror finish. This process takes approximately 50 hours to complete.

→ A person who cuts, polishes, or engraves gems.

- Lapidary enthusiasts use diamond wheels and buffing plates to make cabochons and shaped jewellery.

→ A gem that has been polished but not faceted.

- The colours and designs in the wood make petrified wood suitable for inlay in furniture, coasters, paperweights, book ends and clock faces. Being heat resistant it is also used for pot stands and bench tops.



WDRC Museum Displays of Petrified Wood

The Fred Newman Collection | Chinchilla Museum

The “Fred Newman Petrified Wood Collection” is a feature of the Chinchilla Museum and was donated in 2004 by Merle Newman in memory of her late husband.

Fred fossicked for petrified wood as a hobby, which later lead him to become a passionate local authority on collecting this type of rock.

He came to Chinchilla in 1955 to work for three months for the Chinchilla Shire Council. However, his working career would extend to 25 years with the Water Utilities section of Council.

This collection also includes some unusual pieces of Jasper, Agate, Rhodonite and Thunder Eggs.

Chinchilla Museum also features a collection of Cabochons created by local historian, the late Kate Emmerson.



Donpon Lapidary Collection | Miles Historical Village Museum

The lapidary collection at the Miles Historical Village Museum is the largest collection of its type in regional Queensland and contains over 4000 items from the local region, Australia and around the world.

Donated by the late Mr Norman Donpon of Meandarra in 1998, the collection is historically significant as it illustrates the geological processes occurring within the sediments of the Great Artesian Basin, in the lands west of the Great Dividing Range. It is also one of Australia's most extensive in terms of petrified plants from the Jurassic period uncovered near Chinchilla, Miles and Wandoan.

Mr Donpon's collection has aesthetic significance as the specimens are of extremely high quality and were cut and polished using machinery he custom designed and built for the purpose. Many pieces of stone however, are in their natural state without lacquer to enhance their appearance.

Being well resourced, this collection's research value attracts lapidary enthusiasts, geological professionals and as a major tourist attraction, the collection is socially significant to the local community and the Miles Historical Village Museum.



Meet a local Fossicker!

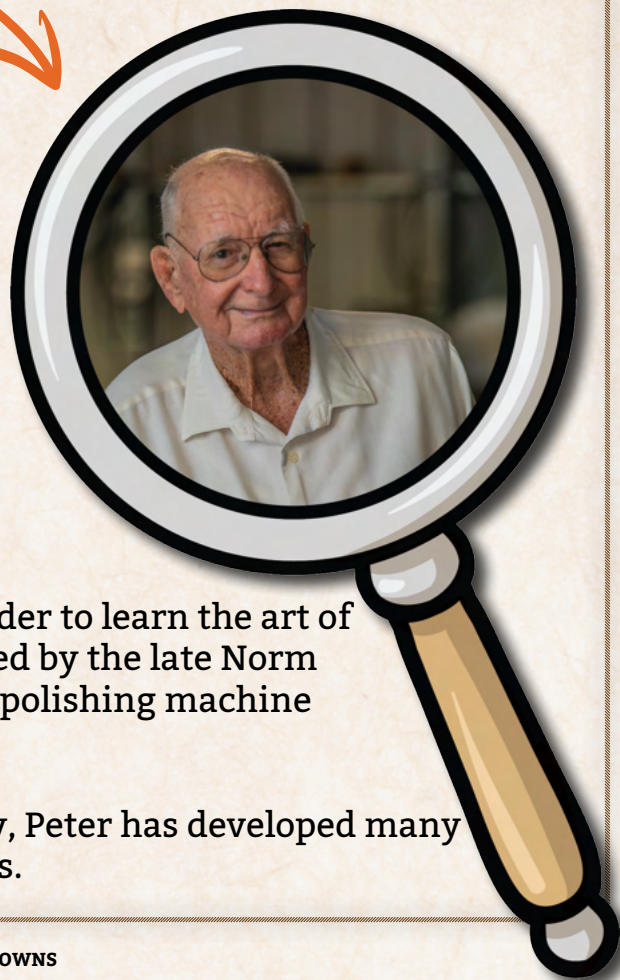
Not only is Peter Jeffery a long-time valuable volunteer at the Chinchilla Visitor Information Centre - he is also the town's local expert on Petrified Wood.

His interest in petrified wood started around 16 years ago after selling his family property near Rywung, just north of Chinchilla.

Peter had retrieved a deposit of petrified wood from the property which provided a good supply of "Chinchilla Red".

He later joined the Chinchilla Lapidary Club in order to learn the art of cutting and polishing stone and was also mentored by the late Norm Donpon who allowed Peter to replicate one of his polishing machine designs.

As a valued member in the fossicking community, Peter has developed many connections throughout the country and overseas.






Peter Jeffery

Fossicking Licences & Permits

To fossick at these sites you will need a current fossicker's Licence and site permit displayed on vehicle dash


- **A Department of Resources Fossicker's Licence** www.qld.gov.au/recreation/activities
- Purchase online from the Department of Resources website, 
- The Chinchilla Visitor Information Centre, **Warrego Highway Chinchilla**
- Fees for licences vary and are valid for the **whole of Queensland only**



Licences can be purchased for the duration of one month, six months or one year for

- An individual
- A family
- **A Site Permit Fee**
 - The cost is \$5 / person / site.
 - There are two registered sites on private property (farms) for fossicking near Chinchilla.
 - A permit must be obtained prior to entry to the fossicking sites.





Gaske's Site “Greenswamp” Greenswamp Road, Chinchilla

Two Hundred metres from the Visitor Information Centre turn left at traffic lights and proceed over railway overhead bridge into Heeney Street. Follow Heeney Street through town centre to Glasson Street. Turn right at this T-intersection into Chinchilla-Tara Road. Follow Chinchilla-Tara Road for 6 kilometres and turn right into Greenswamp Road. The “Greenswamp” fenced site will be on the right hand side, about 3.5km along the road. Park either on the left hand side at the entrance to Nothdurft Road or in front of the fossicking site. Do not enter the “Greenswamp” property through the double farm gates or park in front of these gates.

Bell's Site “Lallalindi” Sturgess-Baking Board Road, Chinchilla

This site is located on the property called “Lallalindi”.

If continuing on from Gaske's site, travel a further 3.4km along Greenswamp Road and turn right into Sturgess-Baking Board Road. (This is an unsealed road).

The site is located amongst the Cypress Pine trees about 500m on the right-hand side.

The following rules apply to both fossicking sites which are fenced areas on private farms.

- Site is walk-in only (no vehicle access).
- Entry to fenced designated fossicking area is through small gate's with Fossicking sign.

BELL'S FOSSICKING SITE

GASKIE'S FOSSICKING SITE

LOOK OUT FOR THESE SIGNS!!

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR:

- ✓ Current fossickers licence displayed on vehicle dash
- ✓ Fossickers site permit displayed on vehicle dash

LICENSING, PERMIT AND ENQUIRIES
CHINCHILLA VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE
07 4660 7291 | WARREGO HWY, CHINCHILLA QLD 4470

ROUTINE LICENCE & PERMIT COMPLIANCE INSPECTIONS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN

- Fossickers permitted strictly within specified fenced area
- Please leave site as found by taking any rubbish with you

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WWW.WESTERNDOWNSQUEENSLAND.COM.AU

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STURGES-BANKING BOARD ROAD

SITE 2
"LALLALINDI"

SITE 1
"GREENSWAMP"

GREENSWAMP ROAD

CHINCHILLA TARA ROAD
To Condamine

CONDAMINE

WARREGO HIGHWAY
To Miles

CHINCHILLA

To Dalby

GORMLEYS RD

RACECOURSE RD

CHINCHILLA RACECOURSE

AERODROME RD

Chinchilla Aerodrome

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

BOTANIC PARKLAND

BIG MELON

MUSEUM

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www.westerndownsqueensland.com.au

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