

“OUT OF THE GLASS CASE”

- Steve Bourne



The opening!

Over two days, Naracoorte Caves hosted the first ever roadshow of the South Australian Museum. The event took place on March 21st and 22nd. Friday the 21st was a special education day, promoted as “Classrooms in the Caves”.

A limit of 500 students was placed on the day with this number being limited by the number of both Naracoorte Caves and Museum staff available. This was quickly booked out in three days after invitations were sent with enquiries relating to a further 600 students received. Before the event had even started it was obvious a two-day education segment could be filled.

Dr Tim Flannery, well-known author and director of the SA Museum opened proceedings with a 15-minute address on science, his travels and believing in your dreams. Due to travel distance and the time required to get to Naracoorte Caves, only 300 were on site to witness this, but with the talk streamed live onto the World Wide Web, many others had the opportunity to watch. After the launch, 18 classes participated in 13 different activities across eight sessions each!

Live web casts continued throughout the day in conjunction with selected activities. This innovative means of spreading the message to the wider community was not a difficult process to achieve and provides unlimited opportunities.

On Friday evening a special sponsors event “Drinks with Batman” was held in the Bat Observation Centre and at the Bat Cave entrance.

The Museum’s Terry Reardon captivated the audience with his humorous anecdotes of bat related activities and Naracoorte Caves Manager Steve Bourne explained the history of the camera system, its method of operation and future plans.

Cinema in the Caves was launched on Friday evening also, with full theatre sound and vision in the unique location of Blanche Cave, albeit projected onto a hastily erected screen (the side wall form a marquee due to the screen being left in Adelaide!). A small, but appreciative crowd thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Saturday arrived and it started all over again! Another first, with eight year 12 students from

Monivae College, Hamilton receiving the lesson of a lifetime from Dr Tim Flannery, Prof Rod Wells, palaeontologist and Dr Phillip Clarke, anthropologist at the SA Museum. Three leaders in the field of early human occupation in Australia, fossils and extinctions answered questions for about one hour. This special session has been recorded with the intention of distributing to schools across Australia. This should be available soon.



The Unveiling!

The day’s activities included curator’s talks, a range of children’s activities, cave tours and hilarious sessions titled “Dancing with Diprotodons”, a performance that is described by the performer Michael Mills as the only “megafauna action song in the world”. His antics enthralled audiences of all ages throughout the day.

The two day event drew to a close on Saturday evening with a function dinner arranged by the local council in the Naracoorte Town Hall. Again the Museum staff entertained with a talk by Dr Flannery and “Survival of the Species” where four speakers argued for the continuation of their particular species.

This inaugural event was made possible through sponsorship of Telstra Countrywide and the support of the SA Museum, their supporters and the support of Naracoorte Lucindale Council. Local support also came from Bourne’s Bird Museum who provided the bird display when the Museum could not and a host of other people.

The event was put together relying on sponsorship that Naracoorte Caves and the SA Museum were able to attract, but was only a success through the very hard work of all staff at Naracoorte Caves who repaired the damage after a most untimely storm on the Wednesday beforehand.

The hard work has paid off, with exposure generated through the Advertiser, ABC radio, local papers and appearing in a new Telstra Countrywide television commercial. It has initiated some new opportunities for Naracoorte Caves and continues to build the site as significant educational resource for schools and universities.

