



The Royal Society of Victoria
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Promotion and Advancement of Science and Technology

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ROYAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA SUPPORTS ACTION TO PROTECT THE BEAUMARIS FOSSIL SITE

The Royal Society of Victoria is an independent, apolitical body which has been promoting science and science education since 1854. Its members have made significant contributions to our knowledge of Victoria's natural environment, particularly in palaeontology, reflecting the abundance of fossil sites in the State.

Unique amongst these sites is a short stretch of the coast at Beaumaris, a bayside suburb of Melbourne, where sedimentary rocks containing fossils of marine megafauna from the Cenozoic era (0-66 million years ago) are exposed. The locality is recognized as the most important of its type in Australia and arguably has international significance.

Beaumaris has produced the only fossil evidence in Australia of several marine animal groups, including whales, seals, sea turtles, and seabirds. By also yielding rare remains of land mammals, the site is pivotal to calibrating the timescale for the evolution of Australia's unique marsupial fauna. Major discoveries continue to be made, showing that the full scientific and educational potential of this fossil site has yet to be realised. In short, without Beaumaris, we would know nothing of the prehistoric past of many of the most iconic and ecologically influential organisms in Australian seas.

The Royal Society has played an important role in promoting knowledge of the Beaumaris fossils for well over a century. Well-known palaeontologists who have visited and collected at the site include Frederick McCoy, Francis Cudmore, F. A. Singleton, G. B. Pritchard, T. S. Hall, Frederick Chapman, Tim Flannery, John Long and George Gaylord Simpson (one of the most influential figures in 20th Century palaeontology and evolutionary biology).

A number of key research papers on the Beaumaris fossils have been published in the Society's journal, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria*. (see list below).

Part of the fossil site has already been built over by the existing facilities of the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron (BMYS). The Society opposes any further development that has the potential to inhibit access to the fossil beds for scientists and the general public alike. As well, the Society supports calls for the establishment of a new reserve that recognizes the scientific significance of the Beaumaris fossil site and protects it for future generations.

[Some key papers on Beaumaris published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria*:
Chapman & Pritchard. 1907. Fossil fish remains from the Tertiaries of Australia. Part II. Vol. 20.
Chapman. 1917. New or little known Victorian fossils in the National Museum. Part VVL.—Some Tertiary cetacean remains. Vol.30.
Singleton. 1941. The Tertiary geology of Australia. Vol.53.
Simpson. 1965. New record of a fossil penguin in Australia. Vol. 79.
Fordyce & Flannery. 1983. Fossil phocid seals from the late Tertiary of Victoria. Vol. 95.]

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