



Carnarvon Gorge

Ancient Australia

Queensland History Week
23 - 27 May 2022



QUEENSLAND
HISTORY WEEK
23-27 MAY 2022

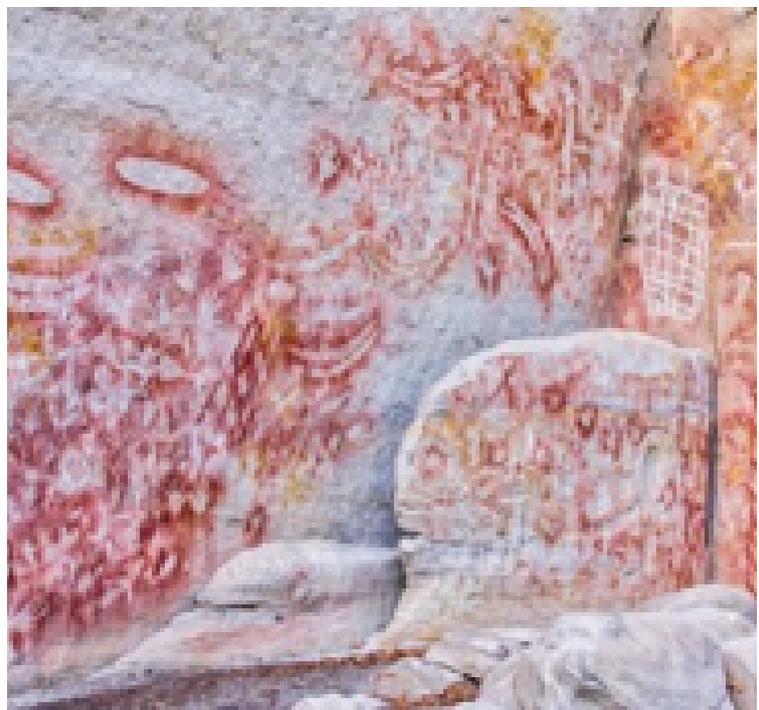
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Reference list:

Australian Nature Guides (2022).
Carnarvon Gorge Human History.
<https://www.carnarvongorge.info/human-history-of-carnarvon-gorge>
Department of Environment and Science
Parks and Forests (2022). Carnarvon
Gorge, Carnarvon National Park.
<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/carnarvon-gorge/about/culture>



Stories of Queensland - Carnarvon Gorge

Both a natural wonder and a significant ancient Australian archaeological site, Carnarvon National Park in Central Queensland is a place of significant cultural value. With its towering white sandstone cliffs, deep gorges and creeks, it has long been a popular tourist attraction. However, it is also an important and sacred site to the Bidjara and Karingbal people.

These archaeological sites contain examples of stencilling techniques which are thought to be the most sophisticated of their kind in the world. Initially, there was debate about whether this site was inhabited permanently, but recent scholarship has refuted this due to defensive concerns and lack of resources. Evidence suggests that First Nations people have been in this area for 3650 years and some of the rock art has been dated back to 19,500 years. There are 2000 examples of rock art in the area, the ochre stencils of tools, weapons, ornaments and ceremonial objects provides an insight into the lives of the Indigenous people. Both the Bidjara and Karingbal people had important spiritual ties during this time. The Dreaming says that the rainbow serpent, Mundagurra, created Carnarvon Gorge as he travelled through the creek system and carved the sandstone. This highlights the importance of this spiritual site.

During the colonial period there was significant interaction between the Europeans and the First Nations people of the area. Europeans came to this area in 1844. In the 1860s, European pastoralists came to the region and established grazing runs. The Carnarvon Gorge area was declared a national park in 1932.

Thinking Activity

Consult the rock art images.

SEE - What do you see?

THINK - What do you think? (What might they mean?)

WONDER - What do you wonder? (What questions do you have?)

Extra for experts

•Read the ABC article <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-08/ancient-rock-art-lost-after-plastic-walkway-explodes-in-bushfire/11848938>

The article quotes an elder as describing the site as "a cathedral, a university, a hospital". How does the site demonstrate the qualities associated with each of these institutions?