



New pterosaurs found in Queensland

A tantalising insight into the diversity and global distribution of flying reptiles

- Today the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum and Melbourne Museum announced the discovery of two new pterosaurs from Outback Queensland.
- This discovery suggests Australian pterosaurs were well adapted to the region as they inhabited the area for millions of years and share links to pterosaurs found in Brazil.

The Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum and Melbourne Museum today announced the discovery of two new anhanguerian pterosaurs from Outback Queensland. The fossilised pterosaur bones were recovered on cattle stations in Boulia and Winton, approximately 355km apart.

The paper describing the new pterosaur fossils, available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03115518.2022.2065028>, was published on Tuesday, 17 May at 10am AEST in *Alcheringa*, an Australasian Journal of Palaeontology.

The partial right femur from the Boulia pterosaur was discovered in 1991 during a field expedition led by Dr Thomas Rich from Melbourne Museum and Dr Patricia Vickers-Rich from Monash University. Over a decade later the partial left femur from the Winton pterosaur was found by Bill Hanley, a participant in dinosaur excavations led by the Queensland Museum and the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum. The remains of these flying reptiles were found hundreds of kilometres apart in geological deposits that differ in age by several million years.

Research into the new pterosaurs was spearheaded by Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum research associate Adele Pentland as part of her PhD in vertebrate palaeontology through Swinburne University. According to Ms Pentland, the two pterosaur leg bones are very similar to one another despite millions of years separating them. “These pterosaurs share commonalities to each other as well as to others found in Brazil,” Ms Pentland said. “At this time they were present on almost every continent and their similarities are a clear indication that they were incredibly successful animals.”

Ms Pentland considers the Winton pterosaur as one of the most unique pterosaurs in Queensland. “Insight into how ancient animals interacted with one another can be difficult to find, however, the presence of two circular depressions on the pterosaur’s femur suggests it may have been bitten by a small crocodile,” she said.

These new fossils add to the limited pterosaur fossils recovered from Australia while providing a tantalising insight into the diversity and global distribution of flying reptiles. Currently four pterosaur species are known from the continent with *Ferrodraco lentoni*, a partial skeleton named by Ms Pentland and colleagues in 2019, being the most complete.