

EWANINGA CONSERVATION RESERVE

Update: 30th May, 2002

Located south of Alice Springs, Ewaninga Conservation Reserve is of significance to the Northern Territory and together, the art and the claypan country provide an example of the Territory's diverse cultural and natural heritage

The claypan acts as a natural bowl, holding water even after light rain and attracting many birds and animals. It is also an archaeological site.



Ewaninga Clay Pan

The art and other archaeological material at Ewaninga are a source of information about the habitation of the Central Desert prior to European occupation.

The Reserve contains prehistoric abraded and pecked engravings that are an outstanding example of central Australian rock art.

The Ewaninga Rock engravings are important because they contribute to our understanding of the history of human occupation of the Northern Territory. They demonstrate a distinctive custom that is no longer practiced and provide an insight into the symbolic life and information system that were fundamental to the successful occupation of the region.



Ewaninga Petroglyphs

The main feature of the area is a set of about 1000 engravings, known as petroglyphs, on rock outcrops near the claypan. The motifs were deeply pecked into the soft red sandstone. When the engravings were new they would have stood out white, but now they have weathered back to the same colour as the surrounding rock. This process takes hundreds, even thousands of years.

The petroglyphs consist of a maze of often complex designs. All depict plan aspects, there are no side views of subjects as found at other sites in Australia.

Attempts at dating petroglyphs have suggested that these kinds of motifs may be as old as 30000 years, although the specific age of the Ewaninga engravings remains unknown. However it is clear that the art derives from a previous phase of occupation of the Central Deserts.

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