Rain and song greet Isisford opening

By Anthea Gieson
news@longreachleader.com.au

THE Isisford Shire Council’s punt on a venturing palaeontologist from the University of Queensland paid off last weekend with the official launch of the Outer Barcoo Interpretation Centre.

The gala opening featured everything from singing students to Commonwealth dignitaries, and attracted over 650 locals and interested passers-by.

The Interpretation Centre’s main drawcard is a fossilised replica of the world’s oldest crocodile, *Istifordia Duncanii*, which was found in the shire by former deputy mayor Ian Duncan, as well as a life-sized model of the snappy critter.

The opening of the state-of-the-art centre was the culmination of more than six years of work by an international team of palaeontologists, headed by Doctor Steve Salisbury from the UQ’s School of Integrative Biology.

Dr Salisbury was back in Isisford over the weekend, addressing the crowd at the opening.

“I would like to thank the Shire Council for the commitment shown to me and this project,” he said to the crowd. They have been exceedingly supportive and, incredibly, they trusted me when I told them that what they had discovered was going to have a great impact”

*Istifordia Duncanii* display, but also showcases local fauna and flora, works by local artists, nature displays and old Isisford relics.

A 60-seat theatrette is also incorporated into the building to screen local history presentations, while a modern cafe will service the hungry bellies of locals and tourists.

The main street of Isisford was cordoned off for the opening with guests and dignitaries including Queensland Governor Quentin Bryce, Member for Gregory Vaughan Johnson, Dr Salisbury and Isisford Mayor Joe Owens.

After songs by local school children and formal speeches, the Outer Barcoo Interpretation Centre was officially declared open.

Hundreds of people passed through the new doors on Friday evening, staying on for a free barbecue and drinks in the grounds of the shire council.

The evening was made all the more eventful with an unusual but steady downpour of rain falling across the region early on Saturday morning.
MAN OF THE HOUR: The man who found the original fossilised skeleton of *Isisfordia* Duncan, former deputy mayor Ian Duncan, was pleased to see the centre come to fruition and to welcome in through its doors hundreds of visitors.

MEET AND GREET (above): The Outer Barcoo Interpretation Centre opening was also a chance for many locals, including Ruby Kent of Isisford, to meet and chat with the Governor of Queensland Quentin Bryce.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE (far left): Andi-Claire Pegler accompanied her fellow Yaraka State School classmates on the piano during the opening of the Outer Barcoo Interpretation Centre opening last Friday evening.

OFFICIALLY OPENED (left): The Governor of Queensland Quentin Bryce and master of ceremonies Peter Forrest lowered the ropes on the Outer Barcoo Interpretation Centre banner.

CHILDREN IN SONG (below left): Under the watchful eye of Isisford State School principal Sherelle Shields, students performed a number of songs for the opening of the Interpretation Centre.

Yaraka State School students (below) Georgia Glasson, Jack Joseland, Bella Joseland and Callum Fisher and Longreach School of Distance Education student Hannah Albrand took to the stage for a rendition of Waltzing Matilda.