Quirky fact:
Sedimentary rocks are the second major rock group. They are cool rocks, meaning they form at the earth’s surface, mostly under water. They usually consist of layers or strata.

Background Information
Often known as the ‘Little Grand Canyon’, Porcupine Gorge National Park lies within the Savannah plains and extends for more than 25 kms along Porcupine Creek surrounded by open woodland and grassland. The creek cuts a meandering path through a deep canyon that reveals sedimentary rock strata spanning hundreds of millions of years. A thin, hard, basalt cap, the product of geologically recent lava flows, has protected much of the older underlying rock, but where this capping has been worn away, the scouring action of waterborne particles has excavated a deep chasm into the softer sandstone. The culprit, Porcupine Creek, reduces to a string of clear pools in winter and becomes a torrential cascade during the wet season (summer).

In the wider section of the gorge, the eroding action of the creek has also created the Pyramid, a monolith of multicoloured sandstone rising from the floor of the gorge. Wind and water have coloured and sculpted the sandstone to form fluted channels, boulders, potholes and shallow caves. Permanent deep pools, each with its resident turtles, are lined with casuarinas (sheoaks) and melaleucas (paperbarks), while various eucalypts and acacias including the rare pink gidgee precariously root in the cliffs above.

The gorge and surrounding area is rich with cultural history. Three traditional Aboriginal groups, the Gutjal, Jirandali and Mitjumba continue their traditional connections to Country within the park. The Tattoos, just a few kilometres up the road, is the site of Aboriginal and European carvings as well as spectacular rock formations.

The gorge is home to currawongs, parrots and the occasional soaring bird of prey. Closer observation reveals a wide variety of birds including the black duck, red-winged parrot, black bittern and numerous honeyeaters. The gorge becomes a focal point for many animals in the dry season while others, such as the wallaroo, rock wallaby and rufus bettong, are permanent residents.

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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Porcupine Gorge National Park
Inquiry Questions

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<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
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<td>How do plants and animals that live at Porcupine Gorge cope with fire and floods?</td>
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<td>7/8</td>
<td>What process formed the gorge?</td>
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<td>What do different people groups value about these landscapes?</td>
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<td>Science</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>What are the links between this environment and the feature of things that live here?</td>
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<td>7/8</td>
<td>How does scientific understanding help people to manage the Diamantina’s environment and resources?</td>
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Points of Interest

- **Porcupine Gorge, via Hughenden**
  Towering cliffs of coloured sandstone, pockets of vine forest and deep permanent waterholes along Porcupine Creek contrast strikingly with the Savannah plains surrounding Porcupine Gorge.
  
  Kennedy Developmental Road (73 kms north of Hughenden) via Hughenden QLD 4821
  
  **Cost:** Entry to the park is free, however fees apply for camping
  
  **Hours:** Open 24 hours per day
  
  **Contact:** Information, access and maps available at www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/find_a_park_or_forest/

- **White Mountains National Park, via Hughenden**

- **Moorrinya National Park, via Hughenden**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing**

- **Tourism and Events Queensland**

- **Flinders Shire Council**
  www.flinders.qld.gov.au

REFERENCES

- Flinders Discovery Centre – Porcupine Gorge National Park Information Brochure
  www.geology.about.com/cs/basicsroxmin/a/aa011804b.htm

- Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Flinders Discovery Centre
  37 Gray Street, Hughenden QLD 4821
  Phone: (07) 4741 2970
  Email: info@flinders.qld.gov.au
  www.flinders.qld.gov.au