Quirky fact:
The skull of a Kronosaurus can be up to 2.4 metres long!

Background Information
The *Kronosaurus Queenslanticus* was a giant pliosaur – one of the largest marine reptiles ever known that lived in the vast inland sea that covered western Queensland between 110 and 100 million years ago.

A ferocious hunter, the Kronosaurus is named after Kronos, the Greek god of time, who was so terrible that he ate his children. Kronosaurus is known from many specimens. It was between eight and 13 metres long, and had teeth up to 25 centimetres long – the size of bananas. It roamed open oceans and the inland sea hunting ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs, turtles and large fish, and was the most fierce and largest sea creature of its time. Kronosaurus has a skull up to 2.4 metres long. Kronosaurus swam through the water using its large flippers. It was not a particularly fast swimmer due to the size of its tail and body and it also had to surface regularly as it was an air-breathing marine reptile.

To date, research has been unable to identify how the Kronosaurus reproduced. Most likely, they would have borne live young at sea, because the incredible size of the animal would have made it difficult to lay eggs on the shore. The ichthyosaur, another type of marine reptile alive at the time, had live births instead of laying eggs, so it is possible that Kronosaurus also made this adaptation to life in the ocean. Pliosaurs have no close relatives alive today.

The first *Kronosaurus Queenslanticus* was discovered in 1889 by A. Crombie and was noted in 1924. However, the best specimen to date was discovered at Army Down Station, north of Richmond, in the 1930s and the area is also the location of the largest pliosaur fossil finds.

**Richmond Pliosaur**
In 1990, whilst mustering cattle on their property, Marathon Station, near Richmond in north-western Queensland, graziers Rob and Ian levers discovered a whole and intact skeleton. This find was identified by the Queensland Museum as being a 100 million year old marine reptile, and later named the Richmond Pliosaur.

The skeleton [not a dinosaur] is one of the best, most complete skeletons of its type in the world. The animal is as yet un-named, but scientists are currently working to fully understand and describe it. It belongs to the pliosaurid group, and was likely a member of the polycotylid family, a specialised pliosaurid from the Early Cretaceous Period. At nearly 5m long, it had a relatively short neck, powerful set of flippers and a tail. It lived in the inland sea in Queensland 100 million years ago.
Inquiry Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>How do scientists learn about the way environments have changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>How do scientists collect and analyse evidence including fossils and minerals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Why does this landscape contain fossils?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Points of Interest

- **Kronosaurus Korner**
  See displays of local fossils from the Cretaceous Inland Sea that covered a large section of Queensland 120 million years ago.
  91–93 Goldring Street, Richmond QLD 4822
  Cost: Entry fee applies. Self-paced and self-guided tours are available
  Hours: Open daily from 8.30am to 4.45pm
  Phone: (07) 4741 3429
  Email: enquiries@kronosauruskorner.com.au
  Website: www.kronosauruskorner.com.au

- **Flinders Discovery Centre, Hughenden**
  www.flinders.qld.gov.au

- **Riversleigh Fossil Fields, Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park**

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- **Australian Museum**
  Research Library enquiries:
  Phone: (02) 9320 6000
  Scientific enquiries:
  Phone: (02) 9320 6202
  www.losingdoms.com/facts/index.cfm#:creaceous

- **Queensland Museum**
  Phone: (07) 3840 7555
  Email: enquirycentre@qm.qld.gov.au

- **Earth Science Australia**
  www.earthsci.org/index.html

- **ABC – The Age of Reptiles**
  www.abc.net.au/science/ozfossil/
  ageofreptiles/eromanga/kronosaurus.htm

**REFERENCES**

- **Queensland Museum**
  www.qm.qld.gov.au

- **Australian Museum**
  www.losingdoms.com/facts/index.cfm#:creaceous

- **Richmond Shire Council**
  www.richmond.qld.gov.au

- **ABC – The Age of Reptiles**
  www.abc.net.au/science/ozfossil/
  ageofreptiles/eromanga/kronosaurus.htm

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

- **Kronosaurus Korner & Visitor Information Centre**
  91–93 Goldring Street, Richmond QLD 4822
  Phone: (07) 4741 3429 or 1300 KRONOK (1300 576 665)
  Email: enquiries@kronosauruskorner.com.au
  www.kronosauruskorner.com.au

- **Richmond Shire Council**
  50 Goldring Street, Richmond QLD 4822
  Phone: (07) 4741 3277
  Email: enquiries@richmond.qld.gov.au
  www.richmond.qld.gov.au

Outback Queensland Education Handbook | Australian Curriculum Factsheets