



# THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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COLLEGE OF MINES

DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY

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25 September 1969

Dr. G.A. Thomas,  
Secretary,  
Victorian Division of the Geological  
Society of Australia  
c/o Geology Department,  
Melbourne University,  
PARKVILLE. VIC. 3053

Dear Dr. Thomas:

I have heard that development in the Beaumaris area might eventually lead to covering or otherwise rendering inaccessible exposures of fossiliferous Tertiary rocks near and along the shore there. As a non-Australian, of course I would not venture to judge Australians' management of their own resources. Yet it occurs to me that the very fact that I am far removed from the scene and yet concerned with it may give my opinion some interest there.

The Beaumaris exposures are very widely known, indeed throughout the world, among geologists and paleontologists. They are a standard for one of the generally accepted and used formal stages of Australian geological history. Their fossil fauna, not yet completely collected and studied, is also a standard for a phase of geochronology. Just one example of their value, unique in many ways, is the fact that the Beaumaris exposures form one of the very few known sites for fossil penguins in Australia, and the richest yet found.

Still more important is the fact that Beaumaris is at present the only site in Australia, and one of the relatively few anywhere in the world, where terrestrial fossil mammals occur in association with abundant marine invertebrates. Because of the extraordinary nature of Australian mammals, fossil and recent, dating or intercontinental correlation of nonmarine Tertiary rocks there is exceptionally difficult. The unique association at Beaumaris provides the best correlation

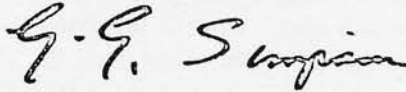
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yet known. Further discovery there is extremely important to all geologists, and of course that depends on continued accessibility of the exposures.

The scientific value of that area at Beaumaris is very great. I am sure that this is appreciated by many Australians and am confident that it will be taken into account in planning for the future there.

Sincerely,



George Gaylord Simpson,

Alexander Agassiz Professor of Vertebrate  
Paleontology, Harvard University, and  
Professor of Geology, University of Arizona

GGG/lr