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**Funds drought
threatens
dinosaur dig**

The future of Inverloch's dinosaur dig is being jeopardised by a funding drought.

By Noel Maud

Workers at the site last week said they had about five years' work ahead of them in the rock platform between Eagles Nest and Flat Rocks.

With new finds being made every day, it should be only a matter of time before breakthrough discoveries are made which may provide important insights into our planet's early history.

But there is no guarantee of funding beyond this year, according to the dig leader, Monash University earth sciences researcher, Lesley Kool.

Ms Kool said on Friday that all the follow-up preparation work done on the fossils was funded by the Monash Science Centre.

The annual six week dig at Inverloch cost only \$6,000, mainly for food and accommodation, as the work is all done voluntarily.

This year's dig is being funded by National Geographic.

Ms Kool said they had hoped to attract a corporate sponsor, who would benefit by being associated with news releases and the possibility of "achieving immortality" by having their name attached to any important discovery.

But so far not even the major oil companies, whose fossil fuels power our transport system, had expressed an interest in supporting the dinosaur hunt.

One of the goals of the Inverloch search is to provide sufficient information to enable a monograph on Victoria's dinosaurs to be prepared by the year 2000.

Meanwhile, the finds from this year's dig are coming thick and fast from the ancient river bed between Eagles Nest and Flat Rocks.

Hopes are high of a discovery which will shed new light on theories about the kinds of dinosaurs that inhabited the land when it was part of Gondwana - the huge southern land mass that included India, Australia, Antarctica and parts of Africa and South America.



Is there a dinosaur hiding beneath the rock?

Inverloch's dinosaur hunters are back at work, searching for more clues about the type of creatures that roamed the land 120 million years ago.

Pictured are Californian, Allan Bermann who has travelled 25,000 miles to join the search, Corrie Williams, a PhD student from Monash university, Nick Van Klaveren, a geologist who has been searching for dinosaurs for eight years and, with the rock cutting saw, Mike Cleeland from Phillip Island, who has been doing research work on the local dinosaur fossils for some time.

Ms Kool said they hoped to prove, or disprove, a theory that dinosaurs living at this time, when the continent was close to the South Pole, would have had large eye cavities to cope with the months of near darkness.

Among discoveries in this year's dig was a tiny Theropod tooth, much smaller than any of the other 11 teeth already excavated.

Ms Kool said this tooth appeared to be from a juvenile and was definitely too small to have come from the same jaw as the other teeth.

The significance of these finds is clarified by a comparison with the other famous southern coastline dig at Dinosaur Cove, where only one Theropod tooth was found in 10 years of excavation.

"The fact that we have found so many teeth so quickly at Inverloch makes us optimistic we'll find part of a skeleton," Ms Kool said.