



KFA GREENLIGHTS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

This month KFA undertakes the first Kimberley-based community project targeted at recording rock art. The Aboriginal training & education program **Developing skills in cataloguing and interpreting Aboriginal rock art, flora and fauna** will train students to record and catalogue the rock art, flora and fauna using scientific methodology and traditional knowledge.

Partnering KFA is Kimberley TAFE, Wildlife Unlimited Ltd and the Kalumburu and Mundjadan Communities in the North Kimberley. Conservation Ark (Royal Zoological Society of SA) has given its considerable expertise.

Partnerships that involve local Aboriginal people in field research and training are a fundamental part of the Kimberley Foundation Australia's mission.

"This project is only possible after years of working with the local Aboriginal people and laying the foundations for future work," says KFA Chairman, Maria Myers.

"There is a demand for Aboriginal local people skilled in both

traditional and scientific knowledge to lead tourism in the area. The community sees that and they want to learn. We are keen to support the training especially if it can lead to jobs," she said.

The training will draw on the cultural and environmental knowledge of the local communities by recording it and, when appropriate, disseminating it. At the same time, practical skills firmly grounded in science, rock art interpretation and biodiversity observation will be taught.

Students who complete the program will receive the Certificate 1 in Tourism (Australian Indigenous Culture).

Support KFA

KFA needs to raise \$1million to support its **Aboriginal training & education program and Dating Rock Art project**. See the enclosed donation form if you would like to support our projects. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Image (Top):
KFA Chairman Maria Myers points out Gwion Gwion (Bradshaw) images

Image (Below):
KFA scientists at the Mitchell Plateau dig (see *Change & Continuity* project)

A precious cultural heritage

Recent stories in the media have raised awareness of ancient Aboriginal rock art and the risks to rock art sites from tourism, mining, the weather and numerous other 21st century hazards. A national archive of all rock art sites has been proposed.

In July KFA will host a gathering of approx. 20 amateurs and academics to ascertain how much of the Kimberley has been searched and how thoroughly; to compare recording methodologies and terminology with a view to standardising both, and to start a discussion about the desirability (pros and cons) of a central data base for the Kimberley. The purpose of this work and the Aboriginal training and education program is to document and record the sites appropriately, in consultation with the local communities.

Working alongside local communities, KFA's goal is to map and record the rock art sites so that future planning for the Kimberley cannot proceed without knowledge of sites of cultural significance.

To quote WA Premier Colin Barnett: "The rock art of the Kimberley needs to be understood, studied, catalogued and preserved."

In September the University of Western Australia's Centre for Rock Art Studies, Griffith University and the Australian National University will meet to discuss the national archive initiative.



OUR RESEARCH:

current
first
stage
projects

Images:
Change & Continuity:
Chronology,
archaeology and art in
the North Kimberley
project dig

KFA DIRECTORS

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Geomicrobiology of rock art project led by Dr John Moreau (School of Earth Sciences, (University of Melbourne).

Dr Moreau is undertaking a preliminary investigation into the biofilms occurring on rock art pigmentation and the associated very fine-grained mineral precipitates generated by bacterial action.

Messages in Paint project – An Archaeometric Analysis of Rock Art Pigments from the North Western Kimberley led by Jillian Huntley (University of New England).

In Australia the use of ochre pigments has been a fundamental practice within Indigenous societies. The archaeological analysis of pigments provides tangible evidence of peoples' connection to place, their country, and to each other through trade, exchange and social networks. This project, among the first in the world to systematically use Portable X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy (PXRF) on remote rock art sites, will examine processed pigments, unprocessed ochres recovered from excavated deposits and other Kimberley ochre samples housed in museum or private collections.

Palaeoecology project – Developing palaeoecological science in the Kimberley led by Dr Simon Haberle (Australian National University), Dr Cassandra Rowe (Monash Uni), and Dr Ulrike Proske (ANU).

Despite the ecological and cultural significance of the Kimberley little is known about the long-term history and variability of fire, vegetation and climate across the region. Key resources required to conduct palaeoecological research have been developed in the form of an online Kimberley Pollen Atlas.

The discovery of pollen-bearing sediment deposits that are at least 24,000 years old in the Mitchell



Plateau region will help to develop a greater understanding of the role of fire-climate-people in vegetation dynamics and the maintenance of biodiversity over long time scales. Further exploratory work on the palaeoecology of wetlands is being conducted in the Broome and Kununurra-Wyndham region and a detailed analysis of pollen and charcoal in archaeological deposits from the Kimberley region is underway.

Paleolinguistic project – Linguistic prehistory of the Kimberley region led by Patrick McConville (Australian National University).

The plan is to research the prehistory of the languages of the Kimberley and provide a database of the relevant findings. This will include linguo-genetic relationships between the Indigenous languages of the Kimberley and elsewhere in Australia, evidence of language contacts and borrowings in the past and partial reconstructions of the

vocabularies of the proto-languages of the Kimberley. Hypotheses about prehistoric human ecologies and social organisation will be presented.

Palynology project – Unlocking the archives of the Kimberley's past: A pilot study of sediment cores from the north west Kimberley led by Associate Professor Hamish McGowan (Climate Research Group, University of Queensland) and Dr Andrew Hammond (University of Central Queensland, Mackay).

The plan is to determine the potential for stratigraphic sequencing from selecting cores at chosen sites and from those cores to produce pollen concentrates for carbon dating and investigate palaeoclimates.

OUR RESEARCH:

current
second
stage
projects

Change & Continuity: Chronology, archaeology and art in the North Kimberley, North West Australia

led by Prof. Mike Morwood, Professor of Archaeology (University of Wollongong) and Dr June Ross, a rock art archaeologist (University of New England).

This multi-disciplinary study documents and dates major turning points in the human occupation of the North Kimberley. The resulting database will be an invaluable research, conservation and management tool in an area with increasing tourist use, and will provide a means for predicting site distributions elsewhere in the region to minimise development impacts. In addition, it will enable three PhD candidates to complete their research degrees, and will help to create a pool of able young researchers experienced in and focused on the Kimberley. It will go some way towards establishing a critical mass of Kimberley scholars and a measure of generational succession.

The late quaternary climate record of the Kimberley region of North West Australia

led by Prof. Andy Gleadow (University of Melbourne) and Dr Karl-Heinz Wyrwoll (University of Western Australia).

Through its palaeo-climatological work, KFA anticipates findings that will bear on contemporary climate change and its consequences, as well as developing a more detailed historical record. It believes that this research will illuminate how adverse shifts in the Kimberley environment, particularly those linked to climatic variations, triggered diverse cultural and migratory responses. In 2010-11 detailed analyses have been undertaken on a second speleotherm, which will provide a continuous climatic record since the last glacial maximum about 20,000 years ago.

Life Ways of the First Australians – Ancient cave dwellings & rock art, Oscar Napier Ranges,

led by Prof Sue O'Connor, professor of archaeology (Australian National University)

and Prof. Jane Balme, associate professor of archaeology (University of Western Australia).

This project continues Prof. O'Connor's initial research at Carpenter Gap which revealed evidence of human occupancy dating back more than 40,000 years. It should determine whether there is other organic material for dating in the caves and rock shelters, and whether there is potential for further excavation. If, as expected, there is an abundance of well-preserved, ancient organic matter [e.g. ropes, baskets, and other artefact remnants] and further excavation is physically feasible, Professors O'Connor and Balme hope to establish habitation dates that may push the time horizons back beyond those currently accepted. Extensive consultation with Indigenous representatives is integral to the success of this project. The project is intended to enable four PhD students to complete their research degrees.

OUR VISION

KFA's vision is to promote scientific research into the rock art of the Kimberley and, in conjunction with the indigenous people of the region, ensure it is preserved and recognised for its national and international significance.



Your support

Your support allows us to fund our research program in which leading scientists and academics across Australia are working towards ensuring that the rock art of the Kimberley is recognised and promoted for its world-wide significance and is protected and preserved accordingly. All amounts of \$2 and over are tax deductible.



KFA acknowledges the support of The Ian Potter Foundation



KFA's Official Airline

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Why Dating the Rock Art is so important

Huge risks and uncertainties plague the numerous dating techniques applied to rock art. It is an extraordinarily complex undertaking requiring sophisticated systems and procedures sympathetic to the environment and Aboriginal cultural protocols. The remote sites add to the difficulty. A long term view, a need for effective Indigenous participation and multiple techniques and validation studies are essential for the success of any dating project.

This may help to explain the paucity of reliable recorded dates. But exciting opportunities exist for establishing minimum and maximum age of the rock art in spite of the hazards.

KFA has nominated dating the rock art a priority and recently sponsored a dating workshop (April 2011) at Melbourne University to progress the dialogue on the limitations and opportunities of various dating techniques. The workshop was attended by leading experts in the field. In spite of the challenging and demanding research problems, the Foundation is buoyed by the enthusiasm recently shown by leading scientists for the project.

"Applying dating techniques to rock art

is never going to be a routine thing" says Andy Gleadow, Head of the School of Earth Sciences at University of Melbourne, and one of KFA's science advisory councillors. "The need to understand the nature and characterisation of the rock art is essential. An integrated approach between archaeologists, geochronologists and any characterisation studies are equally important," he says.

KFA will commence **Dating the Rock Art** project with a 'chronology of the region'. The aim is to focus the best expertise, equipment and modern technologies on the search for answers, and to investigate the full range of possible sample materials.

Mr. Laurie Waina OAM; JP

Former Kimberley Foundation Australia Director



It is with sadness the Kimberley Foundation learned of the recent death of one of its former Directors, Laurie Waina, who died at his home in Kalumburu on 25th January 2011.

Born to Jack and Rufina Waina at the original mission site at Pago in February 1932 Laurie was the first-born son. He had two older sisters, Hilda and Mary-Anne and a younger brother Francis.

Laurie and his siblings grew up in the Kalumburu Mission and attended

the school established by the Benedictine monks.

Laurie married Florentina Chamba and together they had 5 children, Kevin, Gertrude, Dominic, Matthew and Bruno.

It was during his children's early schooling that Laurie decided he wanted to help his people. He founded the Kalumburu Aboriginal Corporation and became its driving force and first Chairman.

To further the education of his children Laurie moved his family to Derby. He started work for the Aboriginal Legal Service, became involved in many different Aboriginal organisations and corporations and sat on numerous councils and committees. He was a Justice of the Peace and a valued contributor to justice and the legal system in the Kimberley.

Laurie was rewarded for his outstanding services in Aboriginal advancement with an Order of Australia Medal bestowed by the

then Governor General, Bill Hayden on a special visit to Kalumburu.

Laurie was a Director of the Kimberley Foundation Australia from 3/6/2005 to 1/12/2007. He is remembered fondly for his wise counsel on aboriginal traditions and culture.

Laurie is survived by his 5 children, 13 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren. He is the last great Kwini man and will be sadly missed by his family, the Kalumburu Community and by the many people in the wider world whose lives were touched by his knowledge, his spirit and his friendship.

Laurie was buried in the country he loved on 13th May 2011.

For more information on the Kimberley Foundation Australia:

Please write to us
admin@kimberleyfoundation.org.au
or visit the website
www.kimberleyfoundation.org.au

WE WOULD LIKE TO INVOLVE YOU

If you have never seen the remarkable Kimberley rock art we would like to show it to you.*

Call us on (03) 9653 3780 to discuss your involvement.

*Applies to donations over \$20,000.