



**KIMBERLEY
FOUNDATION
AUSTRALIA**

Researching, preserving and promoting Kimberley rock art.

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NEW CHAIR TO ADVANCE SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN ROCK ART

A new Chair in Archaeological Science will be created at the University of Melbourne thanks to donations from the Kimberley Foundation Australia, Allan Myers AC QC and the Minderoo Foundation through KFA Patrons Andrew and Nicola Forrest. It will be announced at an event in Melbourne on 26 October to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Kimberley Foundation Australia.

The need for the Chair originated from the work the Kimberley Foundation and scientists at Melbourne University are doing with the Aboriginal communities.

Prof Andrew Gleadow, KFA Director and Chairman of the Foundation's Science Advisory Council says "the new Chair will drive applied science in rock art research and complement the humanities-based archaeology program offered at the University of Western Australia and already supported by the KFA."

Nicola Forrest CEO Minderoo Foundation says "our aim is to strengthen the opportunities for academic research between the east and west coast and drive engagement and collaboration between the University of WA where KFA has already established a Chair in Rock Art, and The University of Melbourne. The opportunity for Minderoo to contribute to the Chair is an exciting way to effect this goal."

The Kimberley Foundation Australia (KFA) is at the forefront of scientific research with a commitment to supporting Kimberley rock art research. Australia has one of the greatest bodies of figurative art on the planet. Most rock art sites in the Kimberley and other parts of northern Australia have never been studied scientifically and the scale of the effort needed to address this is vast and increasingly urgent. Establishing the Chair has been a cherished goal of the Foundation.

KFA is already sponsoring a large number of researchers who are collaborating with traditional owners to date the rock art, but there are challenges to this work that only cutting edge science can solve.

"This Chair will help establish the importance of Australia's archaeological record in the global narrative of human origins and migrations and build momentum towards bringing the deep history of Australia's indigenous past to life," says Prof Gleadow. It's an Aboriginal story and the Chair will assist Aboriginal people in the Kimberley get to the science behind their story.

The University's Vice-Chancellor Professor Davis says "the Chair will transform this area of research and teaching. It will provide research leadership in the scientific methods of analysis and interpretation to problems related to archaeology, prehistory and human origins. It will also help develop and train a new generation of early career researchers and post graduate students in the field of archaeological science, with a focus on rock art dating and conservation. And it will further put Australian scientists onto the world stage," Professor Davis concluded.

The Chair, to be known as the **Kimberley Foundation Minderoo Chair in Archaeological Science** will sit within the School of Earth Sciences in the Faculty of Science.



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KFA CEO Cas Bennetto thanked the donors for their commitment and generosity which has enabled the creation of the Chair. “They have backed KFA’s vision. This Chair cements the leadership role Australia has taken in rock art research – in large part thank to the Kimberley Foundation.

The endowment is composed of A\$3.5 million from the donors and A\$1.5 million from the University.

The announcement of the Chair caps off an exciting year for the Kimberley Foundation. Last month the University of Melbourne was awarded a grant of A\$880,000 from the Australian Research Council (ARC) enabling the Earth Sciences team to continue the rock art dating research initiated and sponsored by the Kimberley Foundation Australia. It is the second time the KFA’s *Rock Art Dating project*, developed under the direction of Professor Andrew Gleadow, Emeritus Professor of Geology at the University of Melbourne and Chairman of KFA’s Science Advisory Council, has received ARC backing.

Further, the Ian Potter Foundation awarded KFA a *Kimberley Foundation Australia Fellowship in Rock Art Dating* last month. The KFA Fellowship will go to Dr Helen Green, a Research Fellow at the School of Earth Sciences, The University of Melbourne to continue her innovative research in uranium series dating.

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