



KIMBERLEY  
FOUNDATION  
AUSTRALIA

Researching, preserving and promoting Kimberley rock art.

# ART+ENVIRONMENT IN THE KIMBERLEY OVER 60,000 YEARS

## WHAT ARE THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ROCK ART, CLIMATE VARIABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE?

What do we know about past climates in the Kimberley?

How did people adapt to changing environmental conditions?

What was the impact of the climate on their lives? And how does it relate to what we see in the rock art?

Rock art research and research of past climates is central to answering some of the big questions about human migration.

### *Unlocking the environmental archives of the Kimberley*

KFA is supporting a program of research to unlock the past 60,000 years of the Kimberley's environmental history.

We need the environmental record to understand how the past climate relates to the rock art and to the earliest inhabitants. It will determine how the climate has changed and how these changes have impacted the landscape.

To tell Australia's story we need to know how the Aborigines lived back then. How did they survive the last glacial maximum 18,000-22,000 years ago?

Two major projects are already helping us tell this story: the ***Dating project*** which uses an innovative combination of four scientific dating methods and knowledge of complex processes on sandstone surfaces to establish a well-dated sequence for Kimberley rock art; and ***Kimberley Visions***, a major archaeological survey mapping the rock art and occupational history of the northern Kimberley.

### **Bringing the Science to life**

Australia's 1st paleo-environment e-atlas will be a key outcome. Users will be able to point their cursor on a Google Earth map of the Kimberley and learn about the temperature, the precipitation and monsoon activity at any point in time up to 60,000 years ago.

Using palaeoclimate reconstructions scientists will predict future climate and environmental change in the Kimberley. This new climate history project on the study of fossilized spores and pollen as well as flora and fauna found in and on the rock art will help to paint a full picture of Australia's environmental history.

**The story is unfolding and is a pathway for non-Aboriginal Australians to understand and admire the richness of ancient Aboriginal culture.**

KFA acknowledges that the rock art and associated stories form part of the cultural traditions of Kimberley Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities.

All research is conducted in collaboration with Aboriginal organisations. KFA-funded researchers comply with legal and ethical codes under Collaborative Research Agreements with the Aboriginal Prescribed Body Corporates on whose land research is being conducted.

KFA's lead Indigenous research partner is the Balangarra Aboriginal Corporation. Traditional Owners participate in the research. KFA recognises the importance of traditional knowledge and supports the presentation of it alongside the scientific. The project is a collaboration between University of Queensland, the Kimberley Foundation Australia, other partners and universities, with support from Queensland Museum.



**WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT  
DONATE TODAY: [kimberleyfoundation.org.au](http://kimberleyfoundation.org.au)**

Your support is an investment in Australia's cultural heritage as we bring the rock art to world-wide attention and ensure it is protected accordingly.



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The panels on the right depict vastly different rock art styles and techniques and range over a period of at least 20,000 years.

Why do these significant variations in technique and style exist on the rock art?

Is it due to the climate variability and environmental change over thousands of years?

KFA's mission is to make public the research findings and share this story. It is Australia's story.

EARLY - IRREGULAR INFILL ANIMAL



INTERMEDIATE - GWION



RECENT - WANJINA



The rock art represented here was made by Aboriginal people of the north and central Kimberley region and is not reproduced for commercial purposes. Images courtesy of the Grahame Walsh archive. Copyright owner reserves all rights.



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