



KIMBERLEY
FOUNDATION
AUSTRALIA

Newsletter

December 2010

KFA PARTNERS UWA CENTRE FOR ROCK ART RESEARCH – WA PREMIER COMMITS FINANCIAL SUPPORT



A partnership between the UWA Centre for Rock Art Studies (CRAS) and the Kimberley Foundation was launched by the Premier of Western Australia, Hon Colin Barnett on 24 November in Perth. The WA Government used the occasion to announce its support of \$300k towards Kimberley rock art research.

KFA and UWA are committed to advancing the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge about Kimberley rock art.

The Foundation's aim is to establish a dedicated Chair in Kimberley Rock Art Research, within CRAS, in perpetuity.

The two organisations will work towards collaborative programs of research in dating and chemical characterisation of rock art; documenting and interpreting the spatial, stylistic and representational variations in the rock art; archaeological excavations and associated chronology; studies of palaeoclimatology, palaeoecology, palaeofauna, and palaeolinguistics and ethnology.

"The rock art of the Kimberley needs to be understood, studied, catalogued and pre-served, says WA Premier Colin Barnett."

Image (Top):
L to R: UWA
Vice-Chancellor Alan
Robson, KFA Chairman
Maria Myers and
WA Premier Hon Colin
Barnett at the launch
of the partnership
between the UWA
Centre for Rock Art
Research and KFA.
Photo by Ron D'Raine.

Image (Right):
Assoc. Prof Jane
Balme relaxing in
north Australia.

Plea for WA to get behind Kimberley rock art

KFA hosted a cocktail party in Perth to celebrate the launch of the new partnership. John Poynton Executive Chairman Azure Capital addressed guests emphasising the importance of understanding the significance of the rock art so that preserving and supporting it was the natural next step.

UWA Vice-Chancellor Alan Robson and KFA Chairman Maria Myers encouraged industry and individuals to follow the example set by the government pleading for significantly greater Western Australian support of Kimberley rock art research.

Guests included Michael Chaney, Chairman NAB, Wal King, CEO Leighton Holdings, Fortescue's Andrew Forrest and wife Nicola, author Victoria Laurie and Hon Tom Stephens, Member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara.

profile

JANE BALME – Acting director Centre Rock Art Research Studies (CRAS), UWA

Acting CRAS director, and KFA Science Advisory Council member, Assoc. Professor Jane Balme, has been working in Australian archaeology for over 30 years. Jane's particular interest is in the subsistence and social organisation associated with the early occupation of an environmentally diverse continent.

Jane says few landscapes offered as much tangible evidence of human history as the Pilbara and Kimberley regions.

"Researchers and the wider community have an extraordinary opportunity to learn more about the rich human histories associated with rock art."

Assoc. Professor Balme is also co-chief investigator with Prof. Sue O'Connor (ANU), of the *Life ways of the first Australians - Ancient cave dwellings & rock art, Oscar Napier Ranges* project. KFA funded this project in its first stage and in July this year it was awarded an Australian Research Council (ARC) grant. In addition to KFA the industry partners are the WA Museum and the Department Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

The aim of the project is to investigate the indigenous archaeology of the Oscar Napier Ranges to understand more fully the complexity of the life ways of the indigenous people of this region.



Science in search of a Kimberley pre-history KFA Public Lecture

Dr Jim Ross, Chairman of the Kimberley Foundation's Science Advisory Council, delivered the **2010 Kimberley Foundation Australia annual public lecture** in Perth on 25 November.

Jim is a distinguished industry geologist and UWA Alumnus who also chairs the UWA Geoscience Foundation and other initiatives in geoscience education and research.

Jim delivered a comprehensive overview of the Foundation's research and conservation objectives in the context of human pre-history, current and planned research projects, and recent results.

Rock Art Cruise to benefit KFA research – register now!

The concept of a unique educational experience combined with a luxurious cruise is a winning formula. KFA is collaborating with *Orion Expeditions* to host its own rock art cruise from Darwin to Broome next year. We want to work with the Kimberley Land Council to include an indigenous guide from Kandiwal as well as leading anthropologists and archaeologists who work with KFA to deliver a really special experience.

The Orion will pay KFA a commission per passenger and this would be directed to KFA's research. **If you are interested in this unique rock art cruise please register now.** We need 30 passengers to proceed. Email us your interest and contact details to admin@kimberleyfoundation.org.au ASAP!



Image:
Sash Bradshaw in
profile alignment
showing Dancing
Balloon waist
decoration, Chilli
Armpit decoration
and held objects
including a single
Crescent Boomerang
and Whisk.

spreading the word

Scientific rigour, probity and dissemination are three of KFA's key objectives and we are always keen to spread the word about our research work and raise the profile of the Foundation. Most recently Chairman Maria Myers appeared on ABC TV's Stateline in WA (19/11/10). In June KFA arranged for *The Good Weekend* feature writer Janet Hawley, and photographer Peter Eve, to visit the dig in the Mitchell River National Park (see field report snapshot opposite). Their 5-page article was published with *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 4 September.

French film maker Laurent Orluc also paid a visit to the dig. Laurent is writing an article for the December issue of *Science & Life* (France) and looking to

secure backing for a documentary on the Kimberley. He is also writing a story for *Paris Match*, the influential weekly magazine covering national and international news – and celebrities.

Still on the publicity trail, KFA arranged for Mike Morwood and June Ross to meet the cruise ship *Orion Expeditions* off the Kimberley coast in July to present lectures to guests keen to know more about rock art. Guests reported that their presentations were exceptionally rewarding. June and Mike also did three radio interviews and their work was the subject of two newspaper articles in *The Australian*.

The Foundation is very grateful to both June and Mike for their time and willingness to share their expertise.

Kimberley Foundation at International Pleistocene Rock Art Conference

A palaeoart congress hosted by the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO) was held in the village of Tarascon-sur-Ariege at the foot of the French Pyrenees (the heartland of the Franco-Cantabrian cave art traditions), in September. Four hundred delegates from thirty-five countries attended.

KFA representatives were Chairman Maria Myers and Science Advisory Council Chair Jim Ross. Also attending were SAC members June Ross, Mike Donaldson and Sue O'Connor, as well as Peter Veth who worked with Jim Bowler on the Mulan project.

The six day gathering included two days of field trips to French rock art sites and four days of presentations running concurrently in four different rooms. It was apparent amongst the rock art community that Australia's presenters and their science were of a high standard.

Questions were raised regarding the age of Kimberley rock art, especially of Bradshaw or Gwion Gwion art, and doubts expressed about the validity of only one optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) date establishing Kimberley art as Pleistocene. In France, five sites have yielded a total of forty Pleistocene dates. In Australia, we have one date and thousands of sites. It is clear it is not sufficient to assert the art is Pleistocene.

The Kimberley Foundation is intent on uncovering the age of Kimberley rock art and will make use of every available dating technique to do so.

report from the field – a snap shot

Continuity and Change: archaeology, rock art and chronology in the northwest Kimberley

In June and July this year Professor Mike Morwood, University of Wollongong, and Dr June Ross, University of New England, chief investigators of the *Continuity and Change* project, and Kirra Westaway of Macquarie University, continued their KFA-funded ARC linkage project in the Mitchell River National Park.

The field team included Dr Mark Moore UNE, ARC Research Fellow, Kim Newman UNE, Technical Officer, Yinika Perston, Di England and Deb Holt UNE students, Robin Maher, camp manager, Murray Scown, UNE, honours student (KFA scholarship), and Meg Travers ANU, PhD candidate. They were joined by John Hayward (DEC, Mitchell

Plateau National Park) and his partner Janie Andrews, an art teacher at Kandiwal.

The local aboriginal team participating on all aspects of the project included John, Myron and Gregory Goonack and Joseph Karadada from the Kandiwal Aboriginal Cooperation (another Linkage Partner in the project).

All the excavated samples from the dig have been sent to UNE for analysis. OSL samples were sent to Macquarie University with results expected early 2011. A full report on the field season is underway and will be available on the KFA website in the new year.

Image:
Joseph Karadada
recording the
art at Lower
Mitchell Falls.



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

Kimberley Foundation Australia Ltd

ABN 12 084 464 648
Level 4, 71 Collins St, Melbourne Vic 3000
Po Box 85 Elsterwick Vic 3185

Tel: 03 9653 3780 Fax: 03 9653 3789
admin@kimberleyfoundation.org.au
www.kimberleyfoundation.org.au

our vision

Our 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.

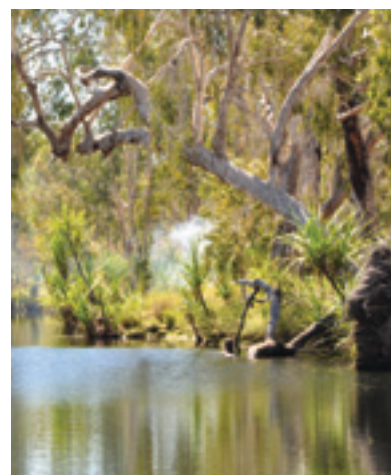


Image (Top):
Indigenous elder
and KFA Director,
Sam Lovell in
rock art cave.

Image (Bottom Left):
Kimberley Rose Tree.

Image (Middle):
L to R, KFA Board
members Christina
Kennedy, Laurie
Brereton and
Maria Myers.

Image (Bottom Right):
Campfire smoke wafts
over the billabong.



camping safari

In July several KFA Foundation Board members, myself (CEO) and friends of KFA were privileged to accompany Sam Lovell (KFA Director) on a camping safari along the Munja track in the northwest Kimberley. The group met at Mount Elizabeth and took off in two 4-wheel drives with Sam as our guide, story teller, bush tucker man and crooner.

We walked through eucalypt woodlands populated with bloodwoods and tall shrubs of acacia and melaleuca, rainforest remnants and open grasslands of spinfex and tropical grasses. We climbed up rock escarpments to discover hauntingly beautiful paintings hidden within cavernous sandstone overhangs.

At night by the campfire we joined Sam, Kim Bridge and Louis in bush ballads accompanied by the guitars – and then to bed – swags under a starlit sky. In the morning it was a swim in the billabong and a cup of hot tea under the Silky Grevillea.

'Magpie Jump-up', Bachsten's Track, Wren Gorge and Sam's Crossing are now in the kitbag of best memories ever. Thank you Sam and fellow travellers for a memorable trip.

We wish all of our supporters a peaceful and Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

We look forward to keeping you informed of the Foundation's research activities in 2011.