

# EDITORIAL

The time between our last editorial and this one has somehow flown by (words like ‘evaporated’, ‘vanished’ and ‘disappeared’ spring to mind), so that here we are, once again, thinking about developments and accomplishments over the last six months. On the local front, since the production of AA74 the Association has vastly improved both its membership base and its social media policies (not a coincidence), so that, for the first time in the history of the organisation, AAA now has more than 1000 members. Such a milestone is testimony to the persistent hard work of our Membership Secretaries, Jacqueline Matthews and Xavier Carah, as well as to the increasing profile of the Association within the profession. In line with the increasing diversity of our membership base, the AAA Facebook page and website <[www.australianarchaeologicalassociation.com.au](http://www.australianarchaeologicalassociation.com.au)> have had moderation policies put in place to ensure editorial consistency of content and to prevent any potential legal issues arising. We note also that the official AAA twitter account has been temporarily deleted until such time that a policy acceptable to our insurers can be enacted. The AAA Student Account (@AAAstudents) is still up and running, however (with a moderation policy in place). These moderation policies are necessary to ensure the smooth running of AAA’s social media profile, which is proving to be an invaluable tool for promoting our journal and Association alike. Once again, the Membership Secretaries have been instrumental in bringing this to fruition, along with the AAA Webmaster, Mick Morrison, and Media Liaison Officer, Alice Gorman. Other behind-the-scenes work by Mick Morrison and the new AA Editorial Assistant, Susan Arthure, has resulted in the AA journal pages being updated with more back issue content, with more to come in the near future.

Just as this Editorial was being finalised in early November, the Australian Research Council announced the successful recipients of Discovery Projects, including Early Career Researcher and Indigenous Awards, to commence in 2013. Perhaps surprisingly, given recent trends in ARC funding, and perhaps not, given the calibre of the applications, archaeological projects were awarded approximately \$4.4M (a large increase from last year’s total), with a further \$2.5M awarded to palaeoenvironment focused projects, \$1.2M for cultural heritage and museum oriented projects, and a further \$1.7M for dating, ancient DNA and historical studies projects of archaeological interest/relevance. We’d like to offer our warm congratulations to all of the successful recipients, and especially the early career researchers Drs Emilie-Jane Ens,

Adam Brumm, Nicholas Porch, Shayne McGregor, Alexander Mackay, Jillian Garvey, Joelle Gergis, Nathan English, Trevor Worthy, James Flexner, Thomas Pryce and Christian Reepmeyer (many of whom have been closely involved with the last few issues of AA, either as authors or reviewers), and Indigenous Elder and researcher Dr Joseph Gumbula. AAA would also like to extend our belated congratulations to Prof. Susan O’Connor who, earlier this year, was announced as the Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellow. Based at The Australian National University, Prof. O’Connor was the 2011 recipient of the Rhys Jones Medal for her outstanding and sustained contribution to our discipline, and is well deserving of this latest honour.

Looking more widely across the heritage landscape over the last six months, many changes are afoot. Recent rounds of legislative review in WA, SA, Tasmania and NSW have highlighted the contemporary political issues surrounding heritage, particularly as these relate to the pressures brought by industry, and the subsequent needs of, and general lack of resourcing to, Aboriginal communities, who are increasingly

taking on the task of managing their own heritage. The repercussions of these changes for archaeological practice are not yet clear, but other developments, such as the recent extensive retrenchment of heritage positions within the Qld public service, indicate that far reaching changes for the profession might be in store.

This edition of AA takes on some of these issues, albeit in its usual eclectic style, with the papers in AA75 ranging widely across the spectrum of contemporary archaeology.

In this edition we have papers

dealing with rock art dating and site management, types and alignments of stone arrangements, lithic analysis of conjoin sets, and field-based portable x-ray fluorescence (PXRF). White’s paper on fine-grained conjoin analysis in the Hunter Valley (NSW) is a practical demonstration of how consulting projects can generate interesting research outcomes, a proposition that is always difficult given hectic consulting schedules and the limited time available to write up results for dissemination to the wider community. Gunn et al.’s paper on Jawoyn (NT) standing stones and Hamacher et al.’s paper on stone ‘lines’ in NSW deal with two very different types of stone arrangements, but both raise issues for recognising the nature and past uses of such archaeological features. Gunn et al.’s other paper in this volume examines the generally accepted dating schemes for polychrome art across western Arnhem Land, arguing that the x-ray art found at Nawarla Gabarnmang and other sites may be very recent. Cole and

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Buhrich's paper highlights particularly critical questions about how Quinkan rock art sites can continue to be effectively managed for the future in the face of increasing development and mining pressure, with an image from Quinkan country featured on our front cover. Given the 2003 legislative changes in Qld, a lessening of political support for heritage generally across Australia, and Campbell Newman's recent axing of heritage staffing within the Qld public service, the issues Cole and Buhrich raise will no doubt resonate across many other contexts. Huntley's paper on the use of portable x-ray fluorescence to examine rock art motif composition reflects on the analytical complexities of such field-based analyses, providing a timely cautionary note to some who seem to believe that the increasing availability of such equipment counters the need for scientific expertise in interpreting the data now so easily collected. Finally, Gibbs' and Colley's paper illustrates the issues and outcomes associated with providing online access to NSW historical archaeology grey literature and the widening divergence between archaeology for the public good and the increasingly business-oriented model being adopted by universities. Their initiative provides an excellent model for other states and sub-disciplines within Australian archaeology and we offer both our congratulations and thanks to all involved in the project for the enormous amount of work and effort they've expended (and will continue to expend in the future) to protect the vast array of data and information produced from archaeological projects.

This volume's Forum section is also highly topical, but slightly unusual in that, instead of one, there are two papers providing the basis for the commentary: an article published in AA72 by Ian McNiven and colleagues on recently reported Lapita finds from the south coast of Papua New Guinea, and a related article by Jim Specht which questions the nature of the finds described in the McNiven et al. paper and their relationship to sites elsewhere. Only the Specht paper is published in this volume, but because it relates to a find that has generated significant interest and debate, both in formal and informal contexts, commentators were invited to respond to either or both papers. Amongst the commentators, Geoff Irwin elected to submit a short report which was also refereed and published in this volume as part of the Forum alongside the other comments. Given the ensuing debate and the importance of the claims for understanding the prehistory of the wider Pacific region, the AA75 Forum deals with a debate that has been brewing since AA72 went to print. We welcome any future suggestions for such Forum sections, given that they are an excellent way to raise larger issues beyond the framework of a single paper and have an important role to play in raising the profile of research and the journal.

In assembling and reviewing the content for this volume we would once again like to thank all of the hard working

referees, both national and international, who were willing to step up and take on the task of reviewing manuscripts. We have been particularly grateful for the general rapidity with which manuscripts are turned around so that authors can receive feedback relatively quickly.

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Scott L'Oste-Brown to the Editorial Advisory Board of *Australian Archaeology*. Since taking on the role of Editors we have been particularly impressed with the thoroughness and rapidity (except during his sojourns across the Tasman to pursue quality control testing of New Zealand's pinots) of Scott's reviews—characteristics that are common amongst our EAB members. As a reward for his hard work, we decided to invite Scott to join the EAB, an invitation that we were delighted he accepted.

As a final note, the annual conference in Wollongong this year is shaping up to have record numbers attend, and will, of course (among other things!) be the venue for the presentation of the inaugural Ulm-Ross Prize for the best paper in *Australian Archaeology*. Both the rules and the ambit of this award have been tweaked slightly since the advice we provided in our last editorial: the winning paper will now be drawn only from the content of the last two volumes of

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*Australian Archaeology* (AA73 and AA74), rather than the last four as previously advised, and the winning paper will be chosen based on a mix of four relatively simple criteria: 1) novelty/originality (opening new avenues for research); 2) clarity of expression; 3) contribution to substantive debate and/or the 'big picture' of the discipline; and 4) contribution to research more generally. We have tried

to keep both the rules and the criteria simple and relatively open, and have convened a judging panel composed of both Australian and international experts. This year's judging panel included: the eponymous award's honorees, Sean Ulm and Annie Ross; the current journal Editors, Lynley Wallis and Heather Burke; Danielle Clode (Flinders University), a professional science writer; international archaeological writers, editors and publishers Brian Fagan (University of California, Santa Barbara) and Mitch Allen (Left Coast Press), and the illustrious Val Attenbrow (Australian Museum).

We thank all of the judges for the serious consideration they have given to each article, and the time they have taken to rank their various merits accordingly. At one level, all papers in *Australian Archaeology* are already of a high standard, so distinguishing a single outstanding paper from within this competitive field is no small task. We look forward to revealing the winner to you in Wollongong and hope to see you all there.

*Heather Burke and Lynley Wallis*