

# **BARRIERS, BORDERS, BOUNDARIES**

Proceedings of the 2001 Australian Archaeological  
Association Annual Conference

Edited by

Sean Ulm, Catherine Westcott, Jill Reid, Anne Ross, Ian Lilley,  
Jonathan Prangnell and Luke Kirkwood

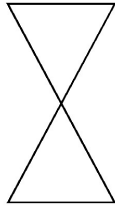


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# TEMPUS

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Front Cover: Boundaries of the Western Desert and the circumcision/subincision lines (p.12).

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# PREFACE: Barriers, Borders, Boundaries

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Jonathan Prangnell and Luke Kirkwood

All of the papers in this volume are based on papers and posters presented at the 2001 Australian Archaeological Association Annual Conference, convened by the editors of this volume. The conference was held from 6–8 December at Kondari Resort in Hervey Bay, approximately 300km north of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia. Sponsored by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit and School of Social Science at the University of Queensland, it was one of the largest Australian Archaeological Association conferences on record.

The conference aimed to provide a forum for the exploration of barriers, borders and boundaries in Australian archaeological methods and practice, frameworks of interpretation and epistemological structures. Sessions were designed to have broad appeal to a range of archaeological stakeholders including academics, consultants, Indigenous peoples, students, cultural heritage managers and policy formulators.

On the evening preceding the formal opening of the conference, Ian Lilley convened a session on the ‘State of the Discipline’ to discuss the current status and future of archaeology in Australia, a subject which had been extensively debated earlier in the year – on the list-server AUSARCH-L. Various senior members of the discipline presented brief perspectives on what they saw as the major issues shaping the future of archaeology in Australia, with a particular focus on the emerging impact of changes in university funding formulae. These discussions are forming part of a continuing dialogue on the challenges facing all aspects of archaeology. Of particular concern is the capacity of current teaching and training regimes to adequately prepare graduates for a modern archaeological workforce. The ability of the academy to respond to the skills mobility of an increasingly diverse workforce is hampered by the diminishing skills base of the academy. Academics form a diminishing proportion of the professionals practicing archaeology but paradoxically they are the people entrusted with reproducing the skills base critical to the future of the discipline. We believe that there is an urgent need to broaden the archaeological dialogue by creating partnerships among the wide range of archaeological stakeholders.

Over three days, 48 papers were presented in six sessions, with a further 40+ presentations in the poster session. Session themes covered a variety of topics relating to the general conference theme: ‘Regions and Boundaries: Archaeological Explorations of Regionalism, Localisation and Boundedness’ (convened by Bryce Barker and Sean Ulm); ‘Written in Stone: Regional, Temporal and

Technological Boundaries in Stone Artefact Assemblages’ (Lara Lamb and Chris Clarkson); ‘Archaeology of Isolation’ (Jonathan Prangnell); ‘Boundaries of Archaeological Thinking’ (Annie Ross); ‘Frontier-Games: Rock Art Variability in the Arid Zone’ (Jo McDonald); and ‘Reality of Barriers: The Evidence from Biological Anthropology’ (Colin Pardoe and Michael Westaway). Peter White had a box-office hit when he convened an ‘Australian Archaeology on Film’ session, which featured some important, and sometimes amusing, early moments in Australian archaeology.

One of the highlights of the conference was the formal poster session (convened by Jill Reid), which attracted a record 40+ entries. While many of the entries were student posters, a significant number were also presented by professional archaeologists. This suggests that a broader cross-section of delegates is now valuing the poster session as a forum for the presentation of research results. This was borne out by the high standard of all posters, both in terms of their content and presentation. Papers in this volume by Brown and Loy, Buhrich, Chapman, Cole *et al.*, Leo, Robertson, and Vale were originally presented as posters.

While not all the papers presented at the conference are published in this volume, the 24 papers that are included here represent the full range of issues canvassed at the conference. All the papers have been subject to a process of peer-review. Some authors have chosen to submit essentially what was presented at the conference, while others have substantially rewritten contributions in light of comments and discussion at the conference and at the suggestion of referees and the editors.

The structure of this volume does not reflect closely the conference session structure. Instead, we have reorganised papers into four broad thematic areas to provide some coherence to the work. The first section, ‘Recent Regional Research’, presents broad regional studies covering a wide time period and geographical range. The section on ‘Rock Art Studies’ explores the use of art to define social boundaries, as well as problems in approaches, and challenges for management. The third section, ‘Archaeological and Aboriginal Heritage’ deals with the way archaeologists undertake research, form partnerships with stakeholders and train future archaeologists. The final section, ‘Technical Studies’, highlights approaches to the study of archaeological remains and sites, using a range of technical, genetic and molecular methods. In all, they cover a wide range of the challenges, solutions and valuable information provided by the barriers, borders and boundaries in current archaeology.

This conference was the first national meeting following the untimely death of Professor Rhys Jones. Shortly before his death, Rhys' friends and colleagues presented him with a handsome and well-received volume celebrating his life and work, but members of the Association believed that the Australian Archaeological Association should permanently mark his enormous contribution to the discipline. It was decided to strike a commemorative medal in his honour, to be awarded annually for an 'outstanding contribution to archaeology'. The first medal is to be awarded posthumously to Rhys at the 2002 Australian Archaeological Association Annual Conference, where it will be accepted by his colleague, wife and muse, Betty Meehan.

### **Acknowledgements**

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For financial assistance and in-kind support in preparing these proceedings for publication, we thank the School of Social Science and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at the University of Queensland, and the Australian Archaeological Association Inc. Tony Eales (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, University of Queensland) brought many of the figures up to publication standard.

We acknowledge with thanks the following people for peer-reviewing contributions to the volume: Peter Bellwood (School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University); Terry Bonhomme (Bonhomme Craib and Associates); Bill Boyd (School of Environmental Science and Management, Southern Cross University); Christopher Chippindale (Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge); Bruno David (Department of Geography and Environmental Science, Monash University); Iain Davidson (School of Human and Environmental Studies, University of New England); Natalie Franklin (Cultural Heritage Branch, Queensland Environmental Protection Agency); Richard Fullagar (Department of Archaeology, University of Sydney); Martin Gibbs (School of Anthropology, Archaeology and Sociology, James Cook University); Lesley Head (School of Geosciences, University of Wollongong); Peter Hiscock (School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University); Ian McNiven (School of Fine Arts, Classical Studies and Archaeology, University of Melbourne); Ken Mulvaney (Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority); Sue O'Connor (Department of Archaeology and Natural History, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University); Colin Pardoe (Colin Pardoe Bio-Anthropology and Archaeology); Donald Pate (Department of Archaeology, Flinders University); Judy Powell (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service); Kathryn Przywolnik (New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service); Paul Rainbird (Department of Archaeology, University of Wales); Gail Robertson (School of Social Science, University of Queensland); Richard Robins (Queensland Museum); Anna Shnukal (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, University of Queensland); Robin Sim (School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University); Claire Smith (Department of Archaeology, Flinders University); Di Smith (Department of Archaeology, Flinders University); Kate Sullivan (Kate Sullivan and Associates Pty Ltd); Paul Taçon (Division of Anthropology, Australian Museum); Bruce Veitch (Archae-aus Pty Ltd); and Michael Westaway (National Museum of Australia).