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Poster Abstracts

We Remember - Stories from the Past, Visions for the Future

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Ngadlu Tirkandi (We Remember) | Artwork by Allan Sumner



Two-way learning on Country: Integrating Banjima ecological knowledge and environmental practice in the Pilbara

Banjima Traditional Owners, Banjima Native Title Aboriginal Corporation

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In the Pilbara region of Western Australia, BHP and Banjima Traditional Owners have developed a collaborative, on-Country program that brings together Banjima ecological knowledge and western environmental practice. Led by Banjima women and Elders, this partnership was established outside of standard regulatory consultation processes, creating a unique opportunity for relationship-building, knowledge exchange and shared learning.

The program responds to aspirations identified by Banjima Elders to strengthen the transfer of cultural and ecological knowledge across generations while providing opportunities for BHP environmental practitioners to learn directly from Traditional Owners on Country. Through a series of ethnobotanical and ethnoecological surveys, Banjima women have shared knowledge of culturally significant plants, animals, habitats and ecological processes, contributing to a deeper understanding of Country and its values.

Ethnobotanical surveys have documented cultural uses for approximately one-third of the native plant species recorded during fieldwork, expanding the Banjima cultural archive and supporting the development of bush food and medicinal plant learning resources. Building on this work, practical ethnobotany activities have brought together Elders, women, young people and family groups to collect, prepare and use culturally significant plants, strengthening intergenerational knowledge transfer and reinforcing cultural connections to Country.

The program demonstrates the value of creating spaces for Traditional Owners and environmental practitioners to learn together outside compliance-driven engagement processes. By combining Indigenous Knowledge Systems with western environmental science, the partnership supports more informed environmental management, strengthens cultural continuity and fosters mutual respect and understanding. This poster highlights the outcomes of the Banjima–BHP partnership and the role of two-way learning in supporting both cultural and environmental stewardship in the Pilbara.

Novice bone working: How intuitive and 'easy' is bone tool creation

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This research project examines the physical and cognitive load required by a novice tool-maker to create bone tools. Current perceptions of bone tool technology are centred around the notion that knapping techniques are labour intensive and require a higher degree of conceptualisation than stone tools and are thus perceived as being inconsistent with technologies likely used by early hominins. This poster presents the results from an experimental program, where four novice bone-workers were tasked with the creation of ESA and MSA African bone tools. The experimental program uses gesture analysis coupled with theoretical frameworks focused on process and cognition, to understand how physically and mentally challenging bone tool creation is positioned through the lens of a novice worker. Overall, this poster outlines the key challenges faced by a Novice during bone tool creation and analyses the levels of difficulty throughout the experimental program. The findings aim to challenge current perceptions in archaeology that deem bone tool technology as largely beyond the abilities of early hominins.

Excavations at WA14-19, WA14-21 and WA-16-28-RS located on Ngarlawangga Country within RTIO's West Angelas Deposit H Project Area, Pilbara WA

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Please note that this abstract is a placeholder pending review from both Ngarlawangga Aboriginal Corporation and Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation. A final abstract will be forwarded to the conference coordinators for review as soon as possible.

Archaeological excavations at sites WA14-19, WA14-21 and WA-16-38-RS have revealed a deep time record of Aboriginal occupation on Ngarlawangga Country of more than 40,000 years. The three rockshelter sites are located approximately 89 km northwest of Newman and 13 km east of RTIO's West Angelas Mine in the eastern part of the Hamersley Range. These excavations occurred in 2025 as part of a Section 16 Excavation Work Program supported by Rio Tinto Iron Ore in collaboration with Ngarlawangga Traditional Owners, who were involved in both the excavation and post-excavation works. Rockshelter 1 at WA14-19 contains the earliest evidence for human occupation in Ngarlawangga Country, with OSL dating showing that rockshelter visits began before 45,565 - 40,875 years ago and then continued intermittently into the recent past. This places WA14-19 among the oldest known sites in the inland Pilbara. Rockshelter 2 at WA14-19, located some 10 metres away, shows Holocene occupation from around 3,000 years ago, although it likely also saw earlier use that was not captured in the small excavation sample. Radiocarbon dating at nearby site WA14-21, located some 480 m to the east along the same ridge, places the earliest occupation at this site to just under 5,000 years ago, with continued use into the recent past. Aboriginal people repeatedly visited WA16-38-RS, a further 1 km to the east, within the last 1,000 years. Collectively, excavation at these sites has contributed to a deeper understanding of how Aboriginal people occupied the inland Pilbara over tens of thousands of years, illustrating both continuity and change in cultural practices.

Country as teacher: Investigating the multilayered cultural landscape of La Trobe University's Bundoora campus

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Cultural landscapes are increasingly recognised within Australian archaeology and embedded into cultural heritage legislation and practice (Ross et al. 2010). This project argues that institutions must be situated on Country not only physically, but intellectually and ethically, and that archaeology has a responsibility to contribute to this shift through Indigenous-led approaches. Foregrounding Indigenous knowledges and both tangible and intangible cultural values is essential for moving beyond symbolic inclusion toward genuinely decolonised practice (Marques et al. 2021). Despite this disciplinary momentum, Australia's university campuses remain largely unexamined as cultural and archaeological places shaped by sovereignty, history, and ongoing relationships with Country.

This research articulates the storied, multilayered cultural landscape of La Trobe University's Bundoora campus by centring Country as teacher and authority. Sediment cores extracted from the Nangak Tamboree Wildlife Sanctuary provide charcoal and pollen data that trace shifts in vegetation communities, fire regimes, and hydrological conditions over time. These palaeoenvironmental insights are interpreted through Indigenous and relational research methodologies, guided by the Kin and Country framework (Bishop & Tynan 2025). Engagement with community members through yarning (Alterator et al. 2021; Gorey et al. 2024) ensures that archaeological evidence is understood relationally, ethically, and in dialogue with sovereign Indigenous knowledge systems.

Victoria's Treaty process, cultural heritage reforms, and national disciplinary shifts mark a pivotal moment for embedding Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies within archaeological practice. By demonstrating how archaeology can contribute to La Trobe University's Indigenous Strategy and 2030 Strategic Plan, this project positions university campuses as culturally significant places and offers a model for future research grounded in Indigenous-led, relational, and Country-centred practice.

Caring for Bunurong Sea Country in a maze of legislation

Caroline Hubschmann, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) is regularly invited to respond to large infrastructure projects planned for Bunurong Sea Country. Depending on the project scope and location, they are governed by state (Victorian) or federal legislation, and sometimes both. This poster uses three case studies to examine the ways in which current legislation struggles to account for the complexities of consulting Traditional Owner corporations in the management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, specifically as they pertain to Bunurong Sea Country.

The first case study is the proposed Victorian Energy Terminal. It is partly located within the Bunurong Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) boundary; however, as this is Sea Country, it would not necessarily trigger BLCAC's involvement in the project under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic).

The second case study looks at the proposed Victorian Renewable Energy Terminal in Wurnmarrinh (Western Port Bay) and the complexities of navigating legislative overlap between state and federal jurisdictions.

The third case study looks at the proposed Marinus Link electricity interconnector between Lutruwita (Tasmania) and Victoria. Bunurong Ancestors walked this Country in Deep Time, long before the seas rose to where they are today. However, BLCAC has no legislatively enshrined authority to speak on behalf of this Country or be involved in its management.

This poster highlights the need to for legislation to reflect Country as is understood by Traditional Owners, rather than through an often limited temporal, political and economic lens.

Buoyed by community: Local knowledge and maritime archaeology on Stewart Island/Rakiura, New Zealand

Sasha Joura, Independent researcher

This poster will present the results of a Masters thesis project on Stewart Island/Rakiura, New Zealand, supported by the AAA Student Grant in 2024. The project utilised a community archaeology approach, with a specific use of crowdsourcing, to improve understanding of the maritime archaeology on the island. This approach has been used in Australasia, but almost exclusively with Indigenous communities and for terrestrial archaeology projects, so it is a novel method in maritime archaeology in this region. Community members on Stewart Island/Rakiura were acknowledged as local experts and interviewed to record their knowledge of sites, with a focus on intertidal and submerged sites from the historical period. In particular, due to the remote location of Stewart Island/Rakiura, it is rarely visited by archaeological professionals, and therefore local knowledge was prioritised as an invaluable resource. This model may prove to be equally applicable to other remote, inhabited locations.

Integrating palaeoecological data through an archaeological lens: Case studies from Bunurong and Gunditjmara Countries

Isabella Krbaleski, La Trobe University

In Australia, a distinct ontological divide shapes how the environment is understood, contrasting Western and Indigenous knowledge systems. Through the systematic structures of the Australian settler-colonial state, Western approaches have come to dominate environmental governance and land management practices, prioritising extraction and human nature separation. These priorities have disrupted more than 65,000 years of enduring cultural relationships between Indigenous peoples and Country, undermining traditional ecological knowledge systems and excluding communities from environmental decision-making. This marginalisation has not only transformed cultural relationships with landscape but has also contributed to significant ecological change across the Australian continent.

This poster presents the results of a research thesis investigating how reframing palaeoecological proxies as artefacts of past human-environment relationships can begin to bridge this ontological divide within environmental research and management. By positioning palaeoecological evidence within an archaeological framework, this research aims to challenge the dominance of Western epistemologies within conventional palaeoecological and archaeological methods, and to create space for Indigenous worldviews to shape how environmental evidence is produced, analysed, and interpreted.

The research centres on analyses of two sediment cores collected from the Victorian coast, on Gunditjmara and Bunurong Countries, through a Braided Knowledge approach. Guided by Community research priorities, pollen and charcoal proxies were examined to reconstruct late Holocene vegetation dynamics, fire regimes, and human land-use patterns, with particular attention to the impacts of colonisation. Treating these proxies as material traces of past human-environment interactions has enabled reflection on how palaeoecological records can support more inclusive approaches to environmental research and the management of Country.

Smart mapping for cultural heritage management: An AI-assisted WebGIS workflow for heritage intelligence

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Cultural heritage desktop assessments require practitioners to search, compare and interpret evidence dispersed across public websites, image collections, reports and archival sources. This poster presents an AI-assisted smart-mapping workflow that organises publicly available heritage evidence into an auditable WebGIS review layer while preserving source provenance, spatial uncertainty and human oversight.

The pilot focused on publicly accessible Australian Aboriginal rock-art-related imagery and associated webpage text. An initial corpus of 5,026 candidate images was reduced through automated visual screening, text-clue screening and manual review before 2,482 records entered multimodel geolocation. A subsequent full image QA/QC process retained 1,596 records for analysis. OpenAI GPT-5.4 mini, Claude Sonnet 4.6 and Gemini 3.5 Flash independently assigned each retained record to a three-level statistical geographic framework. The models reached unanimous level-and-code agreement for 833 records, representing 52.2% of the QA/QC-retained corpus.

Model performance was evaluated against a manually inspected reference subset of 108 records. Claude achieved the highest exact accuracy and macro-F1 (0.889; 0.793), followed by OpenAI (0.556; 0.451) and Gemini (0.398; 0.225). The results show that model agreement is useful for triage but cannot be treated as accuracy. Consensus outputs were exported as GeoJSON layers for WebGIS review using hierarchical spatial representation rather than invented site coordinates.

The workflow demonstrates how multimodal large language models can support heritage intelligence by making fragmented public-source evidence more searchable, reviewable and accountable. Its value lies not in automating heritage judgement, but in assisting professional review through transparent QA/QC, provenance, uncertainty and ethical safeguards.

Measuring use-wear striations on quartz: Towards a quantitative approach

Jon Lundin, Stockholm University

Quartz is among the most common lithic raw materials worldwide. Its distinctive fracture behaviour during lithic reduction has long made it difficult to interpret and a key challenge is determining whether a given quartz piece was actually used as a tool. The foundational framework for use-wear analysis on quartz was established in the 1980s and remains, at its core, a qualitative assessment method. This poster presents results from an ongoing project that develops this framework further by analysing use-wear through metric measurement of striations.

An experimental programme measured 480 striations produced by cutting sixteen contact materials with unmodified quartz flakes. Statistical analysis of striation length and width (on a log scale) showed a consistent positive correlation between the two variables, with harder, drier materials producing longer and wider striations than fresher, softer ones. Combined with other use-wear features such as polish, edge rounding and micro-fractures, it is possible to distinguish between contact materials more narrowly. A preliminary application to a small Mesolithic quartz assemblage from Sweden supported this approach, with the majority of utilized edges aligning with the experimentally established use-wear models.

The questions of what counts as a tool, what it was used for, and how to distinguish use from post-depositional damage are long-standing in quartz research and are not new to researchers working with this material elsewhere. What this approach offers is not a new question but a more replicable way of approaching it. Moving from qualitative, experience-based assessment toward measurable criteria that can be tested, compared and refined across different research contexts. This poster presents the current state of that approach and invites discussion of whether and how a quantitative framework developed on experimental material could be tested against quartz assemblages elsewhere.

Performing archaeology: Exploring opportunities for archaeological interpretation through theatre in an Australian context

Caitriona Lunn, La Trobe University

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Multiple studies have found that the public's knowledge on Australian histories and archaeology is low (Townsend 2026; Monks et al. 2023). This research project seeks to develop a new approach for archaeologists to meaningfully engage with and educate the public through the art of theatre. Although this interpretive method has been used globally, it has not been investigated within a specific Australian context. This project emphasises the importance of better understanding the needs and interests of the public, who show a real interest for knowledge of the past, particularly their own familial and local histories, through entertaining and emotive means. By conducting surveys and focus groups with the Australian archaeological and theatrical community, as well as First Peoples organisations, we have sought to understand the current landscape of archaeological interpretation and theatrical presentations of the past to examine the ways in which theatre can be embedded into current archaeological practice. This research will culminate in the creation of guiding frameworks that archaeologists and theatre practitioners can use as a starting point for collaborating in a unique form of public archaeology. Consultation plays a key role in the project to ensure the final frameworks are practical and can be viably fitted into current archaeological and theatrical practices. This research has shown how theatre can work as an accessible, creative, and interesting way to effectively engage the public as a form of public, collaborative, and community archaeology.

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What lies beneath? Investigating the archaeological potential of clays in texture contrast soils

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In eastern Australia, very few archaeological sites of Pleistocene age have been identified, particularly when compared with northern and western Australia. One possible reason is methodological: excavation often stops when cohesive clay horizons are encountered. In many cases, these deposits are assumed to be sterile because they are interpreted as saprolite or as slowly formed soil horizons too old to contain archaeological material. These assumptions are rarely tested directly. Here we present data that examines the formation and age of texture-contrast soil profiles to assess whether clay-rich horizons may in fact retain archaeological potential. Initial results from a site in southeast Queensland suggest that clay sedimentary horizons previously assumed to be archaeologically sterile were deposited ~12 ka. These findings suggest that some clay horizons may be young enough to contain cultural material, raising the possibility that older archaeological sites in eastern Australia are more common than currently recognised and are being overlooked due to standard excavation practices.

The outcomes were recovery of significant materials (lithics, glass artefacts, hearths and a ground oven), a program of OSL dating, plus soil and pollen analysis. This work has expanded the story, both scientifically and spiritually. We understand how the place was used and became a focus for cultural activities. This new understanding has brough additional cultural authority to the reburial place and built a diversity of appreciation amongst Kaurna and non-Kaurna people.

The paper re-presents a review of the initial 2011 work, and updates this with the 2026 archaeological outcomes. But more it provides oversight on why this place remains central to Kaurna spirituality, identify, and is able to empower Kaurna elders and their future generations.

The politics of protection: Unconscious bias and the weaponisation of cultural heritage

Jade Pervan, The University of Western Australia

This poster explores how unconscious bias can inadvertently weaponise cultural heritage in the pursuit of advocacy. While advocacy may protect one place, story, or cultural value, it can be at the detriment of others. Decisions about significance, representativeness, publication, interpretation, and public promotion inevitably privilege some narratives while marginalising others.

The promotion of particular sites through publication, interpretation, tourism, or public campaigns may strengthen protection outcomes, yet can also expose places to new risks, divert development pressures elsewhere, or privilege some heritage narratives over others. In this context, advocacy is not simply a professional tool but an exercise of power that requires critical scrutiny.

Advocacy therefore carries social consequences that challenge the notion of objective heritage practice, because of the heart of cultural heritage management not everything can be protected.

All participants in cultural heritage management including heritage professionals, academics, governments, industry proponents, custodians, and communities bring conscious and unconscious biases to the production of knowledge that links the past to present realities. These biases influence what is recognised as significant, whose voices are legitimised, which narratives are amplified, and ultimately what forms of heritage are protected, promoted, or overlooked. This raises a fundamental question for the heritage sector: should practitioners strive to advocate objectively, or recognise that advocacy inevitably carries social consequences that demand subjective understanding, ethical reflection, and, at times no action?

Additionally, the question is not whether heritage is weaponised, but whether practitioners are sufficiently reflexive to recognise when this is occurring and in whose interests.

Filling the gap: Towards the set-up of a combined pollen and phytolith dataset to improve palaeoenvironmental resolution in archaeological studies in Western Australia

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Western Australia contains an extraordinary range of vegetation systems across a vast latitudinal and environmental gradient. During the late Quaternary, these landscapes underwent pronounced spatial and temporal shifts in vegetation and climate, creating a dynamic ecological framework within which human activity took place. Yet, despite the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental importance of these changes, the scale and heterogeneity of the state are not fully captured by the relatively small number of studied sites, and interpretations are further limited by the lack of extensive modern reference datasets against which fossil assemblages can be compared.

Pollen and phytoliths offer significant potential for reconstructing past vegetation, local environments, site formation processes and human-landscape interactions. Phytoliths, microscopic silica bodies produced by many plants and commonly preserved in regolith and archaeological sediments, are especially promising but remain difficult to interpret because many morphotypes are not yet securely linked to the plants that produce them. Much of the available comparative material is preliminary, fragmentary, or derived from limited West Australian studies. Pollen has a stronger taxonomic foundation, but modern pollen assemblages from many West Australian vegetation communities remain poorly documented.

This poster highlights both the current limitations and the untapped potential of pollen and phytolith analysis in Western Australian archaeological research. It proposes that progress depends on systematic collection of modern pollen and phytolith data from plants, vegetation communities, surface sediments, pollen traps and excavation contexts. Central to this work is the development of an open-access reference database that directly links plants and vegetation communities to their palynomorph and phytolith signatures. Such a resource would provide the groundwork needed to strengthen archaeological interpretation and allow future studies to build on a shared, testable foundation.

Ancient DNA analysis of historic colonial cemeteries in South Australia

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Historic colonial cemeteries provide a unique opportunity to investigate the ancestry, biological relationships and population origins of early settler communities through the integration of archaeological and genetic evidence. This project investigates human skeletal remains recovered from the historic 19th-century cemeteries of St Mary's and Gawler in South Australia, both associated with the early European colonisation of Adelaide. More than 70 individuals have been exhumed from St Mary's, where previous osteological and isotopic analyses have provided insights into health, disease, diet, and geographic origin. At Gawler, more than 20 individuals have now been recovered, with osteological and morphological analyses currently underway. This study integrates ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis with existing archaeological and bioarchaeological evidence to investigate genetic ancestry, biological relationships, and population origins across both cemetery samples. By combining morphological and molecular data, this research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the lives, identities, and population dynamics of South Australia's early colonial communities.

A bird in a Neanderthal hand: Food or ornament?

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Growing evidence across Eurasia, particularly from archaeological sites in the Iberian Peninsula, supports the ability of Neanderthals to actively hunt and consume a wide variety of birds. This demonstrates that Neanderthals employed innovative hunting techniques and possibly specialised tools to capture these elusive prey. Nevertheless, debate remains over whether bird capture also had implications beyond nutrition, including the use of bird resources such as feathers or claws for ornamental purposes.

This poster presents the evidence documented at Cova Gran de Santa Linya, a unique archaeological site in the northeastern Pre-Pyrenees, with occupations dating from approximately 55,000 to 3,000 years ago. At this site, high-resolution archaeostratigraphic analyses have enabled the identification of occupations associated with some of the last Neanderthals, the arrival of the first Homo sapiens in the region, and the subsequent transition to a farming economy.

The analysis of bird bones recovered from two archaeological units associated with Neanderthal activity (units S1C and S1D) provides insights into the role of Neanderthals in the accumulation of these remains. We present data on taxonomic identification, skeletal representation, and anthropogenic bone surface modifications to assess whether the bird remains resulted primarily from Neanderthal consumption or were instead associated with the use of feathers as ornaments.

Finding superpowers: Disability and inclusion within archaeology

Jody Schulz, The University of Queensland

I am a disabled archaeologist. Despite significant health challenges throughout my education, I have continued to pursue my dream of becoming an archaeologist. My experiences have led me to reflect on who archaeology is for and who gets to belong within the discipline.

Completing my undergraduate degree took many years. During that time, I encountered both support and barriers. Some people questioned accommodations or viewed them as inconveniences, leaving disabled students feeling scrutinised and burdensome, even when formal support arrangements were in place.

Fortunately, I also worked with educators and supervisors who listened, adapted, and recognised that there is no single way to be an archaeologist. Their support enabled me to progress through Honours and into a PhD despite ongoing health challenges and limitations on fieldwork participation.

Archaeology is often associated with excavation and physical endurance, yet the discipline also relies on research, analysis, communication, and interpretation. Fieldwork is only one aspect of archaeological practice and should not define an individual's capability or value.

Disability can foster resilience, adaptability, and creative problem-solving. These qualities bring valuable perspectives to archaeological research and challenge assumptions about how archaeologists should work.

Improving accessibility in archaeology requires more than policies and accommodations. It requires empathy, flexibility, and trust in disabled people as experts in their own needs. By creating genuinely inclusive spaces, archaeology benefits from a richer diversity of experiences, skills, and perspectives.

Challenges in managing indigenous cultural intellectual property

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Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) sits at the heart of cultural heritage management as it is Indigenous people's knowledge that is being recorded and used to identify, assess, and manage values. Collection of cultural knowledge is often governed by agreements which have been reached under legislative mechanisms, however clauses dealing with rights, access, control and management of cultural information are only recently becoming more common inclusions. Businesses, academic institutions, and other non-Indigenous parties store cultural data and information within repositories, taking the role of custodians.

Where appropriate and consistent with community expectations, legal obligations and cultural protocols, data custodians should actively support pathways for Indigenous peoples to exercise greater authority, access and control over cultural information, including repatriation where suitable, thus reinforcing rights to self-determination and cultural continuity. Guiding principles for best practice have been released by NGOs and the United Nations, however there is a lack of legislative frameworks and practical pathways to support recognition of Indigenous rights and interests in ICIP. As a result, data custodians rely on managing ICIP through agreements, organisational policies, cultural protocols and governance frameworks that seek to recognise and respond to the expectations of Indigenous communities.

Data custodians face the challenge of ensuring that ICIP is respected, protected and managed in a manner that supports self-determination, cultural continuity and community authority through attribution, cultural protocols, access and use rights, data governance, and where appropriate, pathways for repatriation. This poster explores practical approaches for embedding consideration of ICIP within heritage management practice, recognising Indigenous peoples as the custodians and interpreters of their cultural heritage, and establishing governance processes that support culturally appropriate decision-making in the absence of legislative frameworks.

Groovy grooves: Investigating unusual grooves on faunal teeth from late pleistocene layers at Švédův Stůl, Czech Republic

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Bone and tooth artefacts have significantly contributed to our understanding of Neanderthal cognition and symbolic behaviour, helping to change the perception of these hominins since their discovery. As such, a number of wolf (Canis lupus) and cave bear (Ursus ingressus) incisors excavated from Late Pleistocene layers at Švéduv Stul cave, used by Neanderthals in the Czech Republic, were found to possess unusual grooves at the neck of the tooth, raising questions about their origins. Grooves in animal teeth are normally associated with ornamentation when found at archaeological sites; however, these specimens do not display the anthropogenic characteristics found on other tooth artefacts created by Neanderthals. This study therefore investigated whether these grooves were produced through anthropogenic, pathological, or taphonomic processes. Using macroscopic and microscopic imaging techniques, damage characteristics were documented, analysed, and compared to the literature. It was found that animal behaviour in life was responsible for producing the unusual grooves on these specimens - specifically the intense grazing of grasses where materials harder than dentine but softer than enamel (such as phytoliths and grit) passed along the sides of and in between the teeth. By understanding this unusual groove morphology and how it occurs, tooth artefacts containing similar grooves can be better identified as natural or human-made, particularly in cases where these grooves have previously been assumed as anthropogenic.

Archaeology on the road: Taking archaeology education across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands

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Archaeological investigations associated with the West Musgrave Project have generated knowledge across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands of Western Australia. While archaeology is an important component of cultural heritage management, many Traditional Owners have historically engaged with heritage through cultural knowledge, Tjukurrpa, and ongoing connections to Country.

In 2025, the Ngaanyatjarra Council Aboriginal Corporation partnered with archaeologists to deliver educational workshops across five remote communities in two weeks. The program aimed to build archaeological literacy, support informed participation in heritage decision-making, and demonstrate how archaeological evidence complements Ngaanyatjarra cultural knowledge.

Tailored workshops for students, ranger teams, community members, and heritage committees used local examples, hands-on activities, artefact identification, and interactive resources to explain archaeological methods and heritage management. This poster presents the development, delivery, and outcomes of the program, highlighting practical approaches to communicating archaeology in culturally appropriate ways while strengthening community capacity and supporting Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in heritage management.