



# BOAB BULLETIN

No. 125

December 2014

## NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at

**Dalkeith Hall, 97 Waratah Avenue, Dalkeith**

Wednesday, 3 December 2014

**Daryl Moncrieff (Department of Parks and Wildlife)**

**“DPaW and Joint management of lands in the Kimberley”**

## CHANGE OF VENUE FOR MEETINGS IN 2015

With the City of Subiaco no longer needing **The Palms Community Centre** for its staff, the Society will return to that venue in 2015. For the benefit of any member who has not been to The Palms, which was once known as Subiaco Bowling Club, that venue is situated in the Nicholson Road Reserve on the corner of Nicholson and Rokeby roads. Parking is good, with about 40 car bays behind the building and some on Rokeby Road. Buses run along Nicholson and Rokeby roads and Thomas Street.

Wednesday, 4 February 2015

**Hamish McGlashan, Chris Oakley and others**

**“Travelling hopefully through Kimberley history”**

Wednesday, 4 March 2015

**Adam Cross (University of Western Australia)**

**“Aquatic life opportunistic in Kimberley’s transient wet”**

Please note that, with many of our speakers involved in work-related travel, this program may change at short notice. Should a speaker not be available, the topic may differ on the evening.

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after the meetings.  
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Throughout 2014, as in every previous year, the Kimberley Society has enjoyed tremendous support from its councillors, members and visiting presenters. Those members who were able to attend monthly meetings, at either The Palms Community Hall or Dalkeith Hall, enjoyed talks on the Kimberley region that included the ever popular walks by society members, climate and vegetation change since the first people arrived in the Kimberley, dental health care, geological history of the Argyle ore body, Broome race riots, rural health and understanding the Australian dingo. All presenters were impressed with the genuine interest shown by members that made their visit and efforts very worthwhile. The Council was also grateful to several speakers who agreed to make presentations at short notice when scheduled speakers advised that they would not be able to appear.

The Council has met regularly to ensure the Society's interests are well managed and that funds achieved through book sales, membership fees and attendances by visitors are provided to worthy projects that align with our objectives. During 2014 Society funds have supported a PhD student studying at ANU and researching biodiversity at Broome using western science, indigenous knowledge and palaeoecology, the University of Notre Dame (Fremantle) rural and remote area medical students' placement project in the Kimberley, and the Kimberley volume to the Western Australian Explorers' Diary Project. Funds have also been set aside for the Old Halls Creek Post Office information signage project. It is your council's intent to continue to subsidise worthy projects that contribute to expanding knowledge of the Kimberley region.

During 2014, members' monthly meetings were moved from The Palms Community Centre, Subiaco to the Dalkeith Hall while the Lords building in Subiaco had asbestos material removed. It is a long story but Lords building staff were obliged to move into The Palms building while repair work was being performed. Recent advice from the City of Subiaco allows future meetings to return to The Palms Community Centre as contractors have completed the works required. As from the first monthly meeting in 2015 the Society will return to Subiaco. Please note this in your diary or on your 2015 calendar!!

So in closing, on behalf of the Kimberley Society Council I wish you all a very safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year. We look forward to sharing the coming year with you at meetings to gain further knowledge and understanding of the Kimberley region that we all cherish.

*Jeff Murray*

## THE BOAB 100 CENTENARY GIFT PROJECT

Every Kimberley Society member will be familiar with boab nuts carved by Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. But few, if any, will have seen boab nut carvings presented as [sculptures](#). [Wesfarmers centenary celebrations](#) included forming a partnership with [Waringarri Aboriginal Arts](#) in Kununurra to commission 15 artists to produce one carving each. They engraved their designs on boab nut plaster casts, which were then used to cast 100 fine art sculptures apiece in white aluminium. Most of the sculptures have been given to individuals but sets of the 15 designs have been donated to public institutions. Those institutions include the National Gallery of Australia, the Parliament of Western Australia, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, and Charles Darwin University in Darwin. [Seva Frangos Art](#) (Subiaco) coordinated the project. [Urban Art Projects](#) (Brisbane) produced the cast aluminium editions. At Waringarri, the new techniques are being applied to specialty art for future sale.

## THE FIRST SWEDISH SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO AUSTRALIA 1910–1911

The First Swedish Scientific Expedition To Australia of 1910-11 is known to only a few Australians and in most cases to scientists – botanists, zoologists and ornithologists – rather than to historians or anthropologists. While the expedition leader Eric Mjöberg's book *Bland vilda djur och folk I Australien* had been published in 1915 it generally remained unread on library shelves in Australia. Mjöberg's paper on the "Phallus Cult" in the northwest was published in German and has been referenced by several writers dealing with the topic of phallic stones and other objects in Australia. Expedition ornithologist, Rudolf Söderberg and a number of other scientists did publish a number of the 32 monographs, the official results of the expedition, in English, which explains the wider appreciation of the expedition's endeavours among the scientific fraternity.

My Kimberley Society presentation, kindly delivered by **Kevin Kenneally** on 7 May 2014, attempts to show the potential for further research into the contribution made by the journals and papers maintained or created by four expedition members, Eric Mjöberg, Rudolf Söderberg, Yngve Laurell (Ethnologist) and Cyrus Videll (Museum Preparator) into a wider understanding of life on the Kimberley frontier in 1910-11.

But first a brief history of how these documents came to my attention.

The expedition documents surfaced in 2004 when I was in Sweden working with Claes Halgren on the repatriation of human remains illegally collected by Mjöberg and Laurell. I found one notebook by Laurell (by chance) in the library of the Ethnographic Museum.

Other journals by Söderberg, Videll and Laurell were made available by the Söderberg family who made contact with Claes and me while in Sweden. There were also copies of a number of newspaper cuttings, and articles written by Söderberg that appeared in a number of magazines (not scientific journals). Söderberg wrote formal papers on Australian birds and became regarded as an expert on bowerbird playground construction etc.

The Ethnographic Museum and the Söderberg family held copies of many photographs.

The Mjöberg papers and photographs were later located by Swedish diplomat Rolf Ericsson at the Californian Academy of Sciences where they had been bequeathed by a benefactor who evidently had purchased them in a Sheriff's Sale after they had been confiscated (for reasons unknown) while Mjöberg was visiting the USA.

The Californian Collection included draft manuscripts, copies of published papers and photographs, as well as journals and daybooks from Mjöberg's trips to the Kimberley and later to northern and north-eastern Queensland (1912-1913).

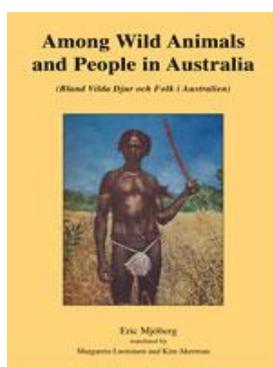
Finding the photos and the journals of Söderberg, Laurell and Videll drove home to me how little we knew of the expedition and I pursued the idea of getting as much as possible translated and out into a general arena. I sought and obtained permission from all holders of material to get copies into Australian Institutions.

Since 2004 I have, with several Swedish colleagues, worked on translating not only the journals that have been located, but also any Swedish newspaper cuttings I have been able to locate, papers from journals and magazines and also draft manuscripts left – particularly by Mjöberg, Söderberg and Laurell. While dealing with printed material was not really a problem, translating the handwritten documents was a different issue. These were often written in an abbreviated fashion with many scientific terms, taxonomic references etc., written in shorthand. In many cases the translators and I had to seek out reference works from the period to determine the animals and plants being referred to in the journals.

I also believe there must still be some journals missing – Laurel’s notes for instance are really scatty and I would hope that somewhere he has left a better, fuller record – we can only hope if there is it will come to light.

To understand the social side of interaction between the Swedish expedition members and the Australians – indigenous and non-indigenous – I have compiled a list of peoples identified at the various stations, settlements and missions visited by them. Many people have assisted me in either identifying or supplementing limited information on some of these folk. Invaluable assistance has been given in particular, by Mr Peter Conole, Dr John Norman and Mr Sam Lovell – all of who would be familiar to the membership of the Kimberley Society.

As well as the written records there are at least a hundred photographs detailing life at Mowla Downs (Mowla Bluff) on the desert fringe, Mount Barnett, in the central Kimberley and at Sunday Island. A real regret is that I did not have access to these images in the 1970s when I am sure many of the people whose images appear in the photographs could have been identified with great precision. As it is copies of these images have been returned to communities or are held on their behalf at the Kimberley Land Council.



In 2012 Hesperian Press published *Among Wild Animals and People in Australia*, a translation of Mjöberg’s *Bland vilda djur och folk i Australien*. Other scholars are now preparing a translation of Mjöberg’s other book *Bland stenåldersmänniskor i Queenslands vildmarker* – a popular account about his subsequent travels in Australia undertaken in 1912-1913. This will be released by Hesperian Press as *Among people of the stone age in the wilds of Queensland*.

It is hoped to have copies of the journals and the other translated documents placed in both State and federal institutions for the use of scholars in the next year or so. In the meantime there are many queries that I, and my colleagues, would like to have answered – In particular – Who was the Mr Richardson, of Cherrabun Station who guided Eric Mjöberg through the St George Ranges?

I believe the value of these records lies in the fact that they are produced by non-English speaking Europeans, who are scientists of repute, and experts in their various fields. How they perceive the Australian frontier reveals perhaps a broader perspective than would have been achieved by English-speaking observers with closer ties to the people that they generally encountered.

I thank the Kimberley Society for the opportunity to present this brief report on the First Swedish Scientific Expedition To Australia of 1910-11 and again express my appreciation to Kevin Kenneally for delivering it at such short notice.

*Kim Akerman*

Works referred to in the text:

Mjöberg, E. 1915. *Bland Vilda djur och Folk i Australien*. Albert Bonniers Förlag, Stockholm.

Mjöberg, E. 1918. *Bland Stenåldersmänniskor i Queenslands Vildmarker*. Albert Bonniers Förlag, Stockholm.

Söderberg, R. 1918. Studies of Birds in North West Australia. Vol. XVIII. Results of Dr. E. Mjöberg’s Swedish Scientific Expeditions to Australia 1910-1913. Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademiens Handlingar. Band 52. No. 17.

## DERBY—THE TOWN THAT TIME ALMOST FORGOT (AN EXCERPT)

*Alison Underwood (Paynter), a Kimberley Society member who lives in Bunbury, WA, sent us the following excerpt from a book she has written and will soon publish. Previous excerpts appeared in the Boab Bulletin in April and December 2013.*

### Extra Curricular Activities

During 1963 I also learned a new skill—playing golf. My instructor was Steve Crossley who was a very good player and a very patient instructor. Because I could see little point in carting around a huge bag of clubs as I trudged from one ant hill strewn green to another, I stuck with only two clubs—a number 3 iron for the long shots and of course a putter—to entice the tricky little white ball into the hole. My locomotion I had brought with me from Carnarvon, my trusty little 125cc Vespa scooter, so I could just manage to carry the golf bag with the two clubs comfortably! After Steve had instilled into me the basics, that is, hit the ball with the club, stand straight, etc, etc, I decided to front up and join the Derby Golf Club. The Derby Golf course was beset with obstacles, the most obvious being, of course, the eminent Boab trees, and the ubiquitous mounds of red earth compacted into huge ant hills. Because of their unique bottle shape, the boabs were something of a golfers' nightmare, particularly as you could see the little ball you had so painstakingly hit with such precision, ricocheting off the elliptical trunk, disappearing into the prolific undergrowth, probably forever. Some of the more enterprising of the students used to spend many hours foraging in the bushes, hoping to retrieve the balls, which, upon presentation to the grateful golfers, were usually compensated with a little monetary reward.

So every Saturday afternoon, attired in my Girl Guide navy skirt and black shoes, I would scoot out to the Golf Course. My students were particularly intrigued by this locomotion and every morning at school, I would be greeted with cries of, "Here comes Miss Paynter on her putt-putt!" This putt-putt was the sound the little engine of the Vespa seemed to make. I must have been successful at Golf, as I managed to win four trophies. The winner had a ritual pub crawl, so four times I had to shout the whole field to free beer at the Port Hotel, and this was the only time I really enjoyed a glass of ale as I was so thirsty after trudging round the dusty course all afternoon. How I ever managed to hit the ball so accurately with only two clubs still amazes me, and I think everyone else! One particularly memorable day, after hitting off, everyone started shouting "Birdie!" and the next few moments were very perplexing as I looked everywhere for a feathered specimen. It took a while to realize that I had hit a hole in one! When I related my prowess to my grandfather, he replied that anyone who spent all afternoon chasing little white balls in that heat was definitely mad! In all the years that I played I only ever purchased one more club, a number five iron but the game kept me fit, even if trudging the hot dusty course with sandy greens was not everyone's idea of recreation in such enervating tropical heat and humidity.

The only time I enjoyed alcohol was after a game of golf, and one evening, after a particularly hot day, a group of us climbed into the branches of the Boab Prison tree and quaffed a small bottle of beer. It wasn't as cool as being in the pub, but the communion with nature was inspiring. Most of the residents of Derby enjoyed alcohol as it blocked out the harsh realities of living in a harsh and enervating climate, even if only for a few hours. One frightening experience turned me off alcohol for life. I was all dressed up in my finest evening gown to attend a Ball but my escort, John, decided to have a pre-Ball drink at the pub, so down to the Port Hotel we drove. So I decided to be on the safe side and ordered an orange juice. However, by the time I had reached the bottom of the glass, I started seeing double, my head was floating around but my body couldn't seem to connect with it! I begged John to take me

home as I couldn't feel my feet. Fortunately, being the considerate guy he was, he carried me out to the ute and off home we went. I was headless and legless, as the saying goes, because my drink had been laced with the innocuous, tasteless Vodka, and though I don't recall getting home or getting into bed, I sure knew about it the next morning. Talk about hair of the dog—I would have cheerfully got myself a whole pack of canines just to ease the pain in my poor head. Not only had I missed the Ball, I was so ill it wasn't funny, even though all my friends laughed at great length. It was a good lesson for I have never repeated the experience as I suffered such a mother of a hangover the next day.

Not long after this, poor John was killed in an accident near Fitzroy Crossing. The police said his ute had slammed into the back of a road train and was crushed to about six inches thick by the force of the impact. The whole town went into mourning as he was a well liked man, very polite and caring to everyone. It took me a long time to accept that he was gone as I remember he had often accompanied me to the Anglican church on a Sunday evening, and he was a really good friend. But death is part of life and we all had to accept it and move on, however hard it was at that time. The social life was never quite the same without his cheerful smile and polite conversation – it was such a sad loss to us all.

*Alison Underwood (Copyright)*

## **AWARDS**

When Minister for Seniors and Volunteering Tony Simpson announced the winners of the [WA Seniors Awards](#) at a Perth ceremony on 8 November, [Maureen Angus](#), 62, a Jawi Bardi woman from Ardyaloon (One Arm Point) was named as WA's highest achieving senior. She received both the Seniors Advocate Award and the Juniper 2014 WA Seniors Champion Award.

Ardyaloon is a remote indigenous town located on the northern tip of the Dampier Peninsula, 220 km from Broome along Cape Leveque Road, which can be closed at times of heavy rain. Its population is approximately 300.

Ms Angus enjoyed support from her family and the Kimberley Aged and Community Services at Ardyaloon but she was aware that other seniors in her community were not so fortunate. Keen to see that situation change, she investigated how to set up a support service that would see other receive the sort of care she received.

Her research and advocacy led to the founding of the Ardyaloon Community Care Service, which supports local seniors by helping them with organised care, transport, shopping, domestic duties and paying bills. That support removed the need to travel hundreds of kilometres to access care services, and some of the seniors have been able to stay at home instead of moving to residential care in Broome.

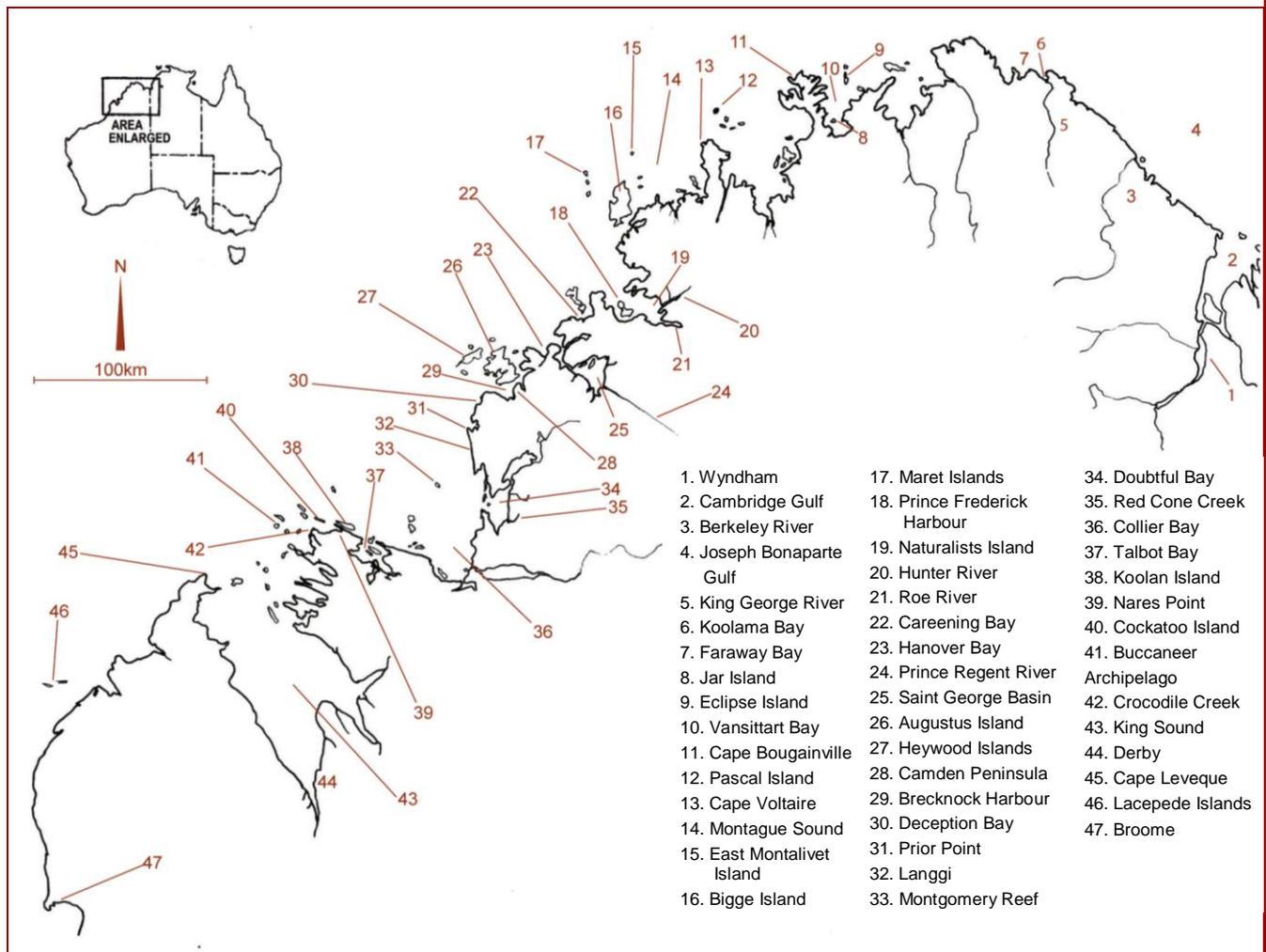
The Care Service also provides activities and outings. In relation to that, Mr Simpson said that Ms Angus's commitment and passion has helped boost social participation and reduce isolation among Ardyaloon seniors.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

The [snubfin dolphin colony](#) in Roebuck Bay comprises 137 individuals. Discovered in 2005, with many of them photographed each year since then, the colony has been studied for more than 10 years. It is the largest known to exist in WA.

## FEATURES OF THE KIMBERLEY COAST

The Kimberley coastline has a great diversity of seascapes and landforms made up of the thousands of islands, river estuaries, gulfs of all sizes, basins, beaches, mudflats, and an extensive set of bays. So unique is this coastline authorities like Brocx and Semeniuk suggest it is of global geoheritage significance ([Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia](#), 94: 57–88, 2011).



### Locations and features of the Kimberley coast

This brief article introduces a series on the Kimberley coast that will appear in the *Boab Bulletin* next year. The first features to be considered will be Koolama Bay in the north east Kimberley (shown as #6 on the map above) and Doubtful Bay (shown as #34). These two bays illustrate how influential the arrangement of an easily weathered rock formation, when located beneath an otherwise resistant formation, significantly determines the development of landforms and their diversity.

Before we being to understand how the bays were formed it is helpful to come to grips with some Kimberley geology. The Kimberley geology in terms of rock types and structure is well illustrated along the coast. The strata of the several sedimentary and igneous rock formations have remained essentially horizontal. The strata were all laid down in a sinking, Kimberley-sized basin beginning some 1,800 million years ago, with the first sediments forming a resistant sandstone formation, King Leopold Sandstone. This was overlaid by Carson Volcanics mostly represented as basalt, followed by Warton Sandstone, Elgee Siltstone and Pentecost Sandstone deposits. Later, further lava was forced upwards and cooled particularly between the beds of

the lower, older strata (e.g. King Leopold Sandstone) forming sheets of rock (sills) called Hart Dolerite. While the basalt, dolerite and siltstone weather comparatively rapidly the sandstones remain quite resistant. As it happened resistant formations are underlain or associated with easily weathered ones – Elgee Siltstone is under Pentecost Sandstone; Warton Sandstone is underlain by Carson Volcanics; and in many locations King Leopold Sandstone is impregnated with sills of Hart Dolerite.



Shoreline in a bay near Cape Voltaire (map ref #13). The Hart Dolerite (left foreground) was a sill once encased in the adjacent King Leopold. Once exposed to weathering conditions the rapid breakdown of the dolerite caused the otherwise resistant King Leopold Sandstone to disintegrate.

There are some other rock types including those of the Yampi formation, bauxite and laterite but these have quite limited distributions on the coastline compared to the six main formations mentioned above.

Earth movements occurring hundreds of millions of years ago changed the arrangement of the rocks in the south west of the Kimberley resulting in folded mountains and deep valleys. A significant uplift occurring some 20 million years ago across the Kimberley was to produce rejuvenated physical weathering by the rivers and creeks leading to the development of many of the landforms we see today.

The wide and shallow continental shelf of the Kimberley means that during the many periods of past lowered sea levels the sea had no influence on coastal land-forming processes. This same feature of the continental shelf is also a major influence in producing today's mega-tidal conditions.

*Sandy Scott*

Editor's Note. This welcome addition to our usual fare follows a [talk](#) that Dr Scott gave to the Society on 5 October 2011 on the subject of 'Bays, Basins, Islands and Estuaries of the Kimberley Coast'. His book, *Kimberley Coast: A Traveller's Guide to Bays, Basins, Islands and Estuaries*, published in 2012, was recently reprinted. It offers lots of information and great images. See [here](#) for our book note.

## ABORIGINAL PAINTINGS AT MUNURRU

**David Welch**, a Kimberley Society member resident in the Northern Territory, has generously donated 10 copies of his most recent publication to the Society, for us to sell. The lavishly illustrated, 82-page book – *Aboriginal Paintings at Munurru, Kimberley, Western Australia* – is No. 9 in David's [Australian Aboriginal Culture Series](#). It is essentially a guide to the Kimberley's most visited rock art sites.

Munurru lies on the western side of the King Edward River in Wunambal country. The sites are in two rock clusters, 4.5 kilometres apart, beside the track to the Mitchell Plateau. David's presentation of information about them takes the reader on a visual tour of paintings that span thousands of years. After brief comments about Kimberley rock art styles, he discusses the Wandjina Complex, the Warnmarri (Brolga) Complex, weathering, and human impact on the sites. He also cites legends that traditional owners related to his group during a visit.

The book, designed to assist with both understanding and appreciation, offers an excellent selection of photographs of the art. Sketch maps show its location, and other photographs help with its interpretation. The paintings depict plants from the earliest Archaic Period, people in ceremonial dress, thylacines and other animals, birds, and Wandjina.

Copies, priced at \$25 each, will be available at the Society's December meeting. A full list of retail outlets is available [here](#), and email addresses are provided for the outlets that offer to fill orders by mail.

## BONAPARTE ARCHIPELAGO AND BROWSE BASIN

Inpex Australia and its five [Ichthys LNG Project](#) joint venture participants have presented the Kimberley Society with a copy of the recently published [Ecological studies of the Bonaparte Archipelago and Browse Basin](#). Containing a range of studies conducted on lands and in waters important to Aboriginal communities, this impressive book provides valuable insight into various aspects of the terrestrial and marine environment.

## PROPOSED BROWSE FLOATING LNG DEVELOPMENT

On 19 November 2014, Woodside Petroleum released its draft environmental impact statement ([EIS](#)) for the proposed Browse floating LNG development. The 366-page document, available on Woodside's website, has 14 sections and 44 appendices, of which 39 are technical studies. It can be downloaded in full or as components.

The draft EIS has been released because the Federal Government ruled that Woodside's original referral of the Browse project for environmental approval should be assessed through a more stringent controlled action process. The development was referred through the Minister for the Environment for environmental assessment as a controlled action under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) in November 2013. The Draft EIS document addresses the [EIS Guidelines](#) issued by the Minister.

In line with its original referral document released almost a year ago, Browse project operator Woodside has focused on using three FLNG vessels to tap the gas and condensate in three fields in the Browse Basin over a 50-year life.

Comments on the draft EIS should be submitted to [BrowseEIS@woodside.com.au](mailto:BrowseEIS@woodside.com.au) by close of business on 19 December. Feedback is to be incorporated into the final submission by Woodside.

## OUR E-NEWSLETTER

When the email version of the October *Boab Bulletin* was distributed, the recipients were asked for feedback on the usefulness or otherwise of the website links in our e-newsletters. Only seven responded. All were positive, and they commented on more than the links. The following extracts come from the responses:

- The links ... are wonderful! and represent real "added value".
- I think the links you are putting in the electronic version of the Bulletin are great.
- Thanks, electronic copy of Boab Bulletin is just perfect.
- email is obviously best
- I can understand you going electronic, the postage is huge. I think it looks great ...
- I am happy to be moved onto the email listing. I appreciate the ever increasing cost of post and value the bulletin.
- I think it's great – easy to read, good with colour illustrations, and impossible to lose!

Your editor shares the “added value” view but, without asking the readers, it was impossible to know whether anyone found the links off-putting. Taking the lack of negative feedback as an indication that members feel either positive or neutral about the links, we will continue to add them where it seems productive to do so.

From the editor's perspective, the links afford scope for sharing research done in the preparation of articles, e.g. five links placed in the page 2 item headed 'The Boab 100 Centenary Gift Project'. They also let readers know that specific material, e.g. the journal mentioned at the start of Sandy Scott's article on page 7, is available online. Another aspect is that, when we put summaries of talks on our website, the links help outsiders to investigate things that might be new to them. The summary of Jiri and Marie Lochman's talk – '[Thirty Years of Kimberley Photography](#)' – from June 2011 is a good example. As well as seeing Jiri's beautiful photographs, and reading about his work, people can quickly access more information about the wildlife he captured in the photographs.

## COUNCIL 2014-2015

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