



CONNECTIONS ACROSS  
THE CORAL SEA

A STORY OF MOVEMENT



In keeping with the spirit of reconciliation, the Queensland Museum Network acknowledges the First Peoples – the Traditional Owners of the lands where we live and work. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders – past and present – and acknowledge the important roles Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders continue to play as part of the Queensland Museum Network community.

Published by Queensland Museum in partnership with the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage



AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL  
Centre of Excellence for  
Australian Biodiversity  
and Heritage

QUEENSLAND  
MUSEUM NETWORK



Queensland  
Government



C • N N E C T I O N S   A C R • S S  
T H E   C O R A L   S E A  
A S T O R Y   O F   M O V E M E N T



## Authors

**Dr Tom Chandler** is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of IT at Monash University (Sensilab). His research explores the interdisciplinary applications of virtual world building, with project collaborations ranging from archaeology, anthropology and zoology through to industrial design and landscape ecology. His primary research endeavour, the Visualising Angkor Project ([www.virtualangkor.com](http://www.virtualangkor.com)), explores the evidence-based virtual reconstruction of Cambodia's medieval capital in the year 1300.

**Dr Geraldine Mate** is Principal Curator (History, Industry and Technology) at Queensland Museum and is responsible for history and transport curation and collections held across the museum network. Her current research projects focus on the cultural landscape of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century mining towns and industrial complexes in Queensland. Geraldine's other research interests encapsulate broader reflections on cultural landscapes. She holds Adjunct Senior Research Fellow positions at James Cook University and University of Southern Queensland and is a Partner Investigator in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage.

**Dr Maddy McAllister** is a maritime archaeologist with a career spanning over a decade working in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. Her research interests revolve around shipwrecks and underwater archaeology in Australasia. She has a passion for wooden ship construction and site formation processes particularly on reef environments, as well as championing science communication in the field. As the Senior Curator of Maritime Archaeology, Maddy is a co-appointment with the Queensland Museum Network and James Cook University.

**Professor Ian McNiven** is Professor of Indigenous Archaeology in the Monash Indigenous Studies Centre, Monash University, and a Chief Investigator in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage. Ian is an elected Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and the Australian Academy of the Humanities. His research collaborations with First Nations 'Saltwater' communities focus on ritualised seascapes and island societies of Torres Strait and the Queensland coast.

**Michael Neylan** is a 3D artist and animator, currently teaching in the immersive media discipline at Monash University. He has developed 3D models in a range of research projects, including the 3D reconstruction of historical scenes and the creation of virtual landscape simulations with CSIRO. Recently, Michael became a co-author in a transport study on autonomous vehicles in collaboration with Monash civil engineering.

**Sophie Price** is the Assistant Curator, Anthropology at Queensland Museum Network, based at Museum of Tropical Queensland in Townsville. Sophie manages the unique anthropology and social history collections from across Queensland. Sophie's research focuses on re-contextualising cultural collections and addressing colonial legacies and practices in museums. Sophie is also passionate about strategic contemporary collecting to address the imbalance of traditional museum collections and diversify collecting areas that look at women's history, LGBTIQ+ communities and current social and political movements.

**Professor Sean Ulm** is a Distinguished Professor in the College of Arts, Society & Education at James Cook University. He is Deputy Director of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage. His research focuses on persistent problems in the archaeology of northern Australia and the western Pacific where understanding the relationships between environmental change and cultural change using advanced studies of archaeological and palaeoenvironmental sequences are central to constructions of the human past. His priority has been to develop new tools to investigate and articulate co-variability and co-development of human and natural systems.

**Dr Katherine Woo** is a zooarchaeologist who holds a BA (Hons) from the University of Queensland, and a PhD from the University of Sydney. She is currently a postdoctoral research fellow in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage, at James Cook University. Her research utilises a range of ecological, biological, and archaeological data to examine economic practices, human-environmental interactions, landscape use, small-scale environmental reconstructions, and taphonomic issues in terrestrial and submerged settings from around the world.

## Acknowledgements

The information in this book has been derived from many sources and assistance has been provided by a range of individuals and organisations. Queensland Museum gratefully acknowledges the significant partnerships and generous and enthusiastic support that have ensured the success of this project.

In particular, the museum thanks First Nations communities from the Torres Strait (Waibene, Erub, Boigu, Mer, Mabuia), mainland Queensland (Jiigurru, Yarrabah, Kunhanha (Mornington Island), Aurukun, Kowanyama and Weipa) and New Guinea (Purari Delta, Wuatam (Watom) Island, Kiwai Island, Samarai Island).

### Organisations

Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage (CABAH)

James Cook University

Monash University

University of Technology Sydney

Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre Trust (TATSICC)

Walmbaar Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

Hopevale Congress Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

### Individuals

Leitha Assan, Gab Titui Cultural Centre

Phillip Baru, Walmbaar Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

Jonathan Charlie, Walmbaar Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

Brian Cobus, Hopevale Congress Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

Daniel La Mela, University of Technology Sydney

Dr Ariana Lambrides, CABAH, James Cook University

Elaine McGreen, Walmbaar Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

Jon O'Neill, University of Technology Sydney

Dr Jim Specht, Australian Museum

All contributing authors, particularly Distinguished Professor Sean Ulm and Professor Ian McNiven, CABAH

### Queensland Museum staff

Peter Denham, Director, Collections and Research

Lisa Porter, Head, Collection Services

Christopher Salter, Head, Cultures and Histories

Diana Azzarello, Senior Exhibition Designer

Laura Cantrell, Graphic Designer

Jason Elliott, Exhibition Project Manager

Karen Kindt, Collection Manager, Anthropology

Chris Michalas, Exhibition Graphic Designer

Avril Quail, A/Head, Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander Engagement

Alison Ross, Senior Exhibition Designer

Cathy ter Bogt, Senior Conservator

Andrew Uttley, Senior Exhibition Designer

Sue Valis, Conservator



**It is customary in many First Nations communities not to mention the name or reproduce photographs of the deceased. All such mentions and photographs in this publication are with permission. However, care and discretion should be exercised in using this book within First Nations communities.**

© Queensland Museum 2021

Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, this book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form, without prior written permission from the Queensland Museum. Queries regarding the re-publication of any material should be addressed to:

Chief Executive Officer  
Queensland Museum Network  
PO Box 3300  
South Brisbane BC, QLD 4101  
Australia

**Editing** Bronwyn Mitchell (principal), Ruth Ridgway

**Design** Chris Michalas

**Photography** Peter Waddington (principal), Gary Cranitch and Skye Bloom (SB Creative Co)

**Project coordinator** Geraldine Mate



A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

ISBN: 978-0-6488005-4-5

Published by Queensland Museum Network in partnership with the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage (CABAH) for the exhibition *Connections Across the Coral Sea*.

Museum of Tropical Queensland, Townsville,  
December 2021 – May 2022

Queensland Museum, Brisbane,  
June – October 2022

Funding support from the Australian Research Council (CE170100015) is gratefully acknowledged.

First printed 2021

Set in Metric 9pt

Printed in Brisbane on 130gsm Pinnacle Satin by Print Works

All objects, unless otherwise acknowledged, belong to the Queensland Museum collection. All photographs, unless otherwise acknowledged, are the property of Queensland Museum and are available for sale through the Queensland Museum Image Library.

qm.images@qm.qld.gov.au  
www.qm.qld.gov.au

› **Inside front and back covers**

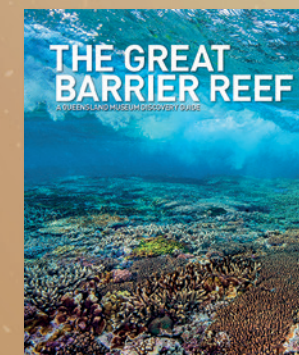
Day Reef, about 20 km north of Jigurrú.  
QM, Gary Cranitch

## Queensland Museum Publications

Queensland Museum is custodian of the state's natural and cultural heritage collections, which tell the changing story of Queensland through objects, specimens and artefacts. The Museum is recognised nationally as a leading publisher of natural and cultural heritage titles. Our bestselling books feature stunning, full-colour photography of the places, flora and fauna of Queensland and are the perfect introduction to the incredible beauty and biodiversity of the state.

Queensland Museum publications can be purchased at all Queensland Museum Network shops, or online at [shop.qm.qld.gov.au](http://shop.qm.qld.gov.au)

For wholesale enquiries, or to obtain a full list of available titles, please call 07 3153 4415 or email [wholesale@qm.qld.gov.au](mailto:wholesale@qm.qld.gov.au)





Imagine a place unbounded by western borders,  
where thoughts, ideas and objects are shared among rich,  
seafaring cultures — a place of substantial exchange  
that has existed since time immemorial.

For thousands of years, the Coral Sea has been a  
place of significant cultural interaction between people  
from southern New Guinea, north Queensland and the  
Torres Strait Islands. While trade and relationships  
continue across this region today, archaeologists working  
in partnership with First Nations communities have  
highlighted ancient two-way cultural movement and  
connection over an extraordinarily large area.

*Connections Across the Coral Sea* draws together the  
threads of archaeological and anthropological research,  
the dynamism of artefacts and objects, and the knowledge  
and stories of First Nations people to tell the rich history of  
this fascinating and incredibly beautiful part of the world.



AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL  
Centre of Excellence for  
Australian Biodiversity  
and Heritage

**QUEENSLAND  
MUSEUM NETWORK**



**Queensland  
Government**

ISBN: 978-0-6448005-4-5



9 780648 800545