

Did Homo erectus make it to Australia?

September 2018

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notes

DNA reveals ancient girl from Siberia had Neanderthal mother and Denisovan father

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ABC Science By Genelle Weule

Updated 23 August 2018 at 11:49 pm

First posted 23 August 2018 at 11:08 am



The Russian Altai region was home to a melting pot of early human species (Wikipedia Commons)

They may not even be Neanderthals or Denisovans, said Michael Westaway, also from Griffith University.

"It makes you wonder if the Denisovans' genomes aren't simply *Homo erectus* [another earlier species of human, also known as Java man]," said Dr Westaway, who was not involved in the research.

"It will be good a day when we find the fossil skulls of these Denisovans to work out what hominin they are."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2018-08-23/scientists-discover-bones-of-first-child-of-different-species/10155434>

Stone tools found on Sulawesi in Indonesia 'made by ancient humans at least 118,000 years ago'

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ABC Science By Dani Cooper

Updated 14 January 2016 at 12:10 pm

First posted 14 January 2016 at 5:19 am



Sediment surrounding stone tools found in Sulawesi has been dated between 118,000 and 194,000 years old. (Supplied: Erick Setiabudi)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2016-01-14/stone-tools-date-earliest-occupations-of-humans-on-sulawesi/7086308>

Pygmy people in Indonesia not related to 'hobbit' but evolved short stature independently

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ABC Science By science reporter Belinda Smith

Posted 3 August 2018 at 4:48 am



A new DNA study shows *Homo floresiensis* genes don't live on in a group of people living near where the extinct hominin was discovered. (Flickr: Karen Neoh)

The Indonesian island of Flores may be famous as the home of a tiny enigmatic extinct human, but its present-day pygmy population has a few mysteries of its own.

It's thought that an ancient human species known as *Homo erectus* colonised the island of Java from around 1.7 million years to 23,000 years ago, and *Homo floresiensis* lived on Flores from roughly 190,000 to 50,000 years ago.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2018-08-03/pygmy-people-flores-not-ancestors-hobbit-homo-floresiensis/10065214>

Did ancient Denisovans discover Australia 50,000 years before modern humans?

by Tom Martinscroft for History - Ancient, Medieval & Modern



Wallace's Line separating southeast Asian and Australian fauna today, and around 50,000 years ago when sea levels were much lower

Professor Cooper believes that, having crossed Wallace's Line over 100,000 years ago, it would be “amazing” if the Denisovans hadn't then reached Australia – a crossing made simpler by much lower sea levels in the Paleolithic. “If you cross Wallace's Line you've done all the hard work,” he said. While no Denisovan remains have so far been found outside of Siberia, he reckons such discoveries could just be waiting to be found.

<https://www.abroadintheyard.com/denisovans-discover-australia/>

'Australian Antiques Roadshow' sees farmers hand in Aboriginal artefacts held for generations

By national Indigenous affairs reporter [Isabella Higgins](#) and Bindi Bryce
Posted about 4 hours ago



PHOTO: Farmer John Martin inspects a number of stone objects found on his property. (ABC News: Isabella Higgins)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-22/aboriginal-artefacts-on-farm-shared-with-researchers/10291124>

Aboriginal Australians, Pacific Islanders carry DNA of unknown human species, research analysis suggests

Updated 26 Oct 2016, 10:44pm

People from Papua New Guinea and north-east Australia carry small amounts of DNA of an unidentified, extinct human species, a new research analysis has suggested.

The analysis suggests the DNA is unlikely to come from Neanderthals or Denisovans, but from a third extinct hominid, previously unknown to archaeologists.

Statistical geneticist Ryan Bohlender and his team investigated the percentages of extinct hominid DNA in modern humans.

They found discrepancies in previous analyses and found that interbreeding between Neanderthals and Denisovans was not the whole story to our ancestors' genetic makeup.

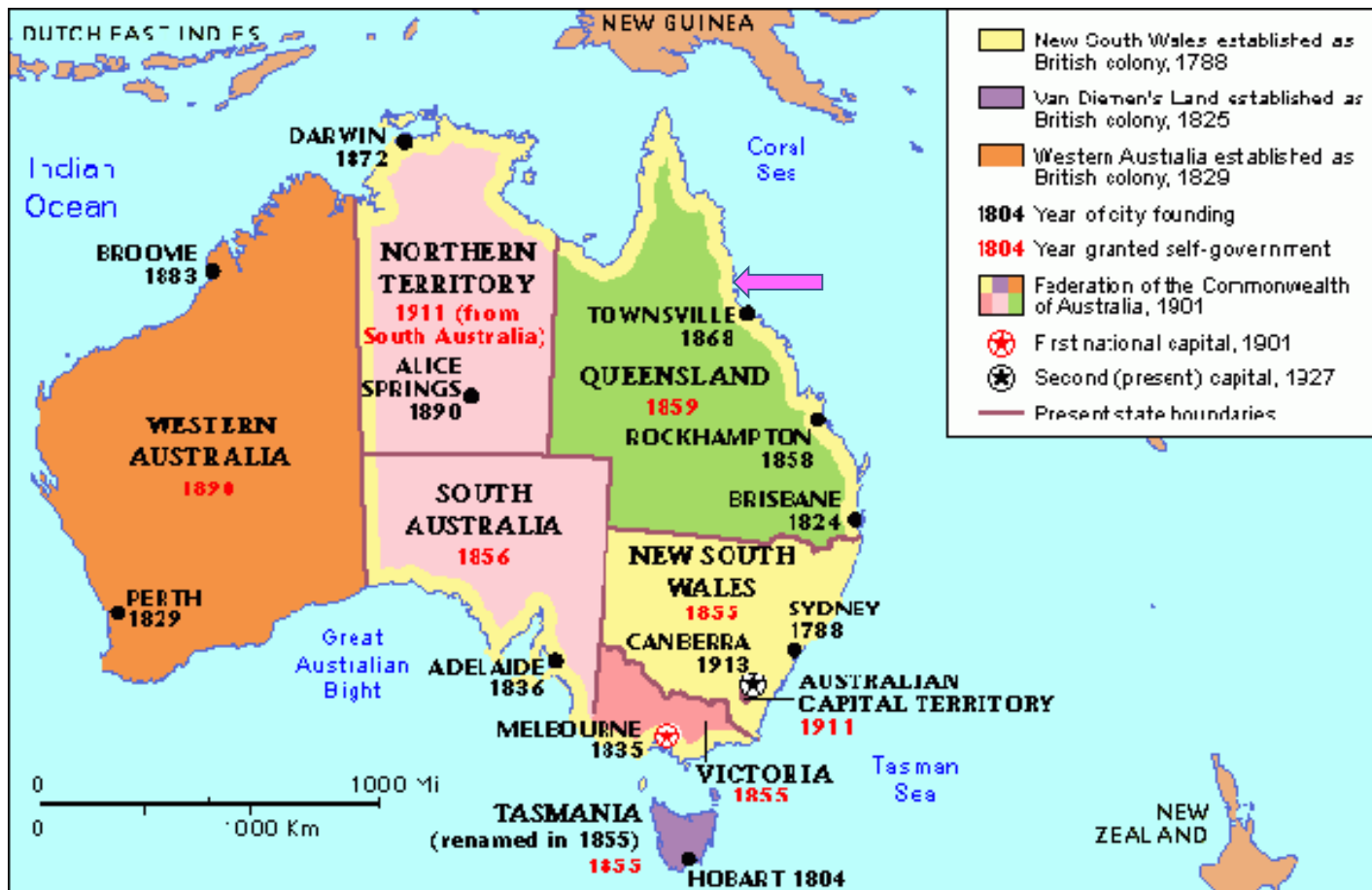


PHOTO: A third group of hominids may have bred with the ancestors of Melanesians. (Supplied: Briar March)

RELATED STORY: [World-first genome study reveals rich history of Aboriginal Australians](#)

RELATED STORY: [Genetic map reveals impact of interbreeding with cavemen](#)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-26/dna-of-extinct-human-species-pacific-islanders-analysis-suggests/7968950>



- 1885 KURANDA
BULUWAI TRIBE
- 1876 CAIRNS
- 1868 TOWNSVILLE
- 1824 BRISBANE
- 1788 SYDNEY



Frontier 1997 Aboriginal Doco

This exploration of Aboriginal history is divided into four main sections, moving from the Dreaming through contact history, to massacres and resistance, on to assimilation policies and the politics of Aboriginal cultures, to a final section on historiography - the various ways in which Aboriginal history has been made and remade.

<https://youtu.be/zQE75wmRgZo>

“Colonisation” or “settlement” by the British in Australia started 100 years prior in Sydney – over 2,500 km away from Buluwai country, Far North Queensland. Frontier violence (massacres) and Mona Mona Seventh Day Adventist Mission are still in the community’s “living memory”.



87. Camp of Barrinean negritoid aborigines in the rain forest covering parts of Atherton Plateau, Queensland, with wild banana leaf thatched huts. Atkinson photograph, period around 1890.

Tindale Genealogical Collection

Over many years anthropologist and entomologist Norman Tindale recorded genealogies of Aboriginal people. From 1928 he began visiting Aboriginal people living on missions and government stations, participated in the 1938-1939 Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition, and by the end of the 1960s had photographed thousands of Aboriginal people, collected significant cultural material and recorded a large number of genealogies (family trees).

SLQ has copies of genealogical information and photographs from the Tindale Genealogical Collection for the Queensland Aboriginal communities of Yarrabah, Cherbourg, **Mona Mona**, Palm Island, Woorabinda, Bentinck Island, Doomadgee and Mornington Island, as well as two northern New South Wales communities at Boggabilla and Woodenbong. <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/tindale>

Birdsell recognised the small stature tribes and variously referred to them as "negritos", "Tasmanoids", "pygmies" or "Barrineans".

Physical Anthropology of Tribes (Page 89)

Evidence available up to the present suggests that The first human invaders of the virgin Australian continent, some forty thousand or more years ago, were a **people of small stature of a type still to be found in small hideaway groups** in the rain forests of tropical Southeast Asia and New Guinea, and as far out into the Pacific as the New Hebrides. They are collectively known as negritos, a separate small-framed type of modern man forming one of the earliest stocks in southern Asia, and geographically, somewhat remote from the negrito peoples of Africa. Birdsell (1941, 1949, 1967) formally named the Australian representatives of this type as the **Barrinean**, after our 1938 work in the Lake Barrine area had confirmed their presence (Tindale and Birdsell, 1940; see pi. 87). We found representatives of **twelve tribes of substantially negritoid type clinging to the shelter of the rain forests** of the Atherton tableland and the tropical lowland rain forests nearer to the coast, and living in artificially created open patches cleared in past times by firing of the forest during dry phases of the year. **Birdsell measured definitive series of both males and females, sufficient to establish the type beyond cavil.** Of an original population present in the 1890s when the area was first opened to occupation—an estimated two thousand—we probably saw five hundred present-day descendants. Our discovery was in effect a confirmation of suggestions and casual observations that had been made over many years, but overlooked by students of physical anthropology.

ABORIGINAL TRIBES OF AUSTRALIA

Their Terrain, Environmental Controls, Distribution, Limits, and Proper Names

By NORMAN B. TINDALE

With an Appendix on Tasmanian Tribes by RHYS JONES

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESS
Canberra
1974



Pictured left is Ngunbuy (*Willie Brim*) Local Traditional Owner, Buluwai country Far North Queensland

- Direct descendant of Tji Awan (*Toby Brim b. 1867*) great grandfather born on Buluwai country and incarcerated at Mona Mona Seventh Day Adventist Mission 1916.
- Willie is small-statured
- Willie has unusual skull features that appear to be *Homo erectus*



Toby Brim standing third from the left. Wrights Creek, Barron Gorge
Willie's Great Grandfather

Norman Tindale and Joseph Birdsell (pictured right) visited Mona Mona Mission on the 1938-1939 Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition.

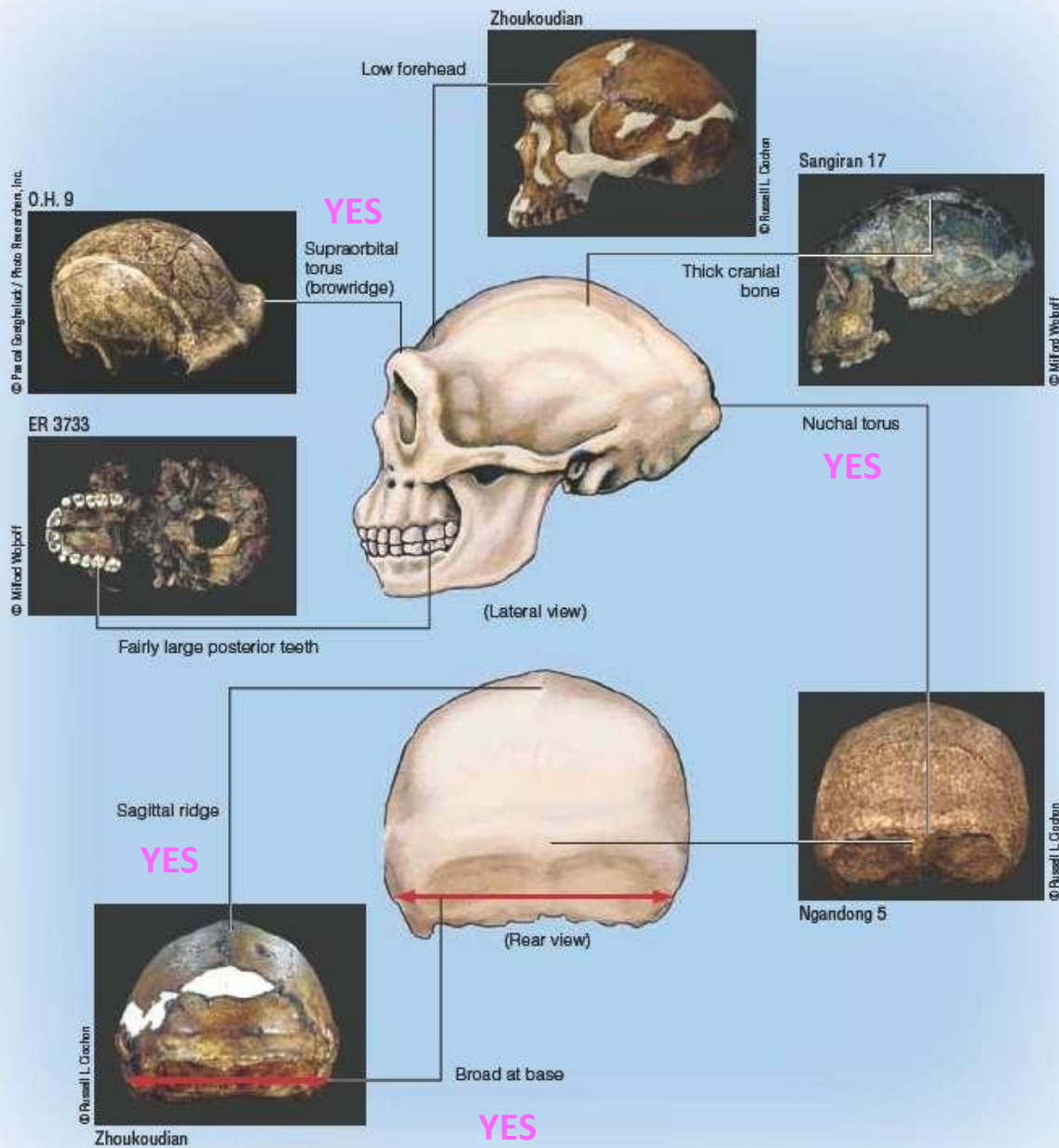
The Tindale Collection encompasses approximately 150 Aboriginal Tribes, the work spanning 70 years.



Joseph Birdsell, height 186 centimetres (six feet one inch), with twenty-four-year-old male of the Kongkandji tribe, height 140 centimetres (four feet six inches). The photograph was taken at Mona Mona Mission, near Kuranda, North Queensland, in 1938.



Toby Brim's youngest son Cecil Brim b.1902
Willie's grandfather



Willie Brim has multiple skull features of *Homo erectus*

- Supraorbital torus – pronounced brow ridge
- Nuchal torus - peaked bone structure at base of skull
- Broad at base - unlike *Homo sapien* which is broader at the forehead line
- Sagittal ridge – pronounced ridge on top of skull



▲ Figure 9-2
Morphology and variation in *Homo erectus*.



Cassowaries (*/ˈkæsəwɛəri/*), genus **Casuarius**, are ratites (flightless birds without a keel on their sternum bone) that are native to the tropical forests of New Guinea (Papua New Guinea and Indonesia), nearby islands, and northeastern Australia.^[3]
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassowary>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunda_Shelf

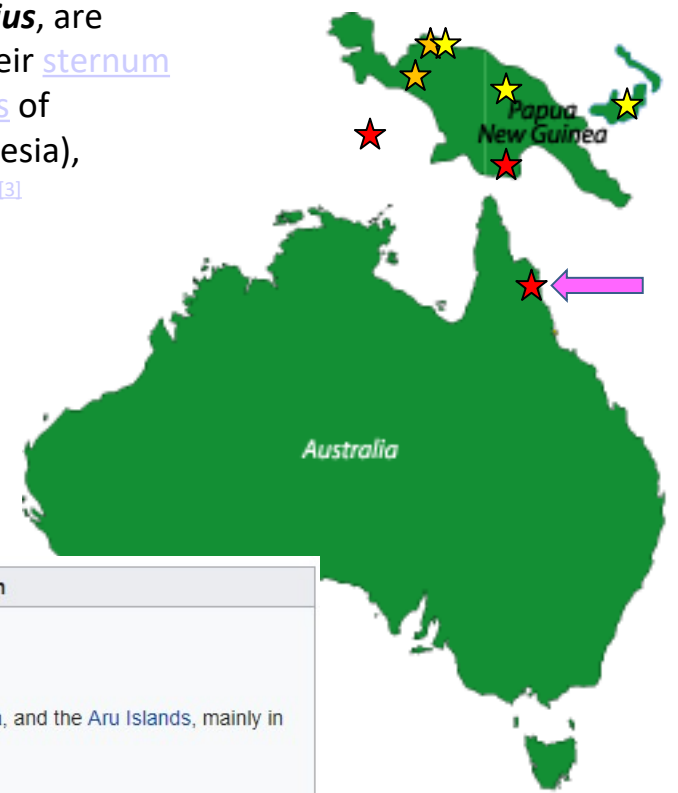



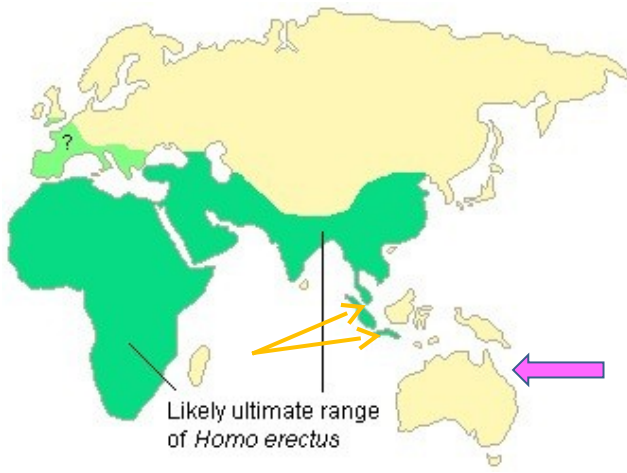


Image	Scientific name	Common Name	Distribution
	★ <i>Casuarius casuarius</i>	Southern cassowary or double-wattled cassowary	southern New Guinea , northeastern Australia , and the Aru Islands , mainly in lowlands ^[3]
	★ <i>Casuarius bennetti</i>	Dwarf cassowary or Bennett's cassowary	New Guinea , New Britain , and Yapen , mainly in highlands. ^[3]
	★ <i>Casuarius unappendiculatus</i>	Northern cassowary or single-wattled cassowary	Northern and western New Guinea , and Yapen , mainly in lowlands ^{[3][11]}

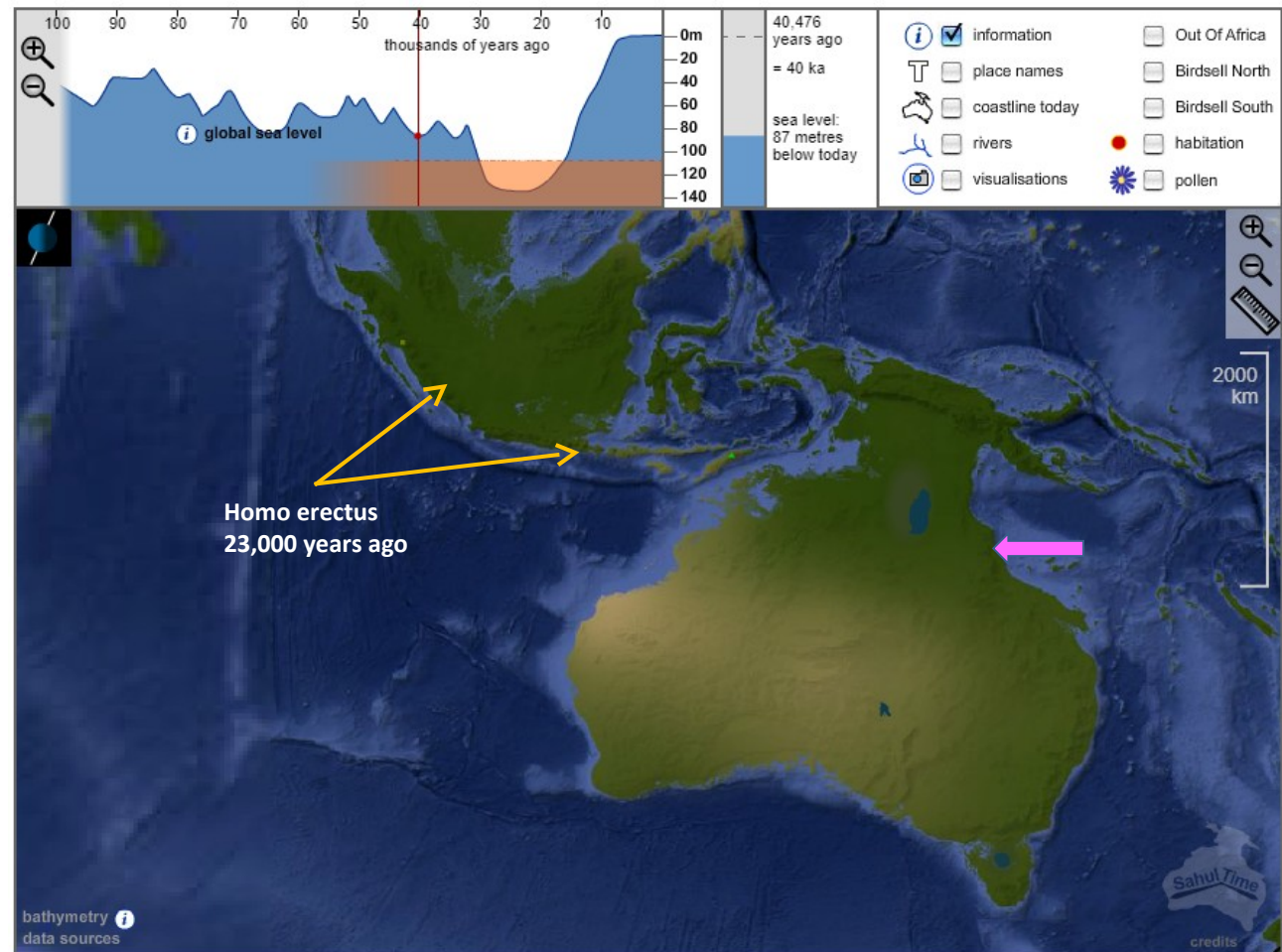
- Ratites are strong swimmers and suited to their 'waterworld' origins.
- Unknown if evidence has been found of cassowary or other ratites on the Sunda side of the Wallace line
- Ratites are found in South America (Greater rhea) and New Zealand (Moa)



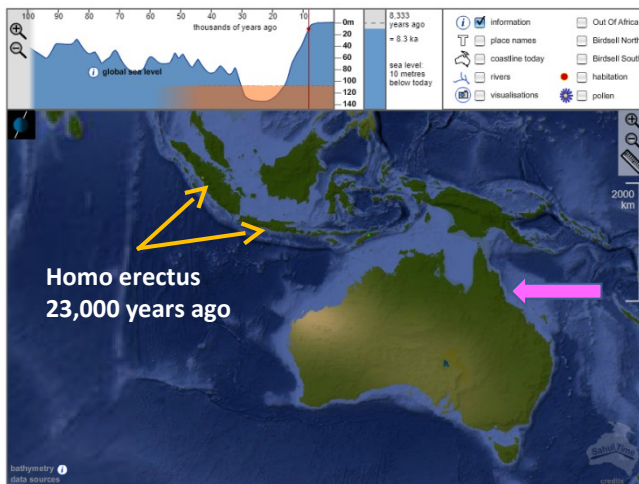
Around 8 thousand years ago Australia (Sahul) was separated from Java/Sumatra/Borneo (Sunda).

The previous 100,000 years the land bridge 'Sahul Shelf' provided ample access between Australia to the 'Sunda Shelf', where *Homo erectus* was last seen around 23,000 years ago.

40,000 years ago



10,000 years ago / current level



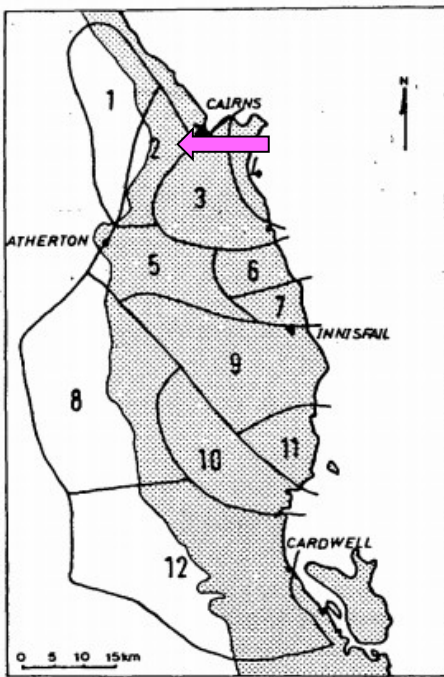


Figure 1. The rainforest "culture area" showing tribal territories and names (from Tindale 1974) and Pre-European distribution of rainforest (shaded)(from Birtles 1967).

1. Tjapukai
2. Buluwai
3. Idindji
4. Kongkandji
5. Ngatjan
6. Madjandji
7. Wanjuru
8. Djirubal
9. Mamu
10. Gulingai
11. Djiru
12. Keramai

THEORISING ABOUT NORTHEAST QUEENSLAND PREHISTORY

NICKY HORSFALL 1984

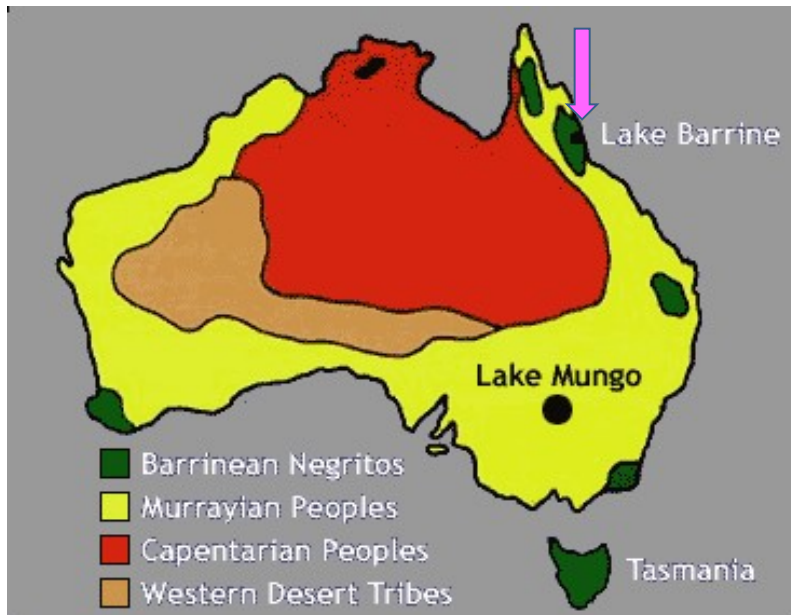
AN EARLY THEORY OF RAINFOREST PREHISTORY

The earliest theory about Aboriginal occupation of the North - Queensland rainforests was put forward by Tindale and Birdsell (1941). In 1938-39 they studied the tribes of this region, describing them as:

characterized by a high incidence of relatively and absolutely small stature, crisp curly hair, and a tendency toward yellowish-brown skin colour (Tindale and Birdsell 1941:1).

These tribes variously referred to as "negritos", "Tasmanoids", "pygmies" or "Barrineans", were believed by Tindale and Birdsell to be closely related to the Tasmanian Aborigines and other small-statured groups in the extreme southeast and southwest of the mainland. Their cultural affinities were also seen as being with the people of southern Australia rather than with their nearer neighbors.

<https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/27502/1/27502-horsfall-1984.pdf>



Map left. Joseph Birdsell recognised Barrinean negritos as physically different from other Indigenous populations and developed the *Trihybrid Thesis* to explain his observations.

Sky islands are isolated mountains surrounded by radically different lowland environments.

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Some sky islands serve as [refugia](#) for boreal species stranded by warming climates since the [last glacial period](#). In other cases, localized populations of plants and animals tend towards [speciation](#), similar to oceanic islands such as the [Galápagos Islands](#) of [Ecuador](#).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sky_island

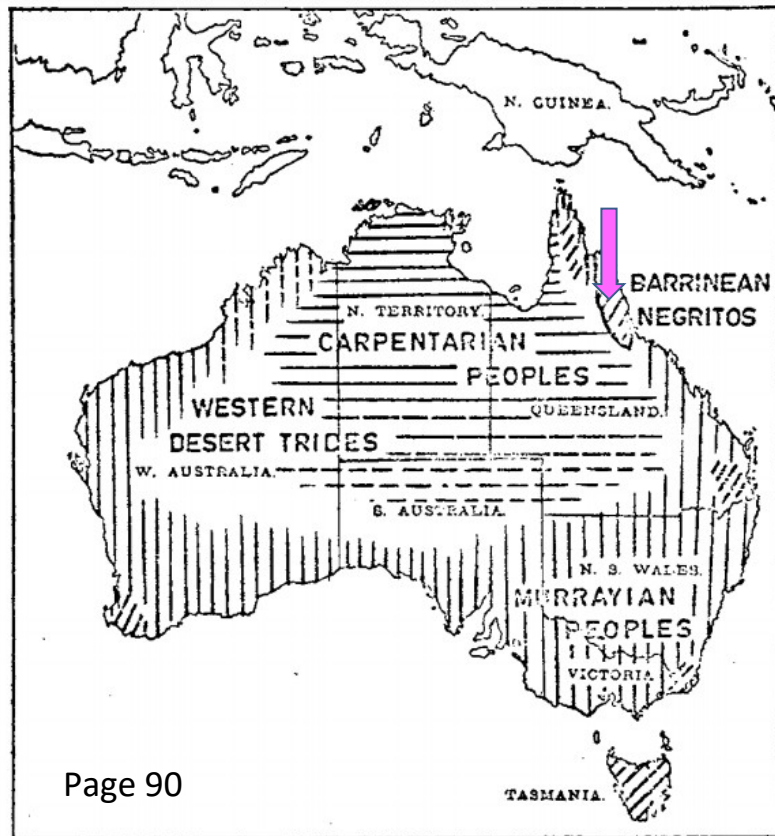
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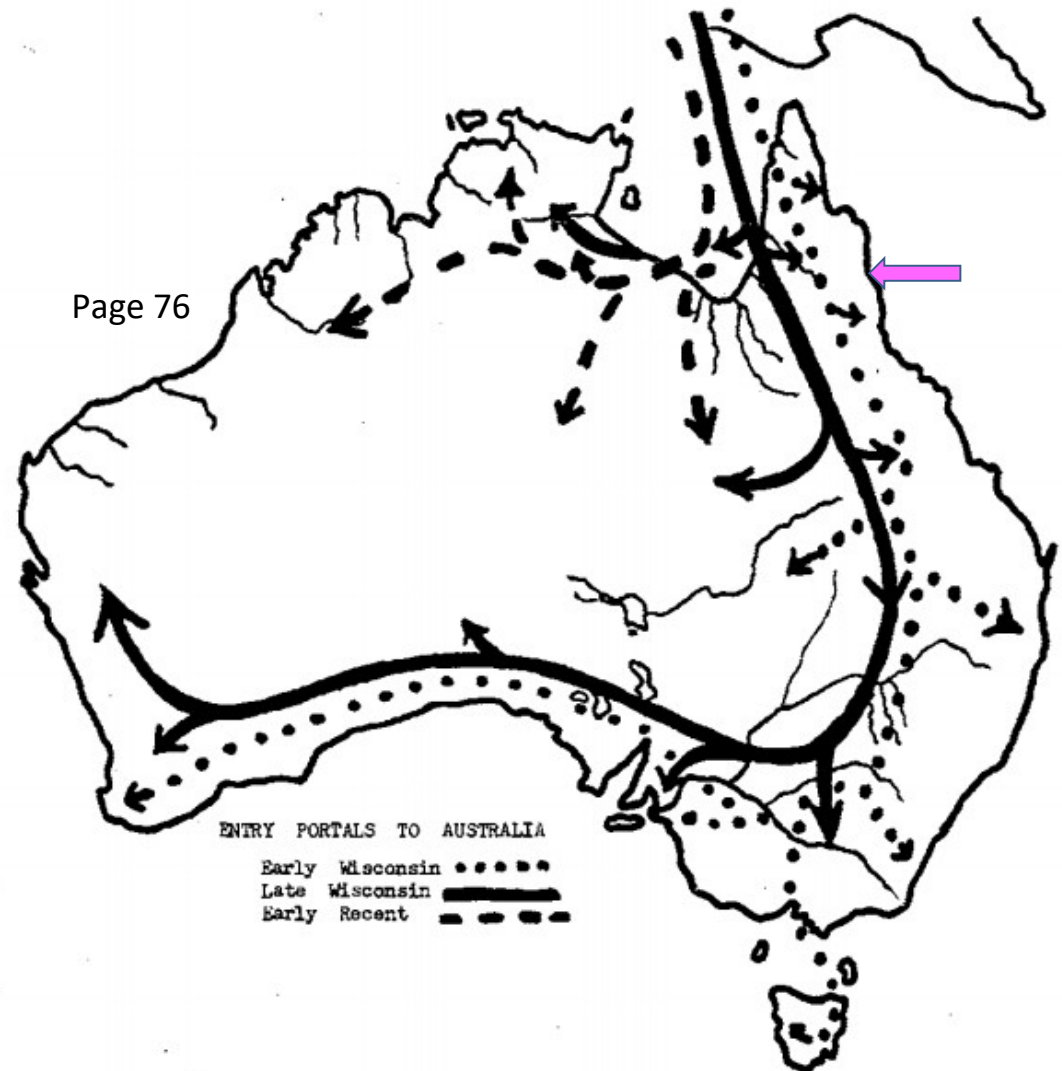
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESS
Canberra
1974



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Fig. 28. Distribution of the main types of Australian people.

Maps below. Joseph Birdsell describes the theoretical entry portals to Australia and the distribution of the main types of Australian people he recognised.



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Fig. 24. Theoretical entry portals to Australia.

Willie Brim is available for:

- Discussion**
- Blood samples**
- Physical examination**
- Cranial scan**
- +617 4093 9008**

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