

**EDITORIAL - Substantive data are never too old.**

As founding subscribers will know, the establishment of **QAR** in 1984 was prompted by my perception that too little substantive archaeological information was being published. Major journals were largely publishing overviews, preliminary reports and syntheses and a great deal of the detail pertaining to sites lay in theses and reports which were often difficult to access. Thus, over the past eight years **QAR** has provided a vehicle for the wider dissemination of such information, at least that which pertains to research in and adjacent to Queensland.

While I am pleased that this sort of archaeological data is being made more accessible in this way, I wish to comment briefly on a perception voiced by many students and one or two colleagues over recent years that the more dated archaeological data becomes, the less "valid", useful or significant it is (this is in sharp contrast to the opposite view where the basal age of sites is concerned!). In my experience, this misperception has arisen since the almost wholesale adoption of the "bucket" excavation procedure developed by Dr. Ian Johnson in 1979. This correlation may reflect the fact that students (esp.) have difficulty in comparing data gathered before and after this development. In short, if it was not gathered by bucket (ie. in comparable arbitrary excavation units) then it was somehow not "scientifically" or rigorously derived and therefore should be considered suspect or of limited utility. Of course, to the experienced field archaeologist this sort of thinking is hogwash and nonsense. While explanatory frameworks may shift with time the objects of archaeological study - artefacts and their matrices - are there for all time so long as they have been well described.

This volume of **QAR** serves to reinforce this position in that the bulk of it is taken up by data-rich reports of three sites in the Carnarvon Range of central Queensland - Cathedral Cave, Wanderer's Cave and Rainbow Cave. These site reports formed the substantive archaeological portion of Dr. John Beaton's 1977 Ph.D. dissertation, **Dangerous Harvest**, which provided an insightful investigation of the role of cycads in Aboriginal culture. The importance of this work was emphasized by Professor John Mulvaney in his foreword to the first volume of **QAR**. In this historical piece Mulvaney highlighted the significant results achieved by both John Beaton and Michael Morwood in the Central Highlands of Queensland. He viewed these results as both complementing his own pioneering work on Mt. Moffatt Station at Kenniff Cave and The Tombs and exemplifying the development of true regional research in Australia (D.J. Mulvaney, **QAR** 1:6).

The three sites reported by Beaton herein, although excavated over 15 years ago and some four years prior to the development of Johnson's data-gathering and recording system, serve well to illustrate my point that well-described substantive data concerning artefacts and their matrices do not diminish in usefulness with age. I am only too pleased that **QAR** is able to provide the dissemination vehicle for this work.

J. Hall - Editor.

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