

EDITORIAL

As the table of contents indicates, this volume of QAR is dedicated to archaeological research in the extreme S. E. corner of Queensland. All but two of the papers fall under the umbrella of the Moreton Region Archaeological Project (MRAP) and represent a statement about the current aims of this long-term regional research program. By way of this editorial I have taken the opportunity to provide an historical backdrop to MRAP so as to inform the QAR readership of its development.

MRAP really grew out of my attempt in 1976 to build an archaeology teaching and research program at The University of Queensland which sought to develop student interest in conducting regional rather than "cowboy" archaeology. As finances were meagre I took the advice given in my undergraduate days at the University of Utah by Professor Jesse D. Jennings that, "archaeology begins in your own back yard" and decided to investigate the possibilities of the general Brisbane area for research. The archaeology-prehistory segment of our Department being brand new, I had no postgraduates to turn to for advice on the matter. So I gathered about me a rather motley crew of interested undergraduates from my first prehistory class (AY238) and we formed a small research group (BARG - Brisbane Archaeological Research Group). BARG members were sent off in all directions to dredge up available literature on previous archaeology, Aboriginal history, geology, climate, environment etc., and we met to drink beer and discuss our findings at my house every third Sunday or so. We found that the general Brisbane area was not only relatively rich in Aboriginal history but it also exhibited a potentially rich archaeological record. Unfortunately, much of the latter was going under the bulldozers at an alarming rate due to the rapid development of the entire Moreton Region, and especially the coastal cities. In short there was a clear and present need to salvage as much of this record as possible.

Thus, the results gathered by BARG formed, by mid-1977, the basis of a regional research design I named MRAP - The Moreton Region Archaeological Project. In essence MRAP was designed as a flexible research program involving three areal components - the offshore islands, the coastal strip ("wallum") and the huge subcoastal zone. This division was founded on a combination of biogeographic, ethnohistoric, logistic and salvage priority factors, the intensity of work undertaken in any one area at a given time being quite heavily dependent upon the latter consideration. MRAP was focused regionally but had broad aims which included 1, the systematic location and recording of sites 2, the collection of sufficient archaeological materials (surface and subsurface) to permit 3, the development of a cultural chronology and 4, the reconstruction of prehistoric subsistence-settlement patterns with a view to 5, integrating these results with current issues in Australian prehistory (see Hall, Australian Archaeology No.10:1980).

The project gained impetus in the years 1979-81 largely through an injection of funds granted by the Australian Research Grants Scheme and those years were most productive in terms of field work and basic analysis. This period saw major investigations of Moreton Island, Bribie Island and the adjacent mainland as well as excavation and survey in the subcoastal zone. The project provided numerous postgraduate students with material for thesis research and formed a foundation from which other students could extend field research in adjacent regions. For example, it encouraged Ian McNiven to investigate lands to the north of the Moreton Region for thesis research which culminated in a sister project - the Cooloola Region Archaeological Project (CRAP).

As the first paper in this volume demonstrates, a great deal was learned about the archaeological record of the Moreton Region during MRAP-Stage I and related work. Findings from excavation and survey were coupled with numerous radiocarbon dates to produce a cultural chronology as well as a loose working model or conceptual scheme for human occupation of the region over the past 20,000 years or so, especially for the Holocene Period. Thus, by 1987, there was sufficient basic data available to begin thinking about issues which related to Australian archaeology in general rather than the study area alone. In short, it was time to launch MRAP-Stage II research. This has taken the form of an attempt to define and interpret specific changes which were perceived in the archaeological record, through a systematic investigation of its stone artefact component. A rationale and research design for this work is provided in this volume. Generous ARC support during 1988 permitted the full-time employment of Peter Hiscock as a Senior Research Assistant on the project; thus, MRAP was able to gain from his specialist expertise in the realm of stone technology. We think that the past 12 months has produced some interesting and significant results which offer much encouragement for future MRAP research.

Now to other matters. I am pleased to report two new additions to the QAR Editorial Board - Dr. Ian Lilley and Dr. Pawel Gorecki. Lilley, after completing his tenure as a Post-Doctoral Fellow here at UQ, will take up a lecturing post at the University of Western Australia in 1989. Gorecki is a recent addition to the lecturing staff at James Cook University of North Queensland. Both scholars bring to QAR welcome expertise in the archaeology of Melanesia and the Pacific. I also point out that Lilley was a founding member of BARG and cut his postgraduate teeth on MRAP research and therefore is no stranger to Queensland archaeological research.

A quick note concerning the presentation of radiocarbon dates in QAR. As more use is made of the CALIB program, calibrated ages will appear more often in the pages of QAR. In order to avoid confusion between the two, QAR will follow the convention of indicating uncalibrated C14 ages before the present (i.e. before 1950) with lower case letters (bp) and calibrated ages with upper case (BP).

Finally, although I hate to finish on an unpopular note, I must inform subscribers that, in order to cover rapidly rising printing costs, the price of QAR Volume 6 (1989) will have to be increased to \$15.00 (plus postage).

J. Hall
Editor