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Abstract:	The island groups of the western tropical Pacific include both large high islands with often continental affinities, such as are found widely in Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia and Solomon Islands, and smaller lower islands of wholly oceanic origin, such as most in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga. Within the Holocene (last 10,000 years), these islands experienced the effects of sea level changes of tens of metres, changes that have not proved easy to isolate because of both the tectonic instability of many parts of the region and the spatially-variable pattern of Holocene sea level change (Dickinson 2001, Nunn 1994). In particular, there was once considerable debate (reviewed by Nunn 1995) as to whether or not this region experienced a higher-than-present sea level during the mid-Holocene. It is now accepted that it did so, with sea level in the western low-latitude Pacific having attained a maximum of perhaps 2.1 m around 4200 cal yr B.P. (Grossman, Fletcher and Richmond 1998, Nunn and Peltier 2001).
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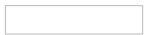
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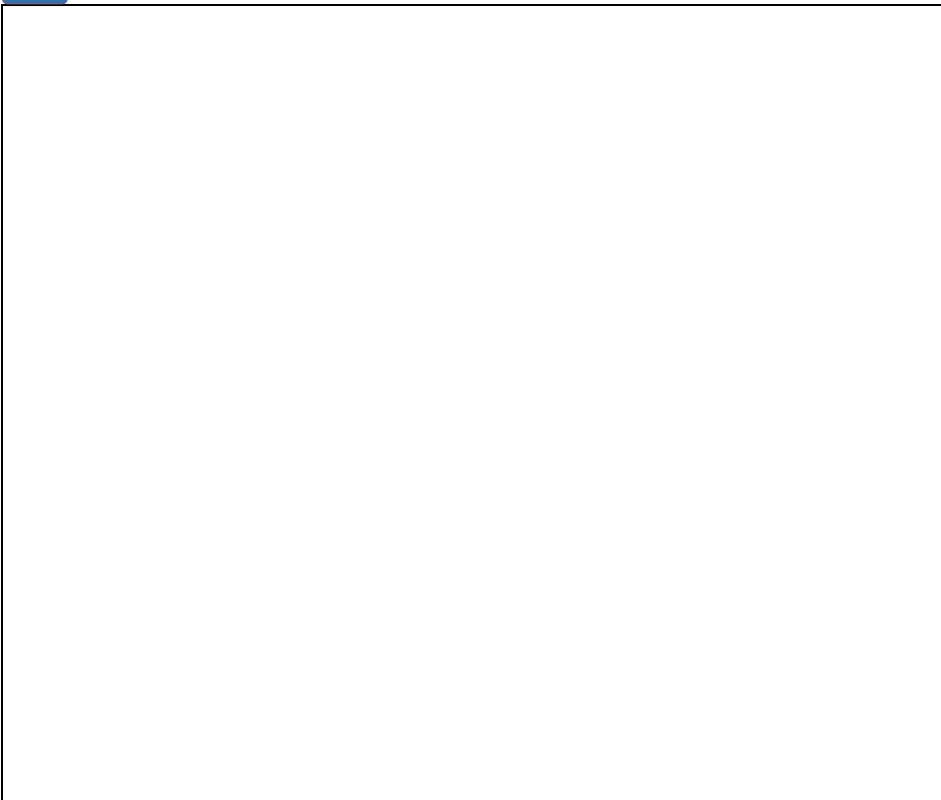
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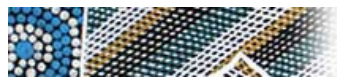
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The University of New England respects and acknowledges that its people, programs and facilities are built on land, and surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, of the world's oldest living culture. In doing so, UNE values and respects Indigenous knowledge systems as a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia.

Archaeology in the Pacific Islands: An appraisal of recent research. *Journal of Archaeological Research*, Vol. 2, Issue. 4, p. 285. Pleistocene human remains from Australia: Lake Mungo, western New South Wales, *World Archaeology* 2: 39–60. Chappell, J. & Shackleton, N.J.. 1986. Oxygen isotopes and sea level, *Nature* 334: 137–40. Holocene mammal faunas from archaeological sites in island Melanesia, *Archaeology in Oceania* 23(3): 89–94. Fox, P. 1986. The vegetation history of Balof 2 rockshelter, New Ireland. An introduction to the key islands in the South Pacific regions of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. This group of nine islands was the first in the Pacific to gain independence from western occupation. Upolu is the main island and tourism hub, but life here is still governed by Fa'a Samoa (The Samoan Way), where family and elders are respected and its 362 villages are presided over by 18,000 matai (chiefs). American Samoa. Its tropical rainforests and marine sanctuaries are superb. Tonga. This island kingdom straddles the western side of the International Dateline (Tongans are first to greet the new day) and consists of 176 islands, 52 inhabited. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, also known as the Pacific trash vortex, spans waters from the West Coast of North America to Japan. The patch is actually comprised of the Western Garbage Patch, located near Japan, and the Eastern Garbage Patch, located between the U.S. states of Hawaii and California. These areas of spinning debris are linked together by the North Pacific Subtropical Convergence Zone, located a few hundred kilometers north of Hawaii. The amount of debris in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch accumulates because much of it is not biodegradable. Many plastics, for instance, do not wear down; they simply break into tinier and tinier pieces. For many people, the idea of a “garbage patch” conjures up images of an island of trash floating on the ocean. Lapita comprises an archaeological horizon that is fundamental to the understanding of human colonisation and settlement of the Pacific as it is associated with... There is much remaining to be discovered about the first people in the western tropical Pacific Islands, particularly where and when they settled particular island groups, how they lived and interacted. The period of interest, constrained by the manufacture of distinctively decorated Lapita ceramics, is approximately 3050-2500 BP in Fiji. The Fiji Islands are a mixed group of islands, dominated by the two largest – Viti Levu and Vanua Levu - which are surrounded by subgroups of volcanic islands in the west (Yasawa), centre (Lomaiviti), and south (Kadavu and Yasayasamoala).