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Researchers gather to unlock Australia's environmental and human history

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR AUSTRALIAN BIODIVERSITY AND HERITAGE HOLDS FIRST ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

The recently launched, \$46-million Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage (CABAH) is holding its first Annual Symposium at the University of Wollongong (UOW) from 6 to 9 November 2017.

The four-day Symposium will bring together world-leading researchers and scholars in the natural sciences and the humanities from across Australia and from overseas. Eight Australian universities are collaborating partners in CABAH, along with many of the country's leading museums and several international partner organisations. The Centre also works closely with Australia's Indigenous communities.

CABAH Director, Distinguished Professor Richard "Bert" Roberts, said the Symposium was an opportunity to bring together in the one room an academically diverse – and geographically spread – group of researchers, scholars, museum curators and public education specialists who share the common goal of unlocking and sharing the secrets of the environmental and human history of Australia, Papua New Guinea and eastern Indonesia.

"This inaugural Symposium is an exciting opportunity to develop a ground breaking agenda to transform our understanding of the history of this continent and that of our nearest northern neighbours, and to tell our epic story to the world," Professor Roberts said.

One of the highlights of the Symposium will be a Strategic Planning Session to help shape CABAH's vision and goals for the next seven years. This session will capture ideas and contributions from everyone involved in CABAH, from PhD students to senior researchers.

Another session will focus on the Education and Engagement Program, a key focus of CABAH that will take the Centre's research discoveries and insights into the classrooms and museums of the nation to engage the wider community, inspire young minds and encourage future generations of researchers.

The Symposium will also feature presentations from a number of academics on projects currently underway, as well as professional development workshops delivered by leading international researchers and communicators from the Centre's Advisory Committee.

ABOUT CABAH

Launched in June, CABAH aims to transform our understanding of Australia's ancient Indigenous heritage and environmental past. By creating an environment in which researchers from very different disciplines can collaborate, it will revolutionise the nation's ability to investigate and learn about the processes that shaped this continent and the story of its people.

This knowledge will then be used to help manage Australia's present and future biodiversity and cultural heritage, and to meet the environmental challenges of the future.

CABAH is funded by a \$33.75 million grant from the ARC, \$1 million from the NSW Government, and \$11 million from participating universities, museums and other organisations. The funds will support at least 40 new research positions and more than 50 new research students over the life of the Centre.

The collaborating partners in CABAH include University of Wollongong, James Cook University, University of New South Wales, Australian National University, University of Adelaide, Flinders University of South Australia, Monash

University, University of Tasmania, Queensland Museum, Australian Museum, South Australian Museum, the State Library of New South Wales, SCARP Archaeology and Bioplatforms Australia.

CABAH also has strategically important international partners in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, France, Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

MEDIA NOTES:

Professor Bert Roberts is available for interview via the UOW Media Office, contact details below.

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