

Rock Art as a Contextual Archive: Respecting Cultural and Spiritual Dimensions within a Comprehensive Scientific Approach

This paper approaches Rock Art as a human archive; applying archival theory to archaeological practice in Aboriginal cultural sites to build knowledge about their context, cultural landscape and wider relationships for future preservation and care. Aboriginal site recording to date has been largely limited within the purview of archaeologists and anthropologists working in conjunction with Aboriginal people. This paper proposes that the GLAM sector (i.e., Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) can play a new role in comprehensively broadening the recording of Rock Art sites as “archives in the field” safeguarding their evidential nature in a scientific framework. The GLAM sector offers multidisciplinary perspectives that are underutilised in terms of projects and engagement with Aboriginal communities and culture. This wide discipline approach encourages other knowledges to also be applied to the study of Rock Art, such as those that enhance social and emotional well-being and what can be done in practical terms of learning, advocating and sharing knowledge that respectfully honours the First Peoples of Australia, through professionalism and respect. The University of Newcastle’s GLAMx Living Histories Digitisation Lab has been associated with the rock art projects of Wollombi, Hunter Region of NSW, involving historical research, survey documentation, illustration, education and advocacy.

Ann HARDY, *University of Newcastle, Australia*
Gionni DI GRAVIO, *University of Newcastle*
Contact email:
ann.hardy@newcastle.edu.au

Keywords: rock art, archive, Australian rock art, Australian Aboriginal, GLAM sector

