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## TOYOTA-ANU PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES 2009

# READING THE BONES: Atoms, Genes & the Politics of Australia's Deep Past

**Dr Claudio Tuniz**

Assistant Director, UNESCO's International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, Italy



**Wednesday 16 December, 6.30-7.30pm**

The Finkel Theatre, The John Curtin School of Medical Research Building 131, Garran Road, ANU

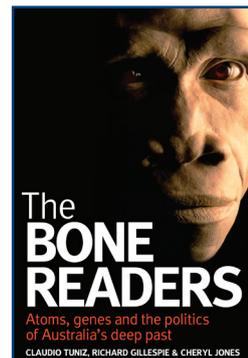
This lecture is free and open to the public. Dr Claudio Tuniz will be available for book signing from the Coop Bookshop stand after the lecture.

Enquiries: T: 02 6125 4144 or E: [events@anu.edu.au](mailto:events@anu.edu.au)

In this lecture, world-renowned palaeo-analyst Dr Tuniz will tell why Australia is centre stage in heated arguments over human evolution and early human environmental impacts. He will reveal how scientists have been reading the past in bones, genes, charcoal, eggshell and pollen. From the discovery of Mungo Lady, Australia's oldest human remains, to the reconstruction of ancient landscapes from an analysis of the eggshell of an extinct giant bird, Dr Tuniz will probe the facts and myths about the first human arrival in Australia and its region; what modern DNA tells us about the origin of Australian Aborigines; theories on Europe's Neanderthals and Indonesia's 'hobbits'; and who or what killed off Australia's giant marsupials.

Science is shedding light on the past but the knowledge is still fragmented, and politics and ideology sometimes intervene.

Dr Tuniz is Assistant Director of UNESCO's International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy, where he promotes the use of atomic and nuclear physics in palaeoanthropology and the study of human evolution. He was director of the accelerator dating centre at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation and has published widely on Australian prehistory. With radiocarbon dating specialist Richard Gillespie and science journalist Cheryl Jones, he is co-author of *The Bone Readers: Atoms, genes and the politics of Australia's deep past* published by Allen & Unwin.



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