



# Uncovering the history of Makassan interactions with Yanyuwa people at Jalabuwaja (Crocodile's Net), southwest Gulf of Carpentaria

**Dr Chris Urwin (Monash University)**  
**Friday 9 May, 3.30pm-4.30pm**

**Presented as part of the 2025 Centre for Archaeological Research Seminar Series**

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This paper explores the remarkable history of one of these places: Jalabuwaja, which derives from 'crocodile net' in Makassarese. In 2024, we conducted excavations at two stone-lined hearths once used to process trepang at Jalabuwaja. One of the fireplaces was used before cal. AD 1800 and possibly 150 years earlier. Combined with Yanyuwa oral traditions, the dates show that Yanyuwa people interacted with Makassan visitors for at least five generations. Our paper explores the stories Jalabuwaja tells today about cross-cultural interaction, including how places are named and known, and how the trepang fishery passed from the Makassans to Aboriginal and European fishers in the early twentieth century.

*Dr Chris Urwin is an ARC DECRA Research Fellow (2025–2027) at Monash Indigenous Studies Centre (Monash University), conducting archaeological and museum-based research with Indigenous communities in Australia and the Pacific. He has also held positions at the Smithsonian Institution (Washington DC) and Museums Victoria.*

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**Join us in-person:** AD Hope building 14, Conference Room (1.28)

**Online via zoom:** <https://anu.zoom.us/j/84955848358?pwd=BlAgPRsbVdbBo9vrMB8mLEfcgz3FAo.1>

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