Mike Morwood died peacefully in Darwin on 23 July 2013, in the company of his wife, Francine, and daughter Catherine, after a long battle with cancer. The day before, in typical fashion, he was still talking about plans for further research.

Mike joined the University of New England (UNE) in 1981 from a position in the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement. He worked at UNE until the late 2000s and then moved to the University of Wollongong from where he retired, though they re-employed him until his death.

In his PhD thesis, Mike pioneered the inclusion of rock art studies into other archaeological studies. John Mulvaney described it as the best he had ever read. Mike continued to work on projects that sought such an integration until his death, aside from a period when he was principally occupied with his research in Indonesia. He turned his UNE course on the Archaeology of Rock Art into a successful book: *Visions From the Past: The Archaeology of Australian Aboriginal Art* (2002).

In the mid-1990s he undertook a multidisciplinary study in Cape York Peninsula involving many experts from other fields (some of whom became his colleagues at Wollongong) and very large numbers of students. The resulting volume (with illustrations by Doug Hobbs) is one of the most detailed reports of an archaeological field project in Australia: M. J. Morwood and D. R. Hobbs, eds., *Quinkan Prehistory: The Archaeology of Aboriginal Art in S.E. Cape York Peninsula, Australia* (1995).

After the Cape York book appeared, Mike began research in Indonesia. As his head of department, I advised him that this was premature and that he should instead write a synthesis of his book as a journal article so that people could take in the many innovations it represented. It turned out I was wrong. He continued working in Indonesia, becoming the foreign archaeologist who had worked there longer than any other.

Initially, Mike took over some Dutch work undertaken with Fachroel Aziz, of the Indonesian Geological Research and Development Centre, on the island of Flores. The Dutch had demonstrated that stone tools made by human ancestors, known for some time from amateur excavations, were older than the Brunhes-Matuyama palaeomagnetic boundary, and so older than about 800,000 years. This was unprecedented. Mike worked with Paul O’Sullivan to provide a numerical age for these stone tools of 880,000 years ago. Subsequent research in the same formations has taken the dating of human ancestors on Flores back beyond one million years. Mike, in characteristic recognition of the importance of involving students in his research, passed that work on to PhD students and also to Mark Moore of UNE. The happy coincidence that UNE employed a geologist, Ian Metcalfe, who had unravelled much of the movement of the continental elements that now make up the islands of Indonesia, led to a highly successful conference and book: I. Metcalfe, J. M. B. Smith, M. J. Morwood and I. Davidson, eds., *Faunal and Floral Migration and Evolution in SE Asia-Australia* (2001).
But Mike Morwood’s name will always be associated with his other project on Flores, undertaken with Randen Pandji Soejono of the Indonesian ARKENAS research institute, at the cave of Liang Bua. The Australian-Indonesian team of which Mike was one of the leaders found a diminutive skull of what he subsequently called ‘A New Human’ in the southern spring of 2003. Mike called on his UNE colleague Peter Brown to make the initial description of these skeletal remains and they decided that it was a new species, *Homo floresiensis*. The initial description was published in 2004 as P. Brown, T. Sutikna, M. J. Morwood, R. P. Soejono, Jatmiko, E. Wayhu Saptomo and R. A. Due, ‘A new small-bodied hominin from the Late Pleistocene of Flores, Indonesia’, *Nature* 451: 1055–61, and M. J. Morwood, R. P. Soejono, R. G. Roberts, T. Sutikna, C. S. Turney, K. E. Westaway, W. J. Rink, J. X. Zhao, G. D. van den Bergh, R. A. Due, D. R. Hobbs, M. W. Moore, M. I. Bird and L. K. Fifield, ‘Archaeology and age of a new hominin from Flores in eastern Indonesia’, *Nature* 431: 1043–44.

Mike insisted the find be nicknamed ‘the Hobbit’ and the name stuck. Controversy has dogged the find for a variety of reasons, many of which were described in a popular book published in New York in 2007: M. J. Morwood and P. van Oosterzee, *A New Human: The Startling Discovery and Strange Story of the ‘Hobbits’ of Flores, Indonesia*. In many ways, the controversy exposed the weak foundations of physical anthropology and archaeology. Recent definitive publications, however, have disposed of many of the stupidities published after the initial announcement, vindicating both Morwood and Brown. The dating of the find was remarkable as it seemed to suggest that the Hobbits were in Flores long after the arrival of modern humans in Australia, and yet there were no remains of modern humans in Flores until after the Hobbits became extinct.

Mike subsequently worked on Sulawesi (the dating of rock art there at about 40,000 years ago was published in October 2014). He had also just completed a research project in the Kimberley sparked by his interest in the archaeology of the Macassans who visited northern Australia and his initial project to attempt to date the early images in the Kimberley.

Mike’s work at UNE was characterised by a single-minded pursuit of interesting research questions and by his engagement of students in that research. He often spoke of teaching as being principally about inspiring people with the wonder of the archaeological story. By pursuing these objectives, he inspired devotion among many students, both those of the highest quality and those less gifted. He embodied what archaeology in a university department should be about – both creating and passing on knowledge about the past. It is typical, also, that he understood that that past, in this part of the world, is the past of indigenous peoples, both in Australia and Indonesia. His ability to work with them and with Indonesian scholars is testament to his humanity.

He will be sorely missed.

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