

Arrawarra Koori fish traps back in action

ABORIGINAL stone fish traps, thought to be more than 1000 years old, are coming back into use on Arrawarra Headland.

This is the culmination of long-standing plans by the area's Aboriginal community.

The traps, which have recently been repaired, are the focus of a collaboration between Aboriginal people, the University of New England, and the NSW Marine Parks Authority.

The three-year project will combine traditional harvesting, scientific research and cross-cultural education of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people from primary school to university level.

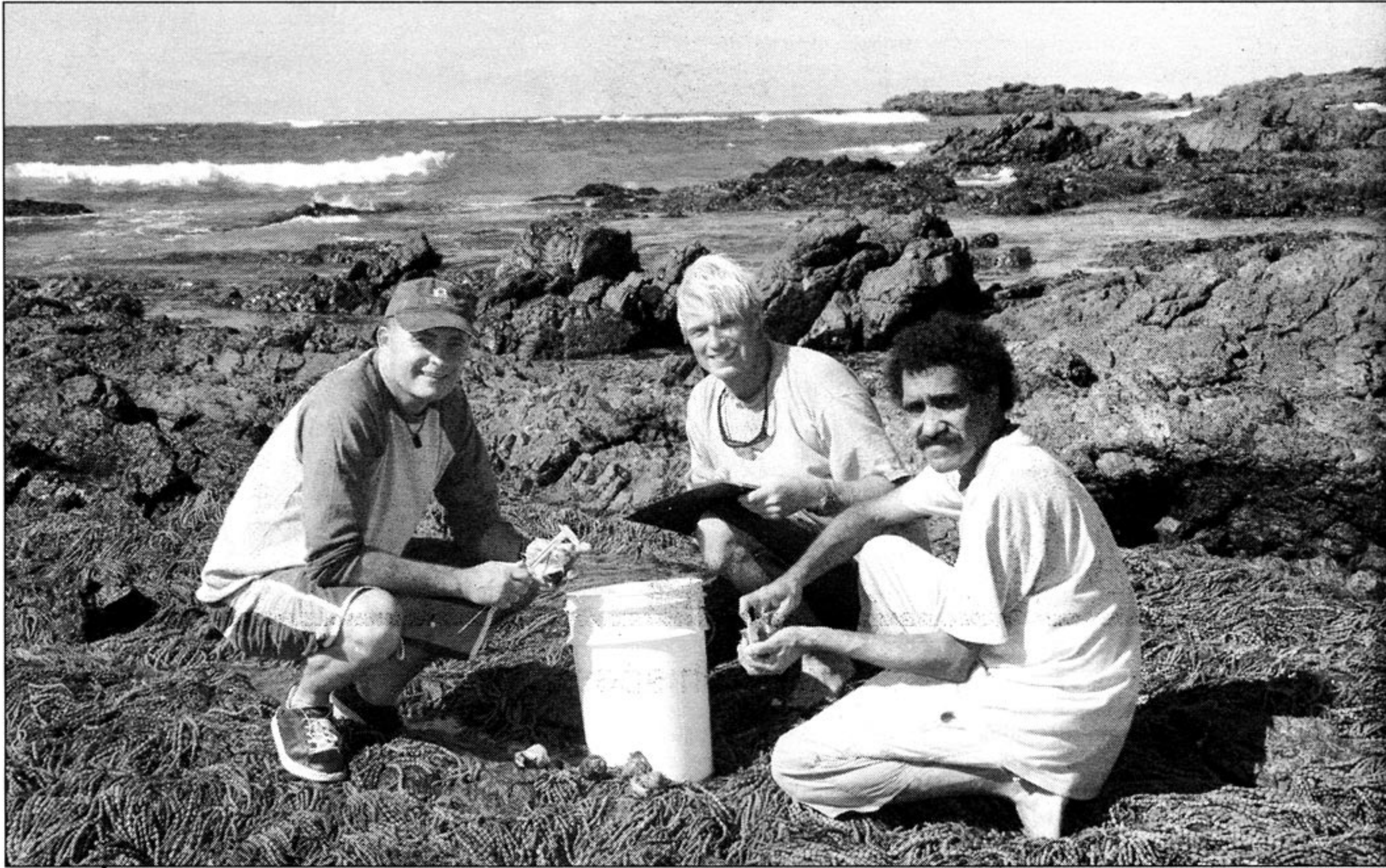
The project will be launched at Arrawarra Headland at noon today by representatives of the Garby Elders, Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation, the Solitary Islands Marine Park and the University of New England.

Traditional trapping will begin this Easter weekend, coinciding with tidal and moon phases.

The acting manager of the Solitary Islands Marine Park, Nicola Johnstone, said changes to the marine reserve zoning provided for traditional use and research at the site and traditional collection methods — the fish trap, hand collection, traditional hand spear and line fishing would be used.

Members of the Garby Elders and Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation will supervise the use of the traps to catch fish, while molluscs like turban shells will be harvested from nearby headland areas.

At the same time, local Aboriginal trainees will be learning how



Associate Professor Stephen Smith, Adam Davey and Ricki Cain conducting surveys of turban shells (googoombull) one of the main species targeted for traditional harvesting at Arrawarra Headland.

Photo submitted.

to use modern scientific methods to assess the sustainability of their harvesting practices and the research will be used to produce educational fact sheets for classroom, as well as websites and filmed documentaries.

The project is being co-ordinated by University of New England (UNE) Associate Professor Stephen Smith, who is based at the National Marine Science Centre in Coffs Harbour. Funding is being supplied through the NSW Government's Environmental Trust.

Dr Smith said the Garby Elders wanted to gather information so they could pass it down to their children and were happy to share much of it with the non-indigenous community.

The project team includes Tony Perkins, Milton Duroux, Ricki Cain, Darren Murray, Libby Sterling, Nicola Johnstone and Russell Glover.



The Aboriginal fish traps at Arrawarra Headland.

Photo submitted