

## How Worn is Worn?: Experiments to explore the manufacture and use of scaphopod shell beads from Northern Australia.

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### Abstract

Over 30 scaphopod shell beads were recovered from deposits in Boodie Cave on Barrow Island during the 2013-2015 Barrow Island Archaeological Project excavations. Twelve of these beads were recovered in close association, possibly from a discarded string of beads from necklace or bracelet. One of the beads has been directly dated to 10,000 year old. The beads exhibit small amounts of edge damage and wear indicting that they were strung and worn/used. When compared to beads from the sites in the Kimberley, the Barrow Island beads show limited wear. There is little research into how scaphopod beads respond to wear when strung on protein and vegetable fibres. This presentation explores the question, using experimental archaeology, how much polishing and edge damage is caused by stringing and wearing scaphopod shell beads and how these compare to those in the archaeological record?