

Climate change clues

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Gina Rinehart and her daughter Bianca at Hope Downs in the WA outback where every rock you pick up contains iron ore.
Photo: *Barry Baker*

HOPE Downs archaeological dig site is a 35,000-year-old time capsule that is expected to reveal important information about climate change and the way Australia's first people adapted to their environment and developed tools to hunt and collect their food.

Archaeologists say they probably ate hundreds of different animal and plant foods.

Patterns of wear on tools will tell how they were used.

Most of the stone tools discovered are sharp-edged, designed to cut meat and plants for food, and also for planing, boring, chiselling and cutting to make other tools and weapons.

The Hope Downs site is important for its old environmental data. Study of sediments will tell scientists much about climate change as they study variations in the colour, grain size and oxidation of the sediments. Analysis of the material will take at least two years.

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