



## **FRIDAY ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

**NPA Environment Centre**

**27 October 2017**

### **When our Ovens Filled with Water: Aboriginal Recollections of Volcanic Activity in Australia**

Much of the landscape of Australia is suggestive of an ancient history that involved erupting volcanoes, but we do not generally think of Australia today as having been volcanically active, even within the past few thousand years or so. Yet it has been, and it is probable that a volcano will one day erupt again on mainland Australia. While geologists are reasonably knowledgeable about the recent history of Australian volcanism, some significant mysteries remain.

**This week's guest speaker at Friday Environment Forum, Professor Patrick Nunn from the University of the Sunshine Coast will explain what science knows about young Australian volcanoes – where they are, when they last erupted, and what effects these eruptions had – and then goes on to talk about Australian Aboriginal memories of volcanic activity.**

These stories take several forms. For example, that of the giant Craitbul and his family who dug ovens to cook food overnight on mountains in southern Victoria. We know that these “ovens” – what geologists commonly call maars – are oven-shaped volcanoes that are often filled with rainwater lakes.

What is clear from the abundance of such Aboriginal stories and their exclusive association with recently-active volcanoes in Australia, is that their eruptions, often thousands of years ago, were witnessed by people. That in itself is no surprise, given that people have been living in Australia for perhaps sixty-five thousand years, yet the fact that these stories have passed down to us today is testament to the extraordinary story-telling abilities and fidelity of Aboriginal people, unbroken over hundreds of generations.



Friday Environment Forum is held at the **NPA Environment Centre, 5 Wallace Drive Noosaville** starting at **10.30am** with a conservation update before the guest speaker. Coffee and tea available from 10am and the forum concludes at 12.15pm. **All welcome.**

For those wanting to enjoy the birds of Wallace Park, join Valda and other bird observers at **8.30am** in the car-park for interpretive birding.