

1 November 2012

---

## Unravelling the legend behind *Homo floresiensis*

Wellingtonians are invited to come along to Te Papa on Saturday 1 December for the unique chance to see and hear about the remarkable discovery of a new human species, *Homo floresiensis*.

Discovered in a magnificent cathedral-like cave on the Indonesian island of Flores in 2003, the new species has been nicknamed the 'hobbit' as it stood just over one metre tall, had large feet, and was capable of undertaking complex activities.

Coinciding with celebrations for the world premiere of Peter Jackson's film *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, Victoria University (together with Wellington City Council, Te Papa, and the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia) is bringing two of the principal archaeologists involved in the discovery of the new human species to New Zealand for a one-off, free public event.



Professor Mike Morwood from the University of Wollongong in Australia, and Thomas Sutikna from Pusat Arkeologi Nasional in Indonesia, will share their insights about discovering *Homo floresiensis* and the ongoing excavations which are helping scientists better understand this new and unique species of human. They will also be bringing some original artefacts collected as part of their work as well as a full-size replica skeleton.

Victoria University earth scientist Dr Brent Alloway is responsible for bringing the event to Wellington audiences, and is a member of an international team of scientists working in Flores to uncover new information about early human settlement in this region.

Dr Alloway's research is focused on examining volcanic deposits associated with stone artefacts and fossil remains, in order to determine the role of eruptive activity on local faunal turnover and extinction in Flores, and to better understand the environment in which early humans lived.

He says the opportunity to see original artefacts and hear from the archaeologists responsible for the discovery of *Homo floresiensis* is a real coup for Wellington—especially at



a time when the New Zealand public will be entering into the celebratory spirit of Peter Jackson's world premiere also being held in Wellington.

"This is a fantastic chance for Wellingtonians, and visitors to the city, to learn more about a little known aspect of our ancestral human past, as well as soak up some of the legend surrounding the discovery of these mysterious little people.

"It's a great privilege to be able to convey such an interesting and ongoing science story to the public—after all, this should be the ultimate objective of any research undertaking."

*A newly discovered species of Little People—unravelling the legend behind Homo floresiensis* takes place at Te Papa's Soundings Theatre on Saturday 1 December at 3pm.

Spaces are limited and bookings are essential. RSVP to [rsvp@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:rsvp@vuw.ac.nz) with "Te Papa Lecture" in the subject line or telephone (04) 472 1000.

**For more information contact Dr Brent Alloway, (04) 463 5844 or email [brent.alloway@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:brent.alloway@vuw.ac.nz)**

**Images:**

1. Reconstruction of the type specimen of *Homo floresiensis* (LB1) – a c. 30 year old female who stood 1.06m in height. Image courtesy of Elisabeth Daynès (©2009, S. Plailly/E. Daynès - Reconstruction Atelier Daynès Paris).
2. Inerie Volcano (2245m) Flores, Indonesia. Image taken by Brent Alloway.