

# Radar search to find lost Aboriginal burial site

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File photo of an indigenous aboriginal Australian man

Scientists said Tuesday they hope that radar technology will help them find a century-old Aboriginal burial ground on an Australian island, bringing some closure to the local indigenous population.

Peter Davies, from Queensland's University of the Sunshine Coast, is researching the ancient shoreline of World Heritage-listed Fraser Island,

popular with tourists for its sandy beaches and dingo, or wild dog, population.

He said he was approached by a Fraser Island group earlier this year to help find the graves, believed to be of more than 100 indigenous people, including many children.

"It's completely sand, and the [ground penetrating radar](#) works really well in sand," the soil scientist explained of the island.

The graves are of those who died at the Bogimbah Creek mission, which was established on the west coast of Fraser Island in 1897.

More than 100 Aboriginal people are thought to have died at the site, where living conditions were appalling and many succumbed to diseases such as dysentery and syphilis, as well as malnutrition, before it was abandoned in 1904.

"It seems like it was purely a way to get the Aboriginal mission out of the white settlers' hair," Davies said of the establishment of the mission on the island at the time.

"It was obviously quite a nasty period of Fraser's history."

Davies said while elders from the Aboriginal community had found the remains of the mission, it was hoped the scientists could locate the exact [burial sites](#), which had never been marked.

The [radar technology](#) would allow the researchers to develop 3-D images of what is below the surface, he said.

"The ground-penetrating radar is the ideal instrument to locate disturbed ground, human remains and artefacts and has been previously used in

locating indigenous burial sites up to 20,000 years old," he added.

Aborigines, who have occupied Australia for 50,000 years but who number less than 500,000 of a total population of 23 million, are the most disadvantaged Australians.

They are believed to have numbered around one million at the time of British settlement two centuries ago.

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