

A Holocene record of sea level, vegetation, people and fire from western Tasmania, Australia

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The analysis of a 10 000 calendar year (cal. ka) pollen record on the west coast of Tasmania has revealed a suite of changes that can be related to sea level, fire and people. Fire-promoted moorland has occupied the site for the entire period and challenges the long-held assumption that rainforest dominated the landscape of western Tasmania through the early to mid Holocene. Changes in wetland taxa and the occurrence of benthic marine diatoms indicate a Holocene sea-level high-stand between 6.3 and 5.8 cal. ka. A significant and sustained rise in charcoal concentration occurs after 6 cal. ka, reflecting the combined effects of anthropogenic burning and hydrological changes that were probably modulated by regional climatic forcing. Finally, European colonisation resulted in a significant decrease in charcoal, rapid peat accumulation and a suite of vegetation changes © The Author(s) 2010.