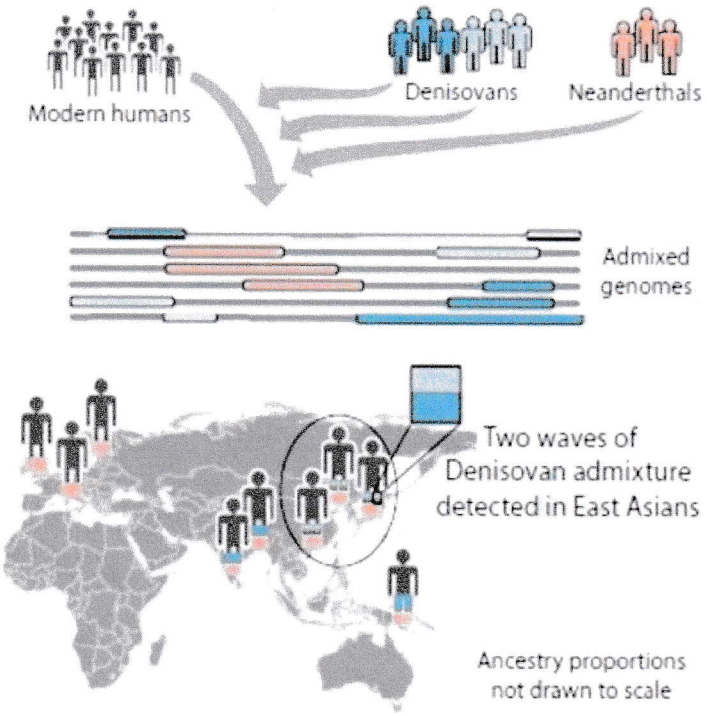
WHO WERE THE DENISOVANS?

DNA has revealed over the last few years interesting facts about these people who some of us now find in our DNA results.

Researchers found two genomes - one from Oceania and another from East Asia.
The genomes are completely different, suggesting that they mixed on at least two different occasions

Our ancestors didn't just have inter-species sex with Neanderthals.
5 per cent of the DNA of some Australasians – including people from Papua New Guinea, are Denisovans.
There were at least two separate waves of prehistoric intermingling between 200,000 and 50,000 years ago.

Oceanian individuals, notably Papuan individuals, have significant amounts of Denisovan ancestry, a senior author Sharon Browning, a research professor of biostatistics, University of Washington School of Public Health has found.
'When we compared pieces of DNA from the Papuans against the Denisovans genome, many sequences were similar enough to declare a match.' The assumption was that the Denisovan ancestry in Asia came from many individuals who had migrated from Oceanian populations.



'But in this new work with East Asians, we find a second set of Denisovans ancestry that we do not find in the South Asians and Papuans,' said Dr Browning. 'This Denisovans ancestry in East Asians seems to be something they acquired themselves.'

What is known about Denisovans ancestry comes from a single set of archaic human fossils found in the Altai Mountains in Siberia.

Individual's genome was published in 2010, and other researchers quickly identified segments of Denisovans ancestry in several modern-day populations, from Oceania but also in East and South Asians.

You will find more on this and other interesting facts by running an internet search for Denisovans and Indigenous Australians.