

HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE 34

- NAIDOC Highlights
- RSA re-negotiation
- Latrobe Valley Expansion
- Yanakie Purchase
- Eco Dev Opportunities



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UP FRONT

Joint Update from the GLaWAC Board Chair and CEO

Dear Members and Friends,

GLaWAC is making great strides forward as we near the end of 2021. We can't speak highly enough of our staff; they have proved resilient and committed throughout the COVID lockdowns and continue to deliver on their workplans. Employment of our community is now over 3 million dollars and growing. Our organisation also has some non Gunaikurnai staff who tirelessly work in support of ours, and our Elders, goals.

We, like you, are missing the face to face contact with our Elders, members and community. We are working hard to keep your vision progressing and communicate as best we can through our new webpage gunaikurnai.org, Facebook page and other media, such as this magazine.

What a huge success NAIDOC Week was. It was great to see so many of our mob coming together. Thank you to all those that made it happen. The Community Day at Knob Reserve had over 800 people attend. It was heart-warming to see people connecting with family and friends and sharing in cultural activities. We aim to hold another event in November and hope to see you again. See more on pages 14-17.

All should be proud of the massive achievements that we have collectively delivered, and we all must continue to pace ourselves in a sustainable way and celebrate our success. Our partnerships, with our Elders, the GKTOLMB, community and agencies are vital to maintain a strong and focused corporate plan based around our

core business. It is vital as we keep moving forward. We continue to respect our Elders and encourage youth to keep driving us forward in a positive way.

We are excited to announce the purchase of 250 acres of land that is next to Yiruk Wamoon (Wilson's Prom National Park). (See page 8). We are proud that we are able to be in a position to purchase some of your land back to help us heal and secure economic benefits for the future for all our mob.

GLaWAC is a leader across the state in many areas of our corporation and our teams' achievements. It is vital we all continue to work together under the "One Mob One Voice" vision to effectively engage with our key stakeholders.

The RSA Negotiating Team have commenced re-negotiations with the State, please see page 6. A reminder to all that your feedback into the RSA is important. Whether it's built into current re-negotiations or future, your input is what provides a foundation for GLaWAC's future.

I strongly remind all of our Community, whether you associate as a Gunai or a Kurnai person, this agreement is for everyone. The benefits, employment and land opportunities are to assist everyone and that your collective agreement is for everyone. I believe strongly everyone moving forward together, will bring great benefit to all.

Once again, we are really proud of the successes we are achieving for our mob and encourage all in community to get involved.

CEO Retirement

I want to inform you that Roger Fenwick, our CEO, is retiring at the end of this year. We wish Roger the best and thank him for his support through our CEO transition period.

Roger has been a strong and supportive leader since GLaWAC came out of special administration in 2017. He has established solid relationships with our staff and community, and we look forward to his ongoing interest in our self-determining journey.

Roger has led a significant transformational agenda in his time at GLaWAC, culminating in jobs growth and economic prosperity for individuals and families; achieved through staying the path with our Whole of Country Plan and listening to Elders, staff, and the Board.

GLaWAC is well-positioned in leading outcomes through our Recognition and Settlement Agreement renegotiation and Treaty. We wish to continue improving and building on a solid narrative to advance and support our Mob, the Gunaikurnai.

Recruitment for our new CEO has commenced and will be conducted over the coming months.

Whilst Roger is not leaving immediately, I wish him all the best for his retirement and thank him for his service.

TROY MCDONALD, GLaWAC Chair



GLaWAC Board members Nick Johnson, Paula Morgan, Troy McDonald (Chair) and Glenys Watts joined CEO Roger Fenwick, in signing the contract of sale for a 250 acre block at Yanakie, 400m from the entrance to Yiruk Wamoon.

Our Community



Elders Council

My heart goes out to all the Elders their family and Community in these hard times.

I extend my condolences to all the families and friends during the lockdown.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to recognise the wonderful efforts of Auntie Faye, who retired from this group earlier this year after a decade of service.

I also would like to thank the GLaWAC admin team for all of the communication and updates in regard to the Elders Council. In moving forward, hopefully we can come together in October.

Thank you to all the staff at GLaWAC for the great work you all have been doing during these hard times.

Please keep safe, bless you all.

AUNTIE LENA MORRIS
Chair of GLaWAC Elders Council



Above: At the opening of the East Sale RAAF Base Indigenous Garden with the NRM Landscaping team.

Main image: Talking Country at the Buchan Caves.

Circled: Enjoying cultural activities at Forestec.

GKTOLMB Update

Since the last newsletter the TOLMB has been pleased to welcome Marianne Atkinson as a returning Board member, and Craig Parker who started as the Board's Executive Officer.

Craig and Rob Willersdorf, on behalf of the board had a busy winter, starting off with coordinating a Joint Management relationship building trip with the TOLMB, GLaWAC, DELWP and Parks Victoria to Tarra-Bulga National Park. A big thank you to the GLaWAC and PV ranger teams who gave everyone an insight into their work along with the NRM Team at GLaWAC. Even though it was a wet and cold day, we all walked a couple of the tracks in the park and heard from the rangers about possible improvements. After that visit, the board has funded Cultural mapping and signage for the park, which will happen in 2022.

TOLMB representatives met with the Parks Victoria Board and gave an overview of the Camping and Access Strategy. We also visited Buchan Caves where we saw the enormous work that has gone on since the fires and heard about the cultural mapping

and interpretation work that is in part funded by the TOLMB and involves many GLaWAC staff.

The Board is working on our next strategic plan. As part of the process, we met with GLaWAC rangers to hear their ideas about the next steps for Joint Management. We also met with senior people from GLaWAC, Parks Vic and DELWP to focus on setting

the direction that Joint Management implementation takes over the next few years towards making self-determination happen. We have already got started on this, working with GLaWAC on a Traditional Foods venture, cultural tourism and increasing the cultural mapping and interpretation into other Joint Managed parks. This will give community a cultural experience when visiting the Parks.



Our Community



Our Community

RSA Re-negotiation

GLaWAC are currently negotiating a review of our RSA and have prepared a report to help guide the process. The RSA Re-Negotiations give Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners the opportunity to build on the Agreement put in place in 2010 after many years of hard work by our Elders.

It's not about starting out again—it's about adding to what we have, making it better and getting improved outcomes as we build our own capacity and capability to manage.

The table shows our journey from our first RSA negotiation and some of the priorities moving toward this new one. We want to

hear from you, our Members, what do you want to see added?

GLaWAC will be holding meetings, both face to face and online based on Covid-19 restrictions, to ensure that your voice is heard as we continue the path toward self-determination.



COMMUNITY SESSION Feeding into the RSA

Friday 8th October 2021
@ 11:30am – (1hr)

This will be an online event

COMMUNITY SESSION RSA update: how we are progressing

Friday 26th November 2021 @10.30am – (45min)

These are some of the ideas we've received so far, keep them coming.

- Jack Smith Lake
- Nooramunga
- Recreation Reserves
- Education – cultural curriculum
- Commercial fishing and nursery opportunities

FUNDING & LAND AGREEMENT

PROVIDES FUNDING FOR:

- Economic development
- Placed in trust to support core operations of TOGE

Transfers land to TOGE:

- Freehold Title; Aboriginal Title to parks & reserves

McLaod Street – \$5M to set-up GLaWAC

What properties would you like?
What land would you like?

TRADITIONAL OWNER LAND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

PROVIDES FOR:

- Joint Management of parks & reserves held under Aboriginal Title;

Requires Traditional Owner Land Management Board to be established

Joint Management of 10 Parks & Reserves

What parks and reserves would you like?
How would you like to manage them?

PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

Some of the settlement funds are required to be held in the Victorian Traditional Owner Trust

This agreement sets out the basis on which the funds are held

\$10 in Trust – (now \$14M)

How much more money do we need?
How will we use the money?

Our Community

RSA Re-negotiation

We respect and acknowledge our Ancestors, families past and present, the essence of who we are.

We celebrate the lore of our land and waters which gives us responsibility to nurture country and to move forward.

OUR JOURNEY

For tens of thousands of years, the Gunaikurnai have connected and protected the Country, rivers and the seas around Gippsland in Victoria. Country has healed us and connected us to our 25 descendant ancestors whose breath of life has been passed on to us.

Our Stories and language connect our past to the present and lead us into the future.

Our Native Title process formally started in April 1997 and went for 13 years. Through the perseverance, strength, and energy of our Elders and Community, the Gunaikurnai had to defend our group composition, knowledge, and connection to Country through the Federal Court of Australia.

Eventually, in November 2008, the Gunaikurnai presented to the then Attorney-General Rob Hulls our Statement of Aspirations.

These aspirations were a big step in putting the Government on Notice about our plans for Self-determination and Caring for country.

During this time, we had a few things happening.

- We were negotiating a Settlement Agreement
- Extensive connection material was being collected for a determination of native title - that we were the right people for/ from Country
- In 2009, there was a tenure assessment of approximately 8,000 parcels of land to determine whether native title had been extinguished.

WORKING ON THE SETTLEMENT FRAMEWORK AND THE TRADITIONAL OWNER SETTLEMENT ACT 2010 (VIC)

The introduction of The Settlement Framework and The Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 was a real policy shift that was happening in government.

The Victorian Traditional Owner Land Justice Group ('VTOLJG') had been working with the State on finding a new way of dealing with land justice for Traditional Owners in Victoria. A steering committee was set up and chaired by Professor Mick Dodson, to investigate and report on a way forward. The Gunaikurnai representative was Uncle Albert Mullett.

This is the process that led to the introduction of the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010(Vic). (TOSA 2010)

THE HISTORIC MOMENT

Our Native Title determination in 2010 was an historic moment. After many years of hard work by a great many people, we finally achieved legal recognition of our connection to Country and our rights as Traditional Owners.

The determination, along with the Traditional Owner settlement agreements that we entered into on the same day, have provided us with a strong base of rights and benefits from which we can build.

GLENYS WATTS

Gunaikurnai Elder,
and GLaWAC & GKTOLMB Board Member



TRADITIONAL OWNER LAND NATURAL RESOURCE AGREEMENT

PROVIDES FOR:

- Traditional Owners having access to natural resources on public land and freehold land owned by Traditional Owners (may be personal or commercial);
- Contains strategies for increased participation in resources management

NEW – wasn't in the first agreement

Things like: Hunting, Fishing and Commercial opportunities

LAND USED ACTIVITY AGREEMENT

Governs activities to take place on Crown land, going forward (replaces the Future Act regime). Allow for:

- Procedural rights
- Right to comment;
- Entitlement to Community Benefits; or Right of veto

NEW – wasn't in the first agreement

Leases and licence control over your land

OTHER MATTERS NOT COVERED BY RSA OR TREATY

Examples may include things like:

- Housing
- Justice
- Education

Not covered by RSA

What other areas?

Our Community

YANAKIE PURCHASE

GLaWAC are excited to announce that the organisation, on behalf of our members, has purchased a 250-acre parcel of land in Yanakie, South Gippsland, next to Yiruk Wamoon (Wilson's Prom National Park) and Corner Inlet Marine and Coastal Park.

This is a wonderful opportunity for GLaWAC to purchase land that enables it to continue to connect to this area. We plan to continue to protect cultural values and uses, gain economic independence, and heal Country.

Our strong organisational governance and financial management is allowing us to expand employment for community and to purchase back traditional lands.

The block, just 400m from the entrance to Yiruk Wamoon (Wilson's Prom National Park), has all of the necessary zoning and permit approvals to offer a unique cultural tourism opportunity; and we welcome the prospect of partnering with other Traditional Owners and tourism operators in this exciting venture.

Initially, the On Country crews will maintain the land, and we can't wait for COVID restrictions to ease enough so that we can have community visit.

Most of all, we look forward to yarning with the Gunaikurnai Community and others to enable self-determine and how we manage this site to help achieve priorities for healthy Country and healthy mob.

"It is through our strong connection to Country and listening to the voice of our Elders around on Country business that we are here today. Guided by the goals laid down in the Whole of Country Plan, and with really great people around us, we continue to progress the collective aspirations of our mob."

TROY MCDONALD

Chair, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation

"It is wonderful that GLaWAC, through its professional approach and strong financial management, is able to start purchasing land back for the Gunaikurnai people. We look forward to partnering with others to grow economic opportunities for the mob and wider community through this purchase."

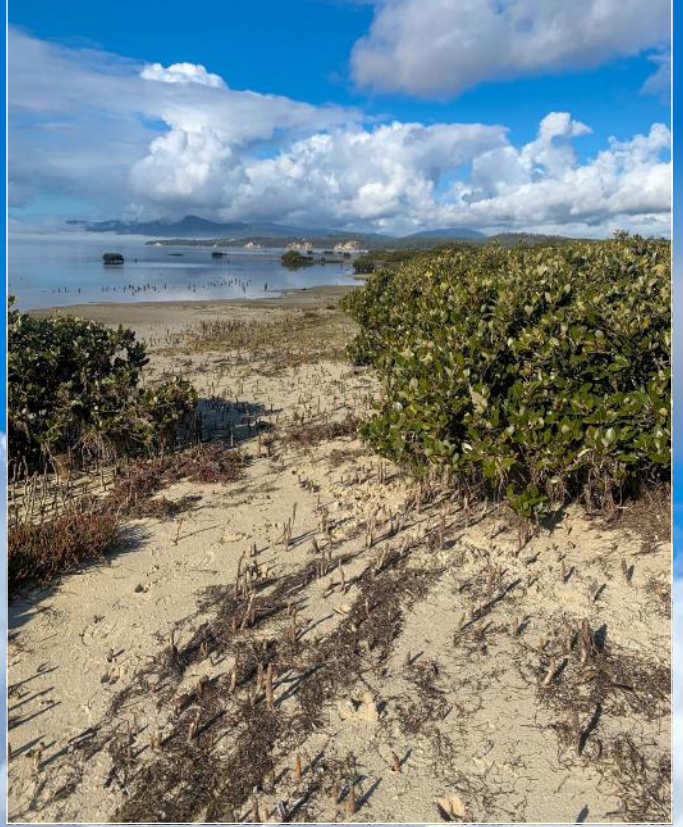
ROGER FENWICK

CEO, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation



Our Community

YANAKIE PURCHASE



Our Community

Valley Expansion

The long-held aspiration of our Elders to provide more jobs in the Latrobe Valley, is continuing to gain speed with the opening of a new office in Morwell.

With a number of staff already working in the valley, your organisation has been successful in obtaining \$1.4M from the state government to help support the development of a valley-based On-Country crew.

Working with the Latrobe City Council, we have secured the former Airlie Nursery site in Morwell to become a base to create more jobs for our Mob, and to deliver NRM & RAP services right across Gunaikurnai Country.

We are working hard to provide training and employment opportunities for the local Aboriginal community in a region that has suffered economically in recent times, and we'll be advertising positions to fill in the coming months, so keep an eye out of our Facebook page and gunaikurnai.org to find out more.

"GLaWAC is committed to providing employment opportunities for the Traditional Owner and Aboriginal community right across our RAP area, and we are excited to work with partners to grow this side of our business."

"Establishing a stronger presence in the Latrobe Valley is a key priority for GLaWAC and the Gunaikurnai People and caring for Country and culture provides opportunities for community and personal healing."

ROGER FENWICK - CEO

Exploration Licence Applications Explained

GLaWAC is working hard to influence how big decisions are made about managing Country, and we continue to exert our Native Title rights on behalf of our members.

Exploration Licences do not give approval to mine, only to explore by very limited means.

GLaWAC receives notice of five or six exploration licence applications (EL's) on Gunaikurnai Country each year. In Victoria, native title holders do not currently have the ability to veto these EL's outright, only the right to negotiate an agreement with the explorer.

Entering into an agreement means that if GLaWAC thinks high impact exploration will affect cultural heritage, it can say no to the activity. If GLaWAC does not enter into an agreement with the explorer, the activity can be taken to the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT), where GLaWAC loses control over the terms of exploration. The general rate of success at NNTT for these types of activities is low.

GLaWAC posts all exploration licence applications, crown land sales notifications and notices concerning works on native title lands to our Facebook page and to the Native Title section of gunaikurnai.org for you, the native title holders, to make comment if you wish.

How GLaWAC deals with Exploration Licence (EL) Applications – A step-by-step guide



Our Community

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

There's plenty of ways to get involved at GLaWAC and plenty of events coming up. Note these dates in your diary and keep an eye on our Facebook page and the events page of gunaikurnai.org for all of the latest details.

SAVE THE DATE GLaWAC Annual General Meeting

Friday 26th November

To be held at Forestec or
online pending COVID
restrictions

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
OCTOBER		
Governance Training	9 Oct	Forestec
Board Meeting	12 Oct	Traralgon
Elders Council	20-21 Oct	TBC
GLaWAC Open Day	23 Oct	Forestec
NOVEMBER		
Elders Council	25 Nov	Yanakie
RSA Update	26 Nov	TBC
GLaWAC AGM	26 Nov	TBC
GLaWAC Cultural Festival	27-28 Nov	TBC
DECEMBER		
Christmas Office Closure	23 Dec	Forestec
JANUARY		
GLaWAC re-opens	4 Jan	Forestec

*While we always prefer to yarn together in person, we may need to hold some events online pending COVID restrictions.

Staying Connected

We're always working on better ways to let community know what's happening on Country, so we've recently combined the GLaWAC and GKTOLMB pages into YOUR deadly one stop shop – gunaikurnai.org

There's plenty of ways for Community to connect with Country and Culture and we encourage you all to check it out.

Want to learn more about becoming a Gunaikurnai member?
Check out the Elders and Members section.

Want to make your voice heard on important matters?
Your first stop should be the Know Your Rights section.

Want to visit one of your joint managed parks?
Take a look at the On Country section.

We'll continue to upgrade the site with Knowledge and language as we get approval from the Board and Elders; and we encourage you to share your thoughts and tell us what you want to see. In fact, there's plenty of ways that you can make your voice heard right from the website.

Our New Website IS LIVE NOW



Check it out

www.gunaikurnai.org

You'll still receive your regular copy of GLaWAC News and you can get updates on job opportunities, what's happening on Country and how your organisation is continuing to fulfil the goals and aspirations of your Elders right from the GLaWAC Facebook page.



Our Community

Have your say

You members are an essential part of the governance of GLaWAC. You make important decisions about how GLaWAC is run, including who its directors are and how we manage the services we provide. We need to hear your voice to ensure that we achieve the goals and aspirations of the Gunaikurnai Whole of Country Plan, as written by our Elders.

We encourage all members to get involved by joining a Board sub-committee or reference group to yarn about matters that are important to you. These groups meet 3-4 times a year, and members are compensated for their time and travel.

When GLaWAC receives a request from a partner organisation seeking to hear community views, we post the relevant information to gunaikurnai.org and our Facebook page. We know the Aboriginal community always get asked to share your opinion about almost everything. All of the time. And that it can be too much! We don't expect that you can, or want, to respond to everything.

Still, GLaWAC will always work hard to influence how big decisions are made about managing Country. We will continue to exert our Native Title rights on behalf of you, our members.

If you would like to be a member of one of GLaWAC's subcommittees or reference groups, please visit the Elders & Members section of gunaikurnai.org or contact Kyla Di Fiore by emailing Kyla.DiFiore@glawac.com.au or phoning (03) 5152 5100.

NATIVE TITLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (NTCHSC)

Support the Board in a timely manner with recommendations and/or resolutions for Native Title and Cultural Heritage matters.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (EDSC)

Support the Board and management in the development and planning of economic opportunities.

AUDIT RISK & FINANCE (ARFSC)

Support the Board and management in the development, planning and implementation of financial and risk audits, policies and procedures.

OUR COUNTRY (OCSC)

Advise the board for on Country/ environmental policy development. (Note the GKTOLM Board deals with Joint Management matters.)

FIRE REFERENCE GROUP

WATER REFERENCE GROUP

Cooking with Kev

Home Made Rocky Road with Macadamia Nut

Its up to you if you want to change things up a little by adding in different nuts and/or other dried fruits, try it out and have fun with it.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of marshmallows (pink & white)
- 500-gram block of milk chocolate (or white chocolate)
- ½ cup of desiccated coconut
- 100-grams macadamia nuts (left whole or chopped up)
- ½ cup glace red cherries (or use dried apricot instead)

Method:

1. Place all the ingredients, except for the chocolate, in a bowl and mix it all up
2. Tip the bowl out onto a tray and spread it around evenly
3. Melt chocolate either in microwave or over a double saucepan
4. Pour chocolate over other ingredients in the tray and mix it around a bit
5. Put tray in fridge for 1 hour or so till chocolate sets
6. With a hot knife slice it up into bite sized pieces

This is a good fun activity for your kids to enjoy as much as you will.

Ever considered becoming a Board member? Not really sure what's involved?

GLaWAC is holding a yarning circle at 10am, Saturday 9th October to talk about how you can get involved.

This will be a great opportunity to get some practical skills and knowledge about what your Board does and how you can get involved and have your say.

Give our admin team a call on 5152 5100 to save your spot, or email admin@glawac.com.au

Our Community



GLaWAC provides
Community Support
and Funeral funding to
our members.

To find out more, please
visit the Elders and
Members section at
gunaikurnai.org

Our Community

NAIDOC Week 2021

After fires, floods and a global pandemic, it was great to see so many people come out to celebrate NAIDOC Week on Gunaikurnai Country.

A massive thank you to everyone who came out to our NAIDOC Community Day at the Knob Reserve last week.

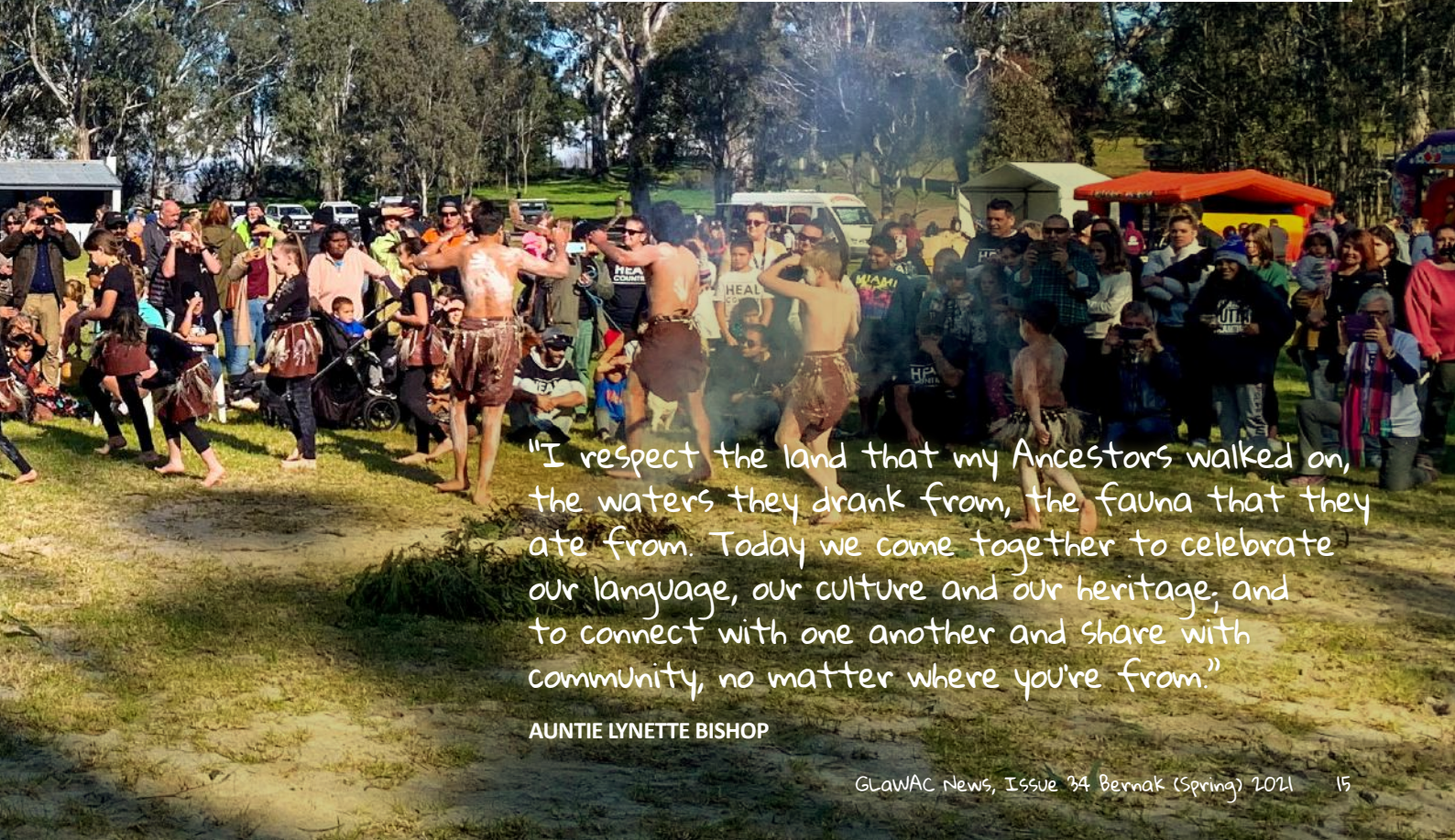
Deadly to be able to connect with family and heal Country and ourselves after so long apart.

A shout out to all the ACCHO's who made the whole week so special this year, and to Nicole Lesage for all of the great photographs down at the Knob, it was a huge celebration and we can't wait to gather again soon.



Our Community

NAIDOC Week 2021



"I respect the land that my Ancestors walked on, the waters they drank from, the fauna that they ate from. Today we come together to celebrate our language, our culture and our heritage, and to connect with one another and share with community, no matter where you're from."

AUNTIE LYNETTE BISHOP

Our Community

NAIDOC Week 2021



"It's deadly to see our mob all together, connecting and taking care of each other. It's important that we take this time to look back at where we've come from and keep building on the achievements of our Elders and Ancestors."



GRATTAN MULLET
GM of Culture at GLaWAC

Our Community

NAIDOC Week 2021



Our Culture



Journey Wall

The Journey wall is complete and looking deadly! Featuring the history, photos and stories of our community, it speaks to the ways of our old people and our journey to gaining Native Title Rights, our recognition and settlement agreements and beyond. When Covid restrictions have eased enough for the Forestec office to welcome visitors again, we encourage all in community to come check out this deadly installation.

Cultural Hub update

On behalf of the Cultural Hub Team, we wish all our members our very best in these times of uncertainty during COVID and continuous lockdowns. Stay safe and healthy, and we hope to be able to come together again very soon as part of GLaWAC's planned annual events.

We say farewell to Wayne Thorpe and Donna Hood as the Men's and Women's Cultural Education and Engagement Officers who have gone onto other employment opportunities in their personal journeys. We thank them for their dedication and commitment to GLaWAC and we wish them well in their future endeavours. These positions will be advertised in the coming weeks as part of our recruitment drive.

I would like to introduce Angela Solomon to the team as the new Nation Building Support Officer. This role will involve engaging with community across Gippsland to promote discussions with the State Government about Treaty and building capacity towards self-determination. Angela will plan to meet with communities or individual groups when timing allows pending COVID restrictions, and at upcoming and future community events.

The journey wall in the foyer at GLaWAC is now complete with early photos, and a timeline of the history of GLaWAC and. It

highlights significant events and achievements that our Elders have fought so hard for over many decades. This is a testament of our resilience towards recognition and self-determination.

We have now settled on a design concept for the Wangan Amphitheatre outdoor education and performance space. We are excited to see the first steps of the planned build in the coming weeks. This space will provide for cultural gatherings, yarns, workshops and coming together to share and learn from each other. It will also be offered for community use.

We welcome opportunities for members to support us in the delivery of Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremonies at public and community events. All you have to do is ring the office here at Forestec and register your interest.

We have continued to build on the donations of books and archival materials for our collections in the Cultural Hub library space and welcome further resources to add to our collections. We thank the individuals and families who have contributed their items for the library area. This resource will be offered to community for access as we build the program for family research and historical information purposes.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our Spring Newsletter and until we all can catch up again, stay safe and well.

GRATTAN MULLETT
General Manager Culture

Our Culture



Our Culture

The Last Jeraeil

After 140 years, researchers have rediscovered an Aboriginal ceremonial ground in Victoria's East Gippsland. The site was host to the last young men's initiation ceremony of the Gunaikurnai back in 1884, witnessed by the anthropologist A.W. Howitt.

Howitt's field notes, combined with contemporary Gunaikurnai knowledge of their country, has led to the rediscovery. The site is

located on public land, on the edge of the small fishing village of Seacombe. Its precise location had been lost following decades of colonial suppression of Gunaikurnai ritual and religious practices.

Researchers from the Howitt and Fison Archive project and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation began searching for the site in 2018. While it lacks archaeological traces, such as middens, rock art, stone arrangements or artefact scatters, the importance of such ceremonial grounds is under-recognised. They are a central feature of Australian Indigenous conceptions of landscape and have considerable historical and cultural importance.



The researchers examine the ceremonial site

THE JERAEIL

In the first few weeks of 1884, the Gunaikurnai peoples of Gippsland were preparing for a historic gathering. After decades of discussion and negotiation with Howitt, who was also a local magistrate and power broker, they finally agreed to allow him to record their secretive young men's initiation ceremony, known as the Jeraeil.

Last held in 1857, just a few years before Howitt arrived in Gippsland, the Jeraeil had ceased to be performed due to tighter governmental restrictions and stern dissuasion from Christian missionaries.

On January 30 1884, all the required Gunaikurnai people had assembled. Those coming from the Lake Tyers Mission came on the paddle steamer Tanjil. Those from Ramahyuck Mission, on the shores of Lake Wellington, arrived on the steamer Dargo.

Convinced that an Aboriginal initiation ceremony from this part of the colony would never be performed again, Howitt arranged and paid for his primary Kulin informants from the Melbourne area, William Barak and Dick Richards, to attend so they could contribute their commentary on Victorian ceremonies.

The event, which lasted four days, began with a series of preliminary ceremonies involving men and women singing together. The women kept time by beating on rugs folded in their laps and hitting digging sticks on the ground. Many of the performances that followed were restricted only to men, with six youths eventually initiated into manhood.

"It was remarkable," Howitt commented, that although he had known many of these men "intimately," and for a long time, they had kept these "special secrets [...]" carefully concealed from him for many years.

Howitt's published description of the Jeraeil, along with the equally significant work on similar ceremonies in New South Wales produced by Robert Hamilton Mathews, went on to influence the way religious life and ritual in south-eastern Australia was understood.

The researchers examine the ceremonial site



Our Culture

Finding the site

Lacking from Howitt's record, however, was a precise description of where the historic ceremony had been held. A recent project to work on Howitt's field notes in collaboration with Gunaikurnai people has uncovered new details, including a sketch map of the ceremony ground, sparking community interest in finding the site.

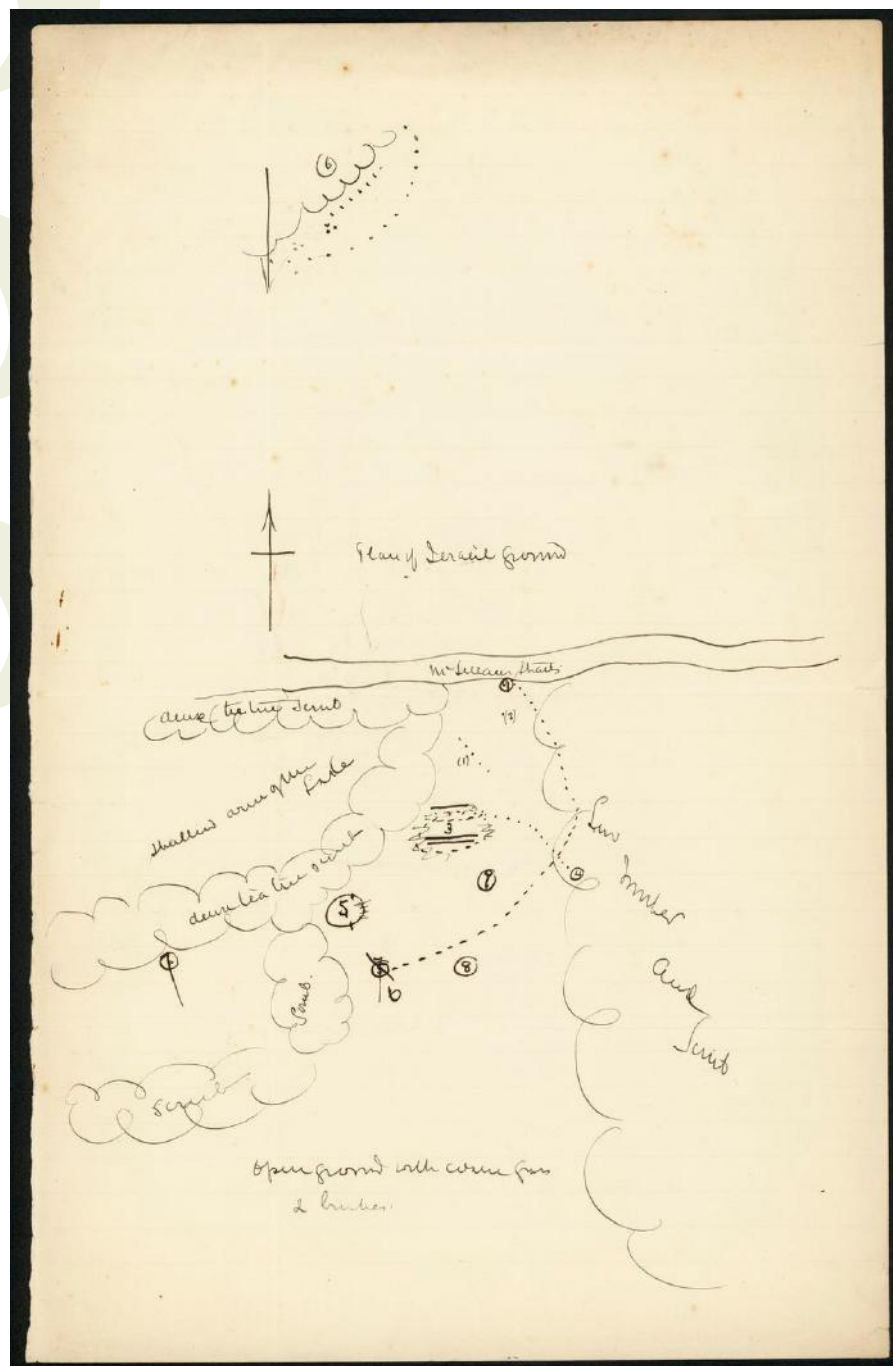
Howitt's drawing of the ceremony ground, along with his notes and newspaper articles, enabled the research team to positively locate the site, on the edge of Seacombe, near the McLellan's strait, which links Lake Wellington with the Southern Ocean.

The site's significance lies not in any immediately observable physical property, but in its historical and cultural associations. They span the story associated with this place, including the local creation stories associated with Bullum Baukan (a woman with two spirits inside her); the complicated relationship with Howitt; interactions with other colonial authorities and the status of the Jeraeil in anthropological literature.

Discovery of this site means it is now protected under the (Victorian) Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. All Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected in Victoria whether it has been formally registered or not and it is an offence to harm it.

The Jeraeil site is arguably one of the most significant of places in terms of the ritual and ceremonial life of Gunaikurnai people. However, the prospect of erecting signage at the Jeraeil site can produce mixed responses.

On the one hand, telling the world about these places might secure them. On the other, the Gunaikurnai live in a region dotted with monuments that remind people of the colonial violence enacted by men such as Scottish explorer Angus McMillan. One plaque brazenly describes McMillan as an explorer who achieved "territorial ascendancy over Gippsland Aborigines".



Victorian Aboriginal cultural heritage continues to be damaged as happened with the recent partial destruction of the Kooyang Stone Arrangement in Lake Bolac. Some in the Gunaikurnai community fear too little is being done to protect such places but also worry about the public's readiness to embrace Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Still, it is imperative places like the 1884 Jeraeil ground are better understood, recognised and protected. Not only does it tell a story of Aboriginal cultural practice but of shared Aboriginal and European interactions we should all know more about.

JASON M. GIBSON Research Fellow, Deakin University; and
RUSSELL MULLETT Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation

Above: Plan of the Jeraeil ground drawn by A. W. Howitt. A. W. Howitt Collection Museum Victoria.

Our Country

Cultural Fire Strategy

Traditionally, there was no such thing as 'Cultural Fire' as fire was an intrinsic and symbolic part of our connection to each other, the land and the spiritual world. Cultural Fire could therefore be seen as a pathway to restoring traditional meanings and the reclamation of traditional customs.

GLaWAC has just released the Managing Country With Fire - Cultural Fire Strategy to provide direction for On Country burning to occur in a way that is culturally appropriate, effectively managed, and reflecting Gunaikurnai values across landscapes.

"Cultural Fire occurs with the right fire, in the right time and in the right way, in the right place.

We use fire to make the land healthy, for ceremony and as a means for communication with each other and the spirits. Our children grow up understanding

these cultural practices and teach their children. We help others to understand the benefits of the use of the right fire to manage and protect Country."

This is our vision for cultural fire on Gunaikurnai Country.

Cultural fire will mean something different to almost everyone but should not be mistaken for fuel reduction or asset protection burns.

Through the insights of our Elders and our Fire Knowledge Holder Group, we are exploring ways for fire to occur in a culturally appropriate manner that is effectively managed and reflects Gunaikurnai values across the landscape.

Our approach is to help community in how they want to be active and get involved in how they want to see fire introduced differently onto their Country.



Cultural Landscape Strategy

TRADITIONAL OWNERS KNOW HOW TO CARE FOR COUNTRY

The release of the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscape Strategy provides our partners in government with a pathway to better understand how Traditional Owners want to express our cultural values, practices, interests and knowledge in managing Country.

The strategy, released by Minister Lily D'Ambrosio last week, was developed by mobs from across the state to bring government into our practise and management, not the other way around.

The following framework acts as a toolkit for Victorian Traditional Owners and can be adapted to each groups self-determined pathway for healing and caring for Country.

1. Restoring the knowledge system
2. Strengthening Traditional Owner Nation resilience
3. Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes planning
4. Embedding Traditional Owner knowledge and practice
5. Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes management

You can read the full strategy on your website at gunaikurnai.org



Our Country

NRM Update

The NRM crews have been busy, busy, busy undertaking a number of projects across Gippsland.

GLaWAC now have roadside management contracts in place with Cranes Asphaltting & Bitumen Sealing, DELWP Gippsland and the East Gippsland Shire Council, and it's been deadly to see Robert, Doug and Max getting the tractors out on Country. They'll be covering a huge area over the coming months so give them a wave if you see them on the road.

The NRM team continues to grow, with Trey Parsons, Jamie Muhammad Harrison and Paul Harrison joining the crew, and Alfie Hudson and Brendan Pearce adding their landscaping skills into the mix. The lads have had their hands full creating an indigenous garden for East Gippsland Water and constructing a formal pathway with cultural markers on the Boggy Creek walking track that leads up to the lookout in Nowa Nowa.

Together with weed control around Buchan, sea spurge removal on the Gippsland lakes and recent pig baiting training with Parks Victoria, there's plenty on the go.



Top: Boggy Creek Lookout walking track
Above: Sea Spurge removal
Below: EG Water Landscaping
Main image: Roadside maintenance



Our Country

Sustainable Water Strategy

Water is very important – I suppose it's important to everyone now today, but it's always been the very core of our existence.

UNCLE LLOYD HOOD
Gunaikurnai Land and Waters
Aboriginal Corporation

Restoring water justice is the strong message GLaWAC and other Traditional Owner groups in the Central and Gippsland region have sent to the Victoria Government in the Sustainable Water Strategy.

GLaWAC, Wadawurrung, Wurundjeri and Bunurong together formed the Sustainable Water Strategy Traditional Owner Partnership. The Draft Sustainable Water Strategy is soon to be released and will be open for public comment for a couple of months.

"In order to improve the health of the Traditional Owner communities and Countries represented by the partnership, the legal entitlements to the ownership of water, which have since (Un)Settlement almost entirely been denied, must be reinstated, unencumbered by fees. Water entitlements transferred to member organisations of the Traditional Owner Partnership must be sufficient to achieve substantial and measurable outcomes as determined by the communities represented by the partnership."

Central And Gippsland Draft Sustainable Water Strategy, Traditional Owner Partnership, 2021

Regional Catchment Strategies

Every six years, the ten Catchment Management Authorities across Victoria – including West Gippsland CMA, East Gippsland CMA and North East CMA on Gunaikurnai Country – update their Regional Catchment Strategy.

The strategies are the Catchment Management Authorities' overarching framework for managing land, water, and biodiversity and directing funding at a regional level. The West Gippsland and North East CMAs have worked closely with GLaWAC on the strategies and recently released their drafts for public comment. Both strategies also refer strongly to the the newly released Cultural Landscapes Strategy, which GLaWAC had a big hand in developing, as a guide for working with Traditional Owners across the state to make sure Country is managed in accordance with cultural knowledge and values.

GLaWAC is continuing to work closely with the CMAs to ensure that your views and aspirations are included. If you want to find out more and have your say, you can email or call Alice Pepper at Alice.Pepper@glawac.com.au or 0417 760 23; or Lisa Hocking at Lisa.Hocking@glawac.com.au or 0400 909 003.

Sea Country

GLaWAC has been yarning with Government and sitting in on the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council meetings about Sea Country for months about what we want in the Victorian Government Marine and Coastal Strategy.

The Strategy has identified six priority actions and almost 50 activities to be implemented over the next five years, including 14 activities which would be Traditional Owner-led. More than half of all activities include Traditional Owners as partners.

For GLaWAC many of the actions directly align with the objectives of the Whole of Country Plan. The draft strategy includes:

- Sea Country ranger programs
- Traditional Owners being appointed as land managers
- Traditional Owner rights recognised.
- Resourcing for working on Country
- Support to monitor and manage land use and climate change impacts on Sea Country.
- Having a say on management, planning and policy of Sea Country

While the public consultation period has ended, we will be actively involved in the final draft and future implementation of the strategy.

If you want to talk to GLaWAC about Sea Country, you can email or call Alice Pepper at Alice.Pepper@glawac.com.au or 0417 760 23; or Lisa Hocking at Lisa.Hocking@glawac.com.au or 0400 909 003.

Our Country

Community members joined Russell Mullett and the RAP team in South Gippsland to discuss coastal erosion along Sea Country



Protecting our cultural heritage

Our heritage is strong across our landscape, and Aboriginal cultural sites and artefacts can be found along our songlines, and trade routes, mountain ridges and waterways. They remind us about the ways of our Ancestors, show our close and continuing connection to Country and need protecting.

As a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, GLaWAC is the primary source of advice and knowledge for the Victorian Government on matters relating to Aboriginal places located in, or Aboriginal objects originating from, our area.

The GLaWAC RAP Team administers a process for Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners to protect our cultural heritage within the Gunaikurnai RAP area and to comment on the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage within adjacent non-RAP areas.

The teamwork with government agencies, stakeholders, and landowners to identify and protect our cultural heritage,

provide Traditional Owner insights into Country and Culture and work with partners such as Monash University to better understand the ways of our old people.

Over the last few months alone, the RAP team have:

- completed sieving for cultural artefacts at Buchan Caves Reserve ahead of bridge replacement works
- completed the South Gippsland Coastal Erosion Climate Change Sea Rises Report
- finalised a report for the Gippsland Lakes and Ninety Mile Beach cultural heritage assessment
- continued work on the Fingerboards Mine & Yallourn Mine Emergency cultural heritage assessments

We are still waiting for results to come through for a project to help community map both the Ramahyuck and Lake Tyers Cemetery's. Using ground penetrating radar, a completely non-invasive technology, to identify grave sites will help guide the future maintenance of both sites. We're excited to be able to share more details about the project as they come to hand.

Our Country

JM Update

LEARNING TO INTERPRET

The JM Rangers and Bushfire Recovery Crew attended interpretation training with Felicity Brooke from Parks Victoria earlier in the year. The workshop was held at Yiruk Warnoon (Wilson's Prom) and was a great opportunity to build our skills in the delivery of cultural information and knowledge within our joint management roles.

Time was also spent learning some very hands on skills to support our work around monitoring bugs and critters that live in our waterways. Both crews have been working together, putting this into practice monitoring waterway health at Cherry Tree in Lake Tyers State Parks.

We have also been working together setting up cameras to monitor native and pest animals within the park. Both teams will work closely together on several projects and continue their learning with some in house training.



GUNAIKURNAI RANGER BRYCE BAXTER

"The interpretation training at the Prom was an awesome experience, learning how to approach small groups with information about our culture and local flora and fauna to that region, this training will help us to run our own tours and build our confidence to do so."

GUNAIKURNAI RANGER KEVIN HOOD

"The Prom was an amazing experience for me. I learnt so much knowledge about how to tell a story and how to connect to people. I really liked how we were shown how to design our own walk"

The Rangers also undertook a 3-day snorkelling course delivered by Parks Victoria, spending time in the waters of the outer barrier of the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park.

GUNAIKURNAI RANGERS HARLEY FINN & HARLEY WANGANEEN

"We found the snorkelling training was a great opportunity for our team to learn some more skills around water. It will help with our job role to find and see how many different species of fish and crustacean life is in our lakes system, and survey the seabeds to monitor how healthy our waters are".





Our Country

Reading and Healing Country

The Bushfire Recovery Crew have had a busy couple of months as they work to improve their understanding and knowledge of Country.

With a little help from the JM Rangers, our crew rolled out 40 monitoring cameras in the Lake Tyers State Park in areas to support deer control methods. The monitoring is collecting data from the area to see if treatment rolled out over the past three years has dropped the number of deer in the area.

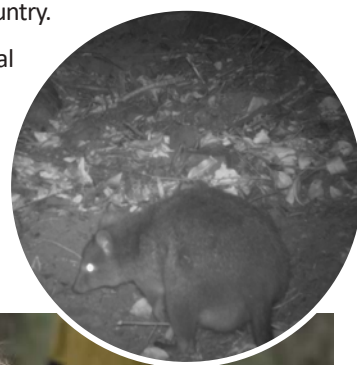
The crew have also been working on water bug monitoring throughout our freshwater waterways to learn how to tell the water quality by identifying the bugs caught. Each individual bug species caught can tell us a lot about the water, what is going on in it and indicates the overall health of the waterway.

We are also focusing on plant ID. This plays a big part in identifying and knowing the importance and benefits of our culturally significant plants as we support Country to heal itself after the fires.

In August, I was invited to present at the 10th Australian Stream Management Conference alongside Patrick Maiden from GHD. GHD are the team supporting our monitoring efforts by using their scientific knowledge and our knowledge of culturally significant plants and animals to find monitoring methods that are meaningful to us as Traditional Owners. The presentation was a great experience, and I was proud to be a part of this conference to let other recovery teams know the work that our GLaWAC crew have been doing out on Country.

I am proud that we, as Traditional Owners are healing Country in a culturally significant way from the plants to the animals.

PAULA HARRISON
Bushfire Recovery Team Leader



CORRINGLE RESERVE UPGRADES

Working together with the NRM crew, we recently completed the 5 posts + landscaping redesign at Corringale Foreshore Reserve. The crew have done a deadly job and completed it in no time. It was a great opportunity for the rangers to learn some new skills from the landscaping crew, and it was good to see all the on-country team working together to do such a good job.

ALFIE HUDSON NRM LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

"I'm rapt all the brothers work so well together, it was really good to see, and I'm sure all crew involved are as well. Seeing out the project from start to finish, it was a great project to work on together"

CULTURAL MAPPING SHORES UP OUR SHORELINE

Our cultural mapping project on the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park has been completed. The crew have really enjoyed the opportunity to work with archaeologist Joanna Freslov, 2 days a week for months now, to survey and record cultural sites on Country. This work is part of the Shoreline Drive Precinct redevelopment and will help guide the landscape design for the upgrade of the surrounding camping grounds.

GUNAIKURNAI RANGER SHAY TERRICK

"I found it very rewarding and educational to work on my Country, and it made me even prouder to be a Gunaikurnai man getting to know more about the rich Indigenous history of our Ancestors that walked this land before us"



Our Organisation

Jobs and Training

GLaWAC is growing

Covid-19 has not stopped GLaWAC from growing. In the last financial year, we have recruited a total of 31 staff. The biggest areas of recruitment were Joint Management and NRM.

We currently have 18 females on staff working across: Administration, Culture, RAP, On Country and the Café. We also added to our Executive team of 4 males with a female Corporate Services General Manager.

GLaWAC supports all of our staff in their journey to be professional, caring for Country leaders.

We have lots of positions to fill later this year and early next year including several roles for our new office in Morwell. Positions include Natural Resource Management Crew, Crew Leaders, Cultural Heritage Crew and an Office Manager so please, if you are interested in any of these roles make sure you contact Mardi Edwards, HR Manager on 5152 5100, or send your resumes to jobs@glawac.com.au

Working to build a workforce

GLaWAC's Human Resources (HR) team has forged many beneficial stakeholder relationships which focus on representing a clear voice about what is important to GLaWAC and our staff.

The Regional People and Culture Forum focuses on working with training facilitators and schools to identify opportunities to build a workforce that can meet the needs of the region into the future.

HR leads the Aboriginal and employment processes for the Gippsland Environmental Agencies (GEA) with a strong focus on ensuring culturally safe recruitment processes, onboarding and Cultural Awareness training.

GLaWAC is involved in several mental health forums with our ACCHO and non-indigenous corporation partners. Involvement in the Gippsland Aboriginal Postvention Response Forums (including suicide prevention) allows participants to provide oversight, guidance and direction in planning to ensure Gippsland Aboriginal communities have culturally appropriate and safe access and engagement in mental health and wellbeing supports and services and develop longer term individual and community mental health and wellbeing strategies.

Strengthening our skills

Although we have experienced some delays with training due to Covid-19, we have forged on with 12 On Country crew enrolling in the Conservation & Land Management Certificate III. Some of the other training going on at GLaWAC has included: Wildfire and Prescribed Burns training to build capacity for Cultural fire, snorkelling, tractor licences, bush tucker Id, OH&S, navigation in remote areas, traffic management and leadership training – just to name a few.

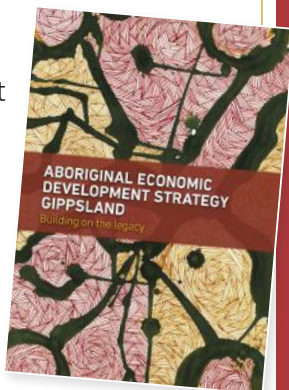
We are also having two ladies-only 4WD sessions – every one of our 18 female staff are joining in!



Our Economy

Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy for Gippsland

Do you want to be supported to get on with the business of growing your business? The Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy for Gippsland has just been released and is the starting point towards ensuring a self-managed and self-determined future of for our local communities.



Whilst GLaWAC is the host organisation for this strategy, it has been developed with a full invitation for the whole of Community, its organisations and Aboriginal business, to contribute during the consultation phase.

We recognise that not everyone would have been able to have your say given the COVID-19 restrictions and that is why we have developed a 'living strategy' that will grow and allow ongoing engagement with those wishing to contribute to the economic future of Aboriginal Gippsland.

The Strategy has been designed to explore partnerships, joint ventures, and collaboration with and between Aboriginal businesses and the broader community. It's about celebrating Culture and stepping forward to showcase our unique abilities, and to understand how to care for Country while developing arts and cultural tourism businesses.

Head to gunaikurnai.org to read the Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy.

There was plenty happening on Gunaikurnai Country in May with GLaWAC hosting the the Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council; and a visit from Employment Minister Jaala Pulford MP, together with Sheena Watt MP. The visit presented an opportunity to yarn about the Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy for Gippsland and discuss the many unique opportunities that Gippsland's Aboriginal community have to contribute to the economic development of the region.



Native Foods and Botanicals launch

A big thank you to Mary-Anne Thomas MP, the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations and our partners from Wulgunggo Ngalu who came along to Forestec in April to launch the Traditional Owner Native Foods and Botanicals Strategy.

Traditional Owners have the right to protect our knowledge and this strategy puts Gunaikurnai, and all mobs around the state, back in control of restoring and reclaiming our cultural practices.

It's also a big step forward for GLaWAC's Bush to Bowl ambitions. In partnership with Wulgunggo Ngalu, we're developing a food supply chain to strengthen self-determination and increase the leadership and participation of Aboriginal Victorians in the bush food sector.

Our Economy

Wulgunggo Ngalu

Over the past 12 months, the partnership between GLaWAC and Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place (WNLP) to establish a bush foods nursery has continued to grow.

Wulgunggo Ngalu sits on a 65-hectare property in the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges near Yarram and provides Aboriginal men an important opportunity to learn new skills, reconnect with, or further strengthen, their culture and participate in programs and activities to help address offending behaviours.

Wulgunggo Ngalu, in Gunaikurnai language, means 'which way together'.

The nursery partnership is about fixing up an old nursery site at Wulgunggo Ngalu and growing important Gunaikurnai bush tucker species to supply to the Bush Café at Forestec (and other places in the future, too). It also gives the Wulgunggo Ngalu men some new skills as they work towards a Certificate II in Horticulture from Tafe Gippsland.

Everyone has been working hard to make sure that the nursery infrastructure is rebuilt to the high standards needed to meet commercial native plant production requirements. The nursery igloo infrastructure needed more work than originally expected and with insufficient

fresh water supply available, a custom designed water tank has been constructed and plumbed in.

In August, GLaWAC's NRM Landscaping team members Brendan, Alfie and Leroy spent the week at the Bush Foods Nursery working alongside Wulgunggo Ngalu fellas. Together, they constructed the new tank

pad, rebuilt the wooden framework on both igloos, and built new garden beds and safe pathways for the nursery production area.

We all had an awesome week working together, making new friends, learning new skills and sharing lots of stories. Even with extended COVID-19 lockdowns in Regional Victoria, most positively we are still on track to have the nursery up and running during Spring 2021.



Feeding the Mob Project

Because of COVID, Kevin and his crew are still working hard pumping out meals for our vulnerable Elders in the community from Bairnsdale through to Cann River. Our ACCHO partners and staff are also working tirelessly to make sure the meals we deliver to them get distributed out to you weekly.

The Bush Café are currently working with the management of Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust to transition the "Feeding the Mob" project to LTAT so that the LTAT can continue to provide meals to our vulnerable Elders. Kevin Murray, Head Chef at the Bush Café will be overseeing the transition process and will help the LTAT Management in the initial set-up to make sure everything is running along smoothly before he gets back to the management of the Bush Café. Kevin will however keep checking in regularly with the Lake Tyers crew to lend support when and where needed.

Bush Café Update

We're pleased to announce that the Bush Café will be re-opening in early October, after too many months closed to you all. It hasn't helped having COVID hanging around but with the Feeding The Mob project being transferred to Lake Tyers Trust, we are working to open our doors to community, along with the general public, and can get back to doing what we do best - provide you all with great tucker and the same friendly service that we're known for. We'll also continue to offer you a "Taste of Our Culture" via the different offerings on our menu which will include weekly specials incorporating many different bush flavors along the way.

"The bush flavors we use are our point of difference, no one does it the way we do."

KEVIN MURRAY





Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)

Under the guidance of the Board of Directors and Elders Council, GLaWAC is the Registered Aboriginal Party that represents the Gunaikurnai people and their aspirations for Native Title, cultural heritage, land, water and natural resource management.

GLaWAC News content disclaimer

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GLaWAC News