

## HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE 37

- Reading the memoirs of our Ancestors
- Nanjet to Mallacoota Sea Country
- Renewable energy – what does it mean for mob?
- Strengthening your voice





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# Joint Update from the GLaWAC Board Chair and CEO

Dear Members and Friends,

The year has commenced with plenty of major projects and opportunities for us to work through. This will involve extensive and strategic engagement with you mob while continuing to building strong relationships with partner agencies.

The Board and Executive team are reviewing the GLaWAC Corporate Plan; and we are undertaking a mapping exercise to better understand what strategies and plans we currently have and what we need to develop to strengthen the organisation as we continue working towards a self-determining future for you mob.

Treaty continues to progress and evolve with GLaWAC's Treaty reserved seat up for re-election. We encourage all eligible members to enrol with the First People's Assembly of Victoria and vote in the upcoming elections.

Some of the major projects we are working on include planning for the Nanjet property near Yiruk Wamoon (Wilson's Prom), planning for the 2026 Commonwealth Games and RSA renegotiations. There will be plenty of opportunity for mob to be engaged on each of them.

We welcome Caron Carter who has been appointed to support the Implementation of the Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy – Gippsland, including setting up the Steering Committee, governance processes and project delivery. CJ Solomon is leading partnerships with Kinaway and Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) to continue planning for the Business Innovation and Growth action areas of the strategy.

Construction of GLaWAC's Wangun Amphitheatre is progressing well, and we look forward to having an opening event later in the year when construction is complete. We encourage you mob to visit Forestec

anytime to see how the building works are progressing. While you are here you can look at some of the amazing artwork that community members have here on display and have a feed or a coffee at the Bush Café.

In late 2022, early outcomes were offered by the State as part of our RSA renegotiation and accepted in good faith by the GLaWAC Board. Negotiations are re-commencing in 2023 to progress other parts of the RSA. This is a slow process, but we continue to meet with the State.

The early outcomes included:

- Freehold title of Forestec and Kurnai Park, together with some funding to refurbish the sites.
- New Gunaikurnai Joint Management Ranger positions.
- Aboriginal title for four more Parks
- Alpine National Park (within the RSA area)
- Baw Baw National Park
- Avon Wilderness Park
- Nooramunga Marine & Coastal Park
- Additional funding for the Gunakurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board (GKTOLMB)

We expect that most of these early outcomes will be in place from the 1st July 2023 and look forward to keeping you updated.

**TROY MCDONALD and DANIEL MILLER**





# GKTOLMB Update

The Land Management Board had a good finish to 2022 by hosting the Joint Management annual reflection workshop in December. We had around 50 people come along, including Rangers, GLaWAC staff, a Deputy Secretary from DEECA and the CEO of Parks Victoria. The day started with a video of some of the young Gunaikurnai Rangers talking about what Joint Management has meant for them, the skills they have learnt, being able to work on Country and learn some of the old ways of caring for Country.

We then spent the day yarning about what is working well, and what can be done better. The aspirations of GLaWAC and Gunaikurnai Rangers matters the most. Everyone agreed the strength of the JM partnership should lead to a stronger Gunaikurnai voice in joint management. Through this we will reclaim culture and see more young Rangers working on Country.

The Board's first meeting for 2023 included hosting GLaWAC Rangers and Gunaikurnai community members for an afternoon on Tali Katoor (Gippsland Lakes). We stopped at a couple of significant places and heard about how GLaWAC's Sea Country program will protect these places in the future. It was special to spend some time with our community and GLaWAC workers and seeing some of the great work that is being done on Country.

For the rest of the year the Board will be busy with a couple of important bits of work. The Joint Management Plan is 5 years old this year, and we will be doing a review to celebrate what has happened in the five years, and to see where the plan is delivering for Gunaikurnai people and what things need to be improved to keep progress happening. We are also very excited to be adding the Alpine National Park (partial), Avon Wilderness Park, Baw Baw National Park and Nooramunga Coastal and Marine Park to the Joint Management Plan. The Board will seek Community input as part of this process, and we will let you know when this starts.

**GLENYS WATTS, Chair of Gunaikurnai TOLMB**

## What we heard in our workshop

"We're proud of working on Country, and working with family, every day, and the leadership being shown by our young rangers."

"We need to create more opportunities for Gunaikurnai community to come together and connect on and with the parks and reserves."

"What matters most? Reclaiming culture and connecting to Country. Respect for Gunaikurnai culture and lore in the park management. Equity of decision making between jm partners."







*Dargo High Plains looking toward Mt Hotham*



# Our Community



FIRST PEOPLES'  
ASSEMBLY OF  
VICTORIA



TREATY  
FOR VICTORIA

## TREATY ELECTION YOUR VOTE MATTERS

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria  
will be holding its Elections in May.

The Assembly you elect will negotiate a state-wide Treaty that works to improve the lives of our kids through truth telling, better education, jobs, housing, health and justice. Every vote counts and all First Peoples in or from Victoria are welcome to vote.

Enrol now: [firstpeoplesvic.org/enrol](https://firstpeoplesvic.org/enrol)

If you're already enrolled, check your details are up to date here: [firstpeoplesvic.org/update-ya-deets](https://firstpeoplesvic.org/update-ya-deets)



### NOMINATIONS

3 – 24 April 2023



### VOTING

13 May – 3 June 2023



# Our Community

## HEY GUNAIKURNAI MOB



**Together with Treaty, we can make sure our people always have the freedom and power to make the decisions that affect our communities, our culture and our Country.**

As a member of the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, you are eligible to enrol with the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria and vote in the upcoming Treaty Elections.

**This is true even if you also participate in GLaWAC elections – you can vote in both!**

Treaty is our opportunity to improve the lives of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people across Victoria. Exactly how profound and strong that reform will be depends on the choices we make over the coming months and the actions that we take together. **Your vote matters.**

If there's one thing that politicians understand, it's numbers. To strengthen our hand in upcoming Treaty negotiations, we need to demonstrate our collective strength and collective support for Treaty.

The most basic, but unquestionable measure for this, is the number of First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria's electoral roll.

When we build our electoral roll, we build our political power.

So please, if you haven't already, enrol yourself now at:

**[firstpeoplesvic.org/enrol](https://firstpeoplesvic.org/enrol)** and encourage all your family members.

Get in touch with the Assembly team if you have any questions about your eligibility or have questions about running as a candidate in the Election yourself.

**[firstpeoplesvic.org/enrol](https://firstpeoplesvic.org/enrol)**





## Our Community

# DEADLY IN GIPPSLAND

Shout out to all you First Nations businesses – established and emerging – may we present to you **Deadly in Gippsland, A First Nations Business Expo!**

The Expo aims to elevate First Nations businesses in the Gippsland region while connecting them to corporate partners, government, government agencies and business support services.

The 2-day event will include a variety of stalls showcasing our First Nations businesses, workshops, yarning circles, panel discussions and much more.

Head to [kinaway.com.au](http://kinaway.com.au) for more information.



**Join us in Lakes Entrance on May 2nd and 3rd**

Hosted by Kinaway Chamber of Commerce and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation

## Surfs up at Conran

Did you make it to Cape Conran for the Victorian Indigenous Surfing Program in January?

If you did, then we don't have to tell you what a deadly day it was, with families coming from all over Gippsland to try their luck at catching a wave. Many for the first time!

The annual event has been running for over 15 years, and sees staff from Surfing Victoria supporting kids in small groups; giving them a lesson on water safety and surfing techniques before taking them into the water to have a go.

Following the Cape Conran event, a small contingent of East Gippslanders travelled to the surf coast for the 25th anniversary of the Woorangalook Victorian Surfing Titles at Urquhart's Bluff, west of Torquay. Congratulations to all involved!





# Our Community

## Leading the way in Gippsland

A special shout out to two of our young leaders, stepping out of their comfort zone as part of the Gippsland Community Leadership Program (GCLP).

Congratulations to Nick Johnson, Team Leader of Aboriginal Student Success at Federation University for graduating as a member of the 2022 cohort; and shout out to Tre Moffatt, Koori Support Worker at Kurnai College who kicked off his GCLP journey last month. Both are leaders in community, and we want to celebrate their values and knowledge as they continue to affirm their positive influence for our mob and our region in the years ahead.

"I would never have thought how transformational this leadership program would be, and the effect it has on my life; it has been such a powerful experience for personal and professional growth."

Nick Johnson, GCLP Graduate



## Your Voice is Important

There is so much happening on Country this year and we want to make sure that your voice is heard and your values are respected.

What do you want to see happen about offshore wind farms and renewable energy on Country?

What about Sea Country? And forest management?

Have you got ideas for cultural tourism at the Nanjet property?

Do you want to be involved in getting ready for the Commonwealth Games to be held on Country in 2026?

There will be lots of opportunities for community members to walk Country with us in 2023, and to have your say about the things you want to see for the future.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page, check out the yarns section on [gunaikurnai.org](http://gunaikurnai.org) or sign up for our e-newsletters (via the website homepage) to keep track of what's coming up.

We've also added a quick quiz (seriously, it only takes two minutes) on the website, where you can leave your feedback about matters that are important to you. Head to [gunaikurnai.org/our-community/elders-members](http://gunaikurnai.org/our-community/elders-members).



# Our Culture

## Cultural Hub Update

The Cultural Hub continue to explore ways to engage members in this space to support the many functions directly related to the Cultural Hub programs and activities. We welcome any interested members to come and have a yarn and learn more about the opportunities we can offer.

In December, GLaWAC supported community members to attend the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV) to undertake family history research which was well received from all the members who attended. This has generated a lot more interest, and we plan to continue to work with the PROV to support community in this program throughout the year.

The Cultural Hub recently worked with the Latrobe Community Health Service's Koorie branch to support the Gippsland Koorie Elders camp held at Wattle Point Retreat. Activities were centred around painting workshops, emu egg carving, basket weaving and possum and kangaroo designs. A big thank you to Sharon Kingaby from Latrobe Community Health Services who coordinated this program.

GLaWAC, in partnership with the East Gippsland Shire and Lakes Entrance Koorie community, continue to progress work on the Krauatungalung Walk in Lakes Entrance, sharing the cultural content of stories and sculptures around the footbridge to promote the local history.

We are all very excited to see the start of works for the build on the Wangun Amphitheatre at the back of the Forestec site. This will be a deadly space for GLaWAC to hold many cultural

events for the community and public to enjoy when completed later in the year.

It's great to see the diverse selection of art and craft on display in the Aboriginal Art Gallery for purchase. We encourage all Gunaikurnai artists who have art and craft material to bring it into GLaWAC where we can promote the sales and offer members the opportunity to showcase their work to visitors at the art gallery. We have seen some increased sales over the past few months, so keep the artwork coming.

Our Artist Register has also been very active over recent months, promoting opportunities for all of our artists to express their interests in undertaking commissioned public work projects. This creates an added income and recognition for all of our emerging and established artists to be recognised in their field of expertise. Keep updated on our facebook page for upcoming news.

We will be planning for the 2023 year with events around NAIDOC Week, community arts and cultural workshops and hopefully some cultural camps – watch this space.

**THE CULTURAL HUB TEAM**





# Our Culture

## PROV VISIT

What a great day - deadly yarns and sharing of knowledge - at the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV) with all these beautiful peeps in December.

The Culture Hub will be making another trip to the PROV early next year as we continue nation building activities.

If you're interested in doing your own family research, keep an eye out on our Facebook page and on our website for more info.



## Cultural Service Expression of Interest

The Cultural Hub team at GLaWAC are looking for Gunaikurnai community members to join our register to provide Cultural Services across Country.

This is an opportunity to practice culture, including Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremonies.

We highly encourage you to make it your own, but we are here to support you to develop the skills and knowledge to deliver the services as you please.

This is a paid service and fuel reimbursements are provided if you need to travel in excess of 50km.

To register your interest or find out more, scan the QR code or call the Cultural Hub on 5152 5100.





# Our Country

## Reading the memoirs of our Ancestors

An extraordinary site of Gunaikurnai rock art in the Buchan Valley has been the focus of an international archaeological expedition providing clues as to how our Old People lived.

GLaWAC invited a team of rock art specialists from France and Spain, to work alongside staff and our research partners at Monash University to unlock the caves hidden secrets.

Some worked to record the finger fluting - lines made by fingers on a soft limestone surface - while others focussed on the rocks and surrounding soils to tell how the cave formed and what the Old People were doing in the cave over time. Archaeologists from the Monash Indigenous Studies Centre focussed on recording information from old excavation pits that were dug in the 1980's.

Who made these markings? Were they adults or children; were they from one family group, or made by different groups over an extended period? And why was this cave chosen? These are some of the questions we're trying to find answers to.



And what we've discovered so far is something altogether unique!

Originally thought to be a small site, the finger fluting extends across the cave for 20 metres, with different types of hands - some smaller, some larger, and with different patterns - recorded within.

The expedition started with geomorphologist Professor Jean-Jacques Delannoy reading the cave by mapping the walls, ceiling and floor with meticulous drawings of rock and pebbles. This is to be able to reconstruct the cave at the time when there were people, communities who entered the cave and who drew the finger flutings. It helps us to understand if the cave is the same today as it was two thousand years ago, five thousand years ago or ten thousand years ago?

"Caves are like a time machine, like a big library full of information about geology, history and the environment, and also the humanities. All that is recorded in the caves, and it is our job to read these archives, the memoirs inscribed in the rock."

RUSSELL MULLETT, GLaWAC RAP Manager

The next stage of the study consisted of photographing the artwork to create three-dimensional models of the panels in which the finger flutings are found. Making tracings of these panels helps to understand the markings' size, length and depth. Mapping the cave's interior, analysing how the markings have been made, and dating samples of rock and stalactites will allow us to put the whole history of the cave back into view and better understand when and why it was chosen as a place for our Ancestors to visit.

"The cave is very well preserved. It's hasn't been damaged by the old people who entered the cave, so it was very well protected. And this protection is essential because it preserves information for our future generations."

Professor JEAN-JACQUES DELANNOY, Geomorphologist at the University of Savoie Mont Blanc in France

And that is essential if we want to be able to understand these stories. In several generations, our children, our grandchildren, the young people who will come and work in this cave, they will use new tools, new ways to record and tell these stories. They will go much further in their understanding. It's important to see ourselves as only a small part of a large chain of understanding; in both scientific terms and in human reasoning.

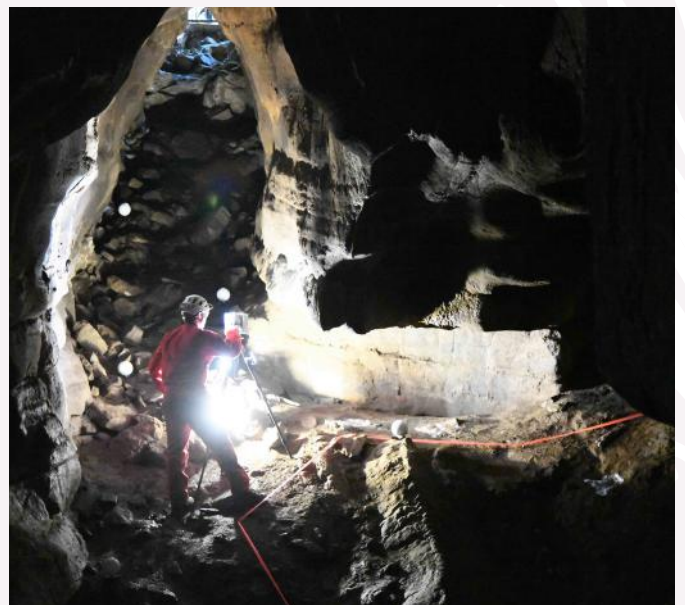


# Our Country



"For us it has been a fantastic experience to be working with GLAWAC. The Country is spectacular and the people are wonderful. In Europe we are used to working in caves where there is no connection between the inhabitants and the town. That connection was lost long ago. So it is a new and very enriching experience to be able to be in contact with a community - a living culture still connected to its ancient past - in a way that allows us to make that connection between people and caves, something that we in Europe simply cannot do."

Professor OLIVIA RIBERO, Rock Art Specialist from the University of Salamanca in Spain





# Our Country

## NRM out and about

Since starting my role with GLaWAC in December 2022 I have been working closely with the already established NRM team and the newly developed Landscaping & Civil crews.

It's exciting times ahead for the organisation with conversations and meetings with Regional Development Victoria (RDV) who are overseeing the development of the Commonwealth Games Village in Morwell. We have been in talks with RDV at a Cultural level, and have pushed to oversee the landscaping project and have a hand in some of the civil works component ahead of the 2026 Games.

This means GLaWAC will be seen not only on a local and state level but on the national global stage as the Games are viewed across the world. With a focus on Gunaikurnai First Nations people & our contribution in putting a stamp on the games with OUR art through landscape design; everyone who'll be watching the Games will view the amazing work us mob are becoming known for.

This new year has seen more conversation with our partners, and we have increased our employer/partner pool due to this hard work. The East Gippsland Shire has reached out to have better relationships with them, which is great since our head office sits in the east. In saying this we have come along in leaps & bounds with the investment of staff in the west. The Valley to more precise, which has been great as this has given way to having an even better relationship with Latrobe City Council (LCC) who want



to engage GLaWAC to help bring their parks & reserves up to date. We currently share a depot which LCC which helps to support the new GLaWAC staff and provide mentorship.

The Valley crew has been picking up more contracts as the days go by, and look to be steamrolling ahead with more contact being pushed in our direction.

Our Tractor crew has been flying at an amazing rate with jobs being completed days, and sometimes weeks, ahead of schedule. This has given way to more contracts and becoming the preferred provider of these jobs. We currently have 2 tractors and have been running them almost continually with some great leadership from Brenden & Uncle Robert.

Our partnership with some local civil companies now gives us more confidence to take on bigger jobs in a contractor/sub-contractor partnership.

**WILLOW CARTER, Senior Manager, Business Enterprise**





# Our Country

## The Nargun Garden

We would like to share an awesome story with you mob!

Gunaikurnai Rangers Mary Harrison and Cathy Thomas have been working on a project to be able to put our cultural mark back in to our joint managed parks. We were thrilled to receive JM Priority Parks Funding from the JM Annual Joint Management Works Plan to create something truly deadly!

One of the recent projects to be delivered is the brand new Nargun Garden at the Den of Nargun Day Visitor Area in the Mitchell River National Park.

We developed the design of five cultural markers to sit in an indigenous garden shaped like a Nargun to showcase how significant this area is to our people.

New interpretive signage will help visitors to better understand what Country means to us and why it's so important to respect it.

"It felt good to be a part of giving the Den some loving, I really enjoyed it and the time we had out there whilst doing it."

MARY HARRISON, Gunaikurnai Ranger

We would like to encourage and empower more women in our community to join the Gunaikurnai Ranger team within GLaWAC to experience working on and looking after Country.

CATHY THOMAS

## Strong women caring for Country and culture

Staff from GLaWAC and Parks Victoria came together on Country in late 2022 for a working bee at the Mitchell River National Park.

Staff worked to clear the steep tracks around Woolshed Creek and shared a walk to the Den of Nargun, a culturally significant place for Gunaikurnai women.

What better way to listen and learn together than to meet on Country for a yarn and share a feed and a laugh while protecting our important sites.



## Getting down to business

There's been plenty of action within the Business Enterprise (NRM) team recently, with a strong focus and drive on employment. We welcomed a Senior Manager and 8 new crew into the NRM space, including 4 in our civil crew.

Another key focus has been building the capacity and capability of our staff. In doing so we have developed a strong partnership with Cranes, who GLaWAC subcontract to complete works.

Cranes work alongside GLaWAC civil staff, developing those staff members skills and abilities into the Civil Works Area.

Major works completed around Angusvale Rd and the Silt jetties area, where several new staff and older staff were able to adapt and develop on their skills and abilities and thrived to deliver deadly outcomes.

KATHERINE MULLETT, On Country General Manager

## LAKE TYERS LEADING THE WAY

We're thrilled to share that the Lake Tyers (Bung Yarnda) Camping and Access Strategy has swept up a bundle of awards in 2022, including an Award of Excellence in Land Management at both the Victorian and National Landscape Architecture Awards.

The jury recognised that "the Lake Tyers (Bung Yarnda) Camping and Access Strategy is an exemplary project whose innovative process supports genuine joint management between Parks Victoria (PV) and the Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) by putting engagement with Traditional Owners at the centre."

"Importantly this project disrupts a pattern of harm to sensitive cultural sites resulting from the impact of increased public visitation to the lake edge campsites."



A special mention to all you mob that lent your voice to develop the Plan, and to our Gunaikurnai Cultural Rangers, in particular Shay Terrick and Robbie Farnham, and our joint management partners at Parks Victoria for all of your deadly work.



# Our Country

## Nanjet to Mallacoota – Sea Country Indigenous Protection Area

In 2022, GLaWAC signed an agreement with the Federal Government for funding to begin the process of establishing a Sea Country Indigenous Protection Area (IPA) from Nanjet, east of Wilsons Promontory, to Mallacoota, on the Vic/NSW Border.

### What is a Sea Country IPA?

A Sea Country IPA is sea, or land and sea, managed by First Nations People in partnership with others to conserve and protect Cultural and environmental values. It is a voluntary agreement with the Australian Government.

Sea Country includes the sea and coastal environment, as well as seagrass beds, dunes, estuaries and bays, and coastal wetlands.

The initial draft of the area of interest includes the Gippsland Lakes and estuaries around Mallacoota.

### Why create a Sea Country IPA?

1. Identify Cultural and natural values;
2. Identify the condition and threats to these values; and
3. Develop a plan to manage and conserve the values.

While the plan is being developed, training opportunities will be offered that will ensure a path to future employment. In the long term, it is envisioned that this will lead to employment opportunities, such as Sea Rangers, for First Nations People.

### Why have an IPA?

With an IPA, GLaWAC and Far East Gippsland groups can partner with stake holders, community groups and government organisations to manage marine & coastal resources.

A Sea Country IPA will be a way for Gunaikurnai and Far East communities to care for and protect land and waters for present and future generations while protecting Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property.

By identifying cultural values, work can be undertaken to protect areas at risk from climate change and human interference (from activities such as tourism or industry expansion).

### What next?

The first step in the IPA process is engagement with any families or clans who may have an interest in the draft coastal area identified.

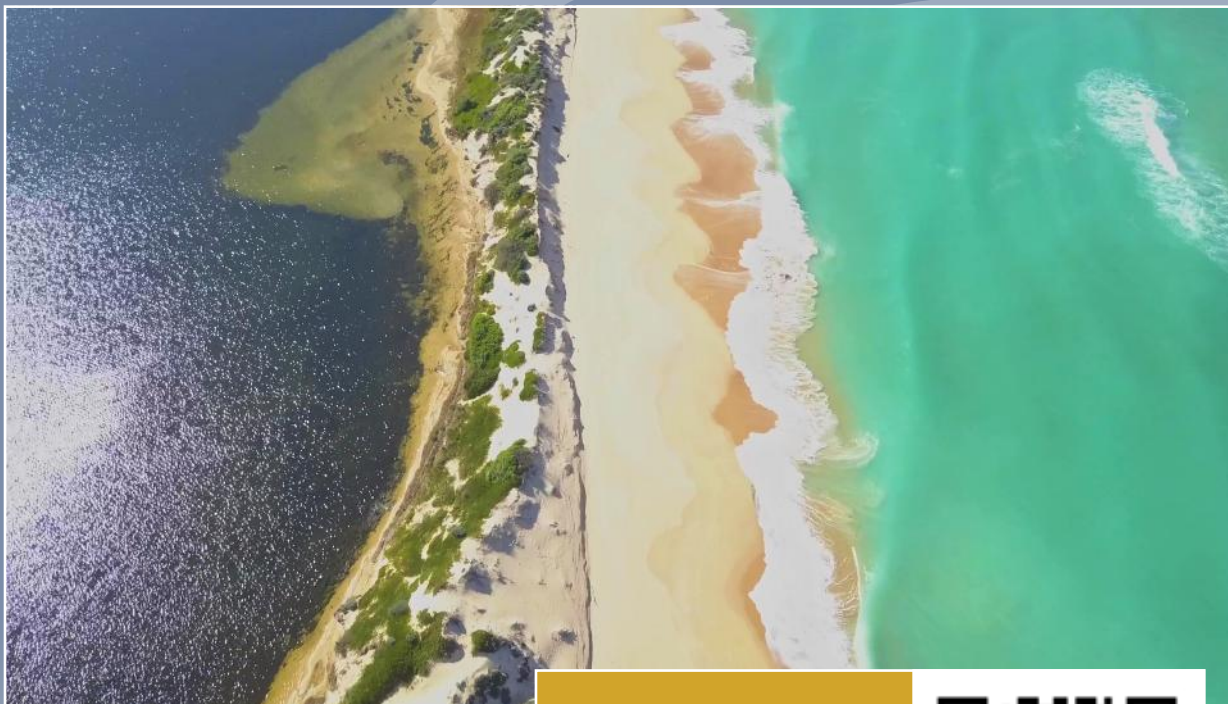
Families and clans are encouraged to register their interest in participating in the development of a plan.

Further engagement including with government agencies and commercial operators will also occur.

GLaWAC is partnering with Monash University and the Arthur Rylah Institute to undertake specific research into culturally significant areas and species that occur along the coast. This can be extended east of the Snowy River if community want.







## Have your say

and register your interest  
in upcoming Community  
events, On Country Sea  
Country Assessment by  
scanning the QR code





# Our Organisation

## Welcome new staff

GLaWAC continues to grow with a number of new staff members joining the team while others seek secondment opportunities with partner agencies.

In the On Country space, we welcome Willow Carter as the Senior Manager of Business Enterprises, and Chris Hood, Jason Saunders, Tyson Harrison, Chris Farnham, and Ian Harrison into the NRM crew. Liv Bowman is helping with NRM project work and we are thrilled that Kade Brickle-Krizanac has joined us in a permanent role after his time as a high school trainee.

Shane O'Shanassy is working across Human Resources and Communications, and Caron Henebery Carter has joined the Economic Development team to support the implementation of the Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy Gippsland.

Sharing skills and knowledge with our partners continues to provide some amazing opportunities for our staff and the organisation as a whole.

Shout out to Robert Baxter and Trey Parson – both sharing and learning on their secondments to DEECA Forest Fire Management, and to Russell Dow and Cath Thomas who have both had their secondments to Parks Victoria extended.

We welcome Matt Holland (Parks Vic), Brett Whitfield (DEECA) and Sean Phillipson (East Gippsland CMA) on secondment to help make your voice heard across matters relating to Sea Country, renewable energy and policy.

It's opportunities like these that help grow the voice of the Gunaikurnai through the region, just some of the benefits of GLaWAC's partnership approach to managing Country.



Willow Carter



Ian Harrison



Kade Brickle-Krizanac



Chris Farnham



Chris Hood



Olivia Bowman



Jason Saunders



Shane O'Shanassy



Brett Whitfield



Sean Phillipson



Matt Holland



Caron Carter

## PATRICK A PARKIE

After a two-year secondment to Parks Victoria, Patrick Mullett has taken the opportunity to move across permanently as the new Aboriginal Heritage Coordinator of East Region.

Pat was one of GLaWAC's first Cultural Rangers, and also spent time learning and growing in the RAP crew and as a JM Ranger in his decade with us. His influence on the organisation and his peers has been undeniable and though we'll miss his presence, we know he'll always be a part of the GLaWAC family. Wishing you all the best for your new role and all that comes your way in the future, Pat.

## Persistence pays off

Shout out to Gunaikurnai Ranger Harley Finn for completing his Certificate III in Conservation and Eco System Management.

It's been 4 years of persisting through Covid and TAFE closures, not to mention moving from a school-based traineeship to a GLaWAC traineeship to a Gunaikurnai Ranger, but he has made a great achievement and as of February 2023 he is qualified!

Congrats brother, deadly things coming your way.





# Our Organisation

## Another step toward water justice

In late 2022, GLaWAC became the first Registered Aboriginal Party to ever sign a Partnership Agreement with Melbourne Water.

The Agreement provides a pathway to work together on 10 priority commitments of mutual interest including recognising our people as a sovereign partner in land and water management and improved cultural understanding.

Melbourne Water Managing Director Nerina Di Lorenzo is excited about this important journey, recognising the cultural and spiritual connections Gunaikurnai people have with the land and water we have cared for and protected for thousands of generations.

"This formal agreement will drive positive transformation in the water sector,"

Dr Di Lorenzo said.

"It highlights our respect for Traditional Owners and cements Melbourne Water's commitment to work together now and into the future."

This agreement is the first of its kind in Victoria and GLaWAC is looking forward to working closely with Melbourne Water to achieve the goals of this partnership agreement.

"GLaWAC is committed to water justice for the Gunaikurnai and creating opportunities for the community right across our RAP area as we continue to care for and heal Country."

DANIEL MILLER, CEO GLaWAC





# Our Organisation

## Taungurung Visit

They often say that two heads are better than one so you can imagine the excitement and innovation that comes when teams from two Traditional Owner Corporations come together to collaborate.

So it was in February, when the Corporate Services team from Taungurung Land and Waters Corporation (TLaWC) visited Forestec to spend time yarning with our corporate services and communications teams.

As one of our neighbouring Traditional Owner Corporations, we share similar goals and values. We see lots of synergies and opportunities to join and progress projects and tackle challenges together.

It was great to be able to show the TLaWC crew around Forestec; safe to say they loved our set-up particularly the Cultural Hub, and Bush Café and Art Gallery.

Our time together was spent sharing information on our organisational goals and structures. Part of this process was for



the different disciplines to team up and share how our individual roles work and create a network to potentially support each other into the future.

We can now share resources and progress more quickly as a partnership, giving us a great chance to benefit from each other's specialist skills.

## Standing together for a louder voice

We are happy to announce that the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation have reinstated our membership and commitment to a shared voice through the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations.

Victoria's Traditional Owner Corporations share many similar projects and aspirations whilst experiencing the same systemic barriers.

GLaWAC is committed to activating the voice of the Gunaikurnai as we build on the aspirations of the Ancestors who came

before. We are excited to join voices with Traditional Owners across the state as we each maintain our self-determining pathway to a better future for community, culture and Country.

As a member corporation, GLaWAC will share our voice to direct this work, including the policy positions and statutory changes required to move forward real self-determination for Traditional Owners.

Without members setting this direction and strengthening the Federation's collective voice, the work would fall to individual corporations or not be undertaken at all.

"The Federation is strengthened by its members - through their contribution, shared vision and values. We are pleased to welcome back the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and to walk with them on the road to Traditional Owner Corporation economic development and community wellbeing."

PAUL PATON, CEO, Federation of Victoria Traditional Owner Corporations





# Our Economy

## Renewable Energy – what does it mean for members?

Gunaikurnai Country has been the centre of Victoria's energy economy for more than a century. As the shift to renewable energy takes off, Country continues to be front and centre of the journey.

GLaWAC needs your guidance as we make ourselves a critical partner in this journey.

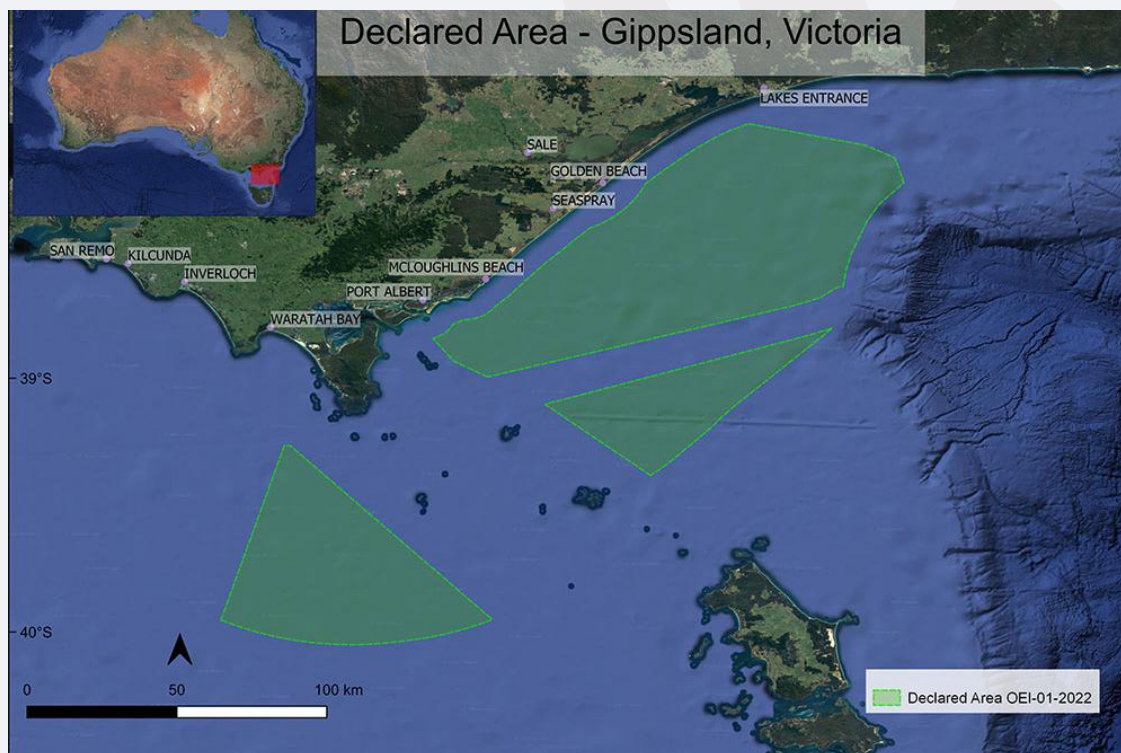
Climate change is bringing big changes to Country and culture, particularly along our coasts, and through fire, flood and extreme weather. The transition to renewable energy is an important one which will help reduce the effects of climate change. At the same time, the transition brings opportunities for our community.

Historically, the energy sector in Gippsland has taken irreplaceable cultural heritage from us and impacted our connection to Country - most notably through the gas pipeline

project and the coal-fired power stations. The Gunaikurnai have received little in return to remedy the impact on Country and our people.

GLaWAC has a big job during this energy transition to oversee the protection and healing of Country and to make sure that economic, business, employment, and lifestyle opportunities are available to our mob.

This is a complex space with lots of players, and we're working hard to position ourselves to influence outcomes that have the biggest outcomes for mob.



*A map showing the declared offshore electricity infrastructure area in Bass Strait. The declared area off Gunaikurnai Country covers approx 15,000 square kilometres, and runs from offshore of Lakes Entrance in the east, to south of Wilsons Promontory in the west.*

### GUNAIKURNAI COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY ADVISORY GROUP

We're establishing a Gunaikurnai Community Renewable Energy Advisory Group that will guide the work of GLaWAC staff and advise the Board on matters relating to renewable energy and we want you to be a part of it. If you have a passion or strong interest in renewable energy transition, or have experience in the energy industry, we'd love to hear from you. You can register your interest via [gunaikurnai.org](http://gunaikurnai.org) or by calling GLaWAC on 5152 5100.

If you'd like to know more about what GLaWAC has already been involved with, you can find the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) Submission for Offshore renewable energy infrastructure area proposal: Bass Strait off Gippsland on our website.

GLaWAC are partnering with State and Federal governments and working with industry on this journey. Guided by the aspirations of our Elders in the Gunaikurnai Whole of Country Plan we're seeking outcomes that:

- protect our culture,
- support our economic independence,
- protect our Country and the flora and fauna most at risk,
- ensure that our rights are upheld and respected,
- bring our mob along on the journey.



# Our Economy

## Bush to Bowl

The 2nd phase of our Bush to Bowl Strategy- to establish a local supply chain of bush foods and plants direct to the Bush Café- is underway, with plans in place to enter retail markets, and wholesale food service markets over time.

Our official nursery production site is based at Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place (WNLP), at Macks Creek near Yarram. The Wulgunggo Ngalu Bush Foods Nursery (WNBFN) after undergoing a major structural rebuild over the last 18 months, is now commercially setup to supply the GLaWAC Bush Café.

The first stage of the WNBFN was funded through the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporations (FoVTOC), Djakitjuk Djanga Program in partnership with GLaWAC and WNLP. The Djakitjuk Djanga program has connected us with many incredible participants, agencies and groups involved in TO bush food industry in Victoria and interstate.

In late November, the Community of Practice Field Visit to Wotjobaluk Country linked us to project staff and participants in person. This was a huge occasion, especially as we had been unable to meet up due to COVID restrictions over 2 years. The tour was highly informative, and the real highlight was visiting the Barengi Gadgin Land Council Wail Nursery and having a guided tour and learning about the team's approach to growing bush foods.

Over the next 18 months, there will be a series of Traditional Owner and community workshops, events and activities for sharing knowledge and celebrating culture with Bush Foods.



### Key objectives of GLaWAC's Bush Foods Project:

- Sharing Gunaikurnai cultural heritage and knowledge with Our Mob and the wider community
- Providing opportunities for sharing traditional knowledge through collecting, growing and cooking bush foods
- Strengthening self-determination, increasing leadership and participation of the Gippsland Aboriginal Community in the bush foods industry
- Growing & sourcing local bush foods to supply the GLaWAC Bush Café at Kalimna West in Gippsland
- Providing training opportunities in sustainable economic development ie. commercial bush food production and distribution
- Establishing Indigenous Cultural & Intellectual Protocols (ICIP) to determine Gunaikurnai IP marketing strategies for distribution of bush foods and plants

GLaWAC's Bush Foods Project aligns closely with nation-building elements essential to all strong Traditional Owner Groups. It supports community to:

- reconnect with and heal Country
- strongly identify with their connections to culture and Country
- have an established, strong knowledge base for well informed and empowered decision-making around Country and culture
- work together towards sustainable and economical independence eg. Bush Café & Wulgunggo Ngalu Bush Foods Nursery
- undertake training & career opportunities in hospitality, horticulture business and marketing
- Grow and supply bush foods providing a vital pathway for future employment opportunities at GLaWAC and the wider community



# Our Economy

## Bush tucker road trip to Wotjupaluk Country

Last October, the Federation of Traditional Owners invited GLaWAC Nursery Project Officer Sam Monks and I to take part in the Djakitjuk Djanga Native Bush Foods Tour over in the very beautiful Wotjupaluk Country. The weather was perfect the whole time, which made it easy for everyone to be able to access some of the properties we visited during the visit.

To start off, we arrived very early, so we went directly to the Wail Nursery, also known by the name of Barenji Gadgin Land Council's Wail Nursery, which sits just off the highway at Wail, only a stone throw from beautiful downtown Dimboola.

Being so early, we were treated to a personal tour of the Indigenous Bush Foods section of the nursery by two deadly fellas - Gavin and Brian - both of whom shared their extensive knowledge about the many different types of bush foods they are growing. They are not only growing plants from their immediate area, but also plants from other areas as well. It really was well worth taking the journey around the nursery with them both, boy, talk about an information over-load for me, but it goes to show these guys truly know their stuff, and they were more than happy to share their knowledge with us!

They showed us lots of what they have been doing, and how they've been growing and propagating bush tucker plants and seeds for re-sale and re-growth to eventually supply communities across the state and further afield, so watch this space.

We took the guided tour again when the rest of the party arrived and later treated to a Traditional Welcome to the beautiful Wotjupaluk Country as well as a Smoking Ceremony delivered by Brian. Brian went on to tell us about his Apprenticeship in Horticulture, he was proud to tell us that he's been doing very well with it too, and just by the way he was talking, you could hear just how dedicated and passionate he was about what he had been learning. Everything Brian had been learning up to this point has been put into practice within the nursery where he also teaches and shares his extensive knowledge with his work colleagues.

Credit goes to the whole group led by Gavin, Brian and their small team of dedicated workers who have worked tirelessly to get what was a run-down nursery, back up and running once again and putting Dimboola and surrounds back on the map. When you visit this place, you'll understand what I'm talking about.

We settled into our accommodation at the Little Desert Lodge and later met the whole group outside in the big communal cooking area where everyone jumped in to prepare a bush tucker feast for our dinner that night; and what a feast it was, too.



Some of the food we shared were, kangaroo, as well as wallaby snags, and a nice slab of emu coated with a beautiful bush dukka (supplied by a lovely couple who had been mixing their own ingredients - all bush tucker spices of course). I was later gifted the rest of the large packet of Bush Dukka spices to bring back home for use in the Bush Café. I even took a little bit of it home with me to try some on chicken and beef, it went down a treat, you could taste the many different ingredients that were in it...it was truly tasty.

After dinner was over, we all sat around the fire pot and each shared stories and a bit about ourselves, like where we were from etc, at same time we were exchanging information about the many different bush foods that people were already producing. There was even a show and tell of Djakitjuk Djanga participant products which were so proudly displayed for us to look at, and of course to taste.

On the second day, we were introduced to Mr Matthew Koops, who yarned about his Quandong propagation before we drove out to a number of his properties where we could see firsthand how he grows them. The properties were full of Quandong trees and lots of host trees and other bushes, as well as a whole area where he was growing several different types of Wattle trees.

I never knew that Quandong trees needed a host to be able to live on, till such a time the host dies off and then the Quandong tree sends out more suckers to find a new host. Matthew said it was not an easy process to grow Quandong trees and that it had taken him a few decades to get to where it is today, and there's still much more to learn.

Our last day included a short drive to the You Yangs to look at a site that had recently had cultural fire put through, led by the Wotjupaluk Traditional Owners. The burn was done with the guidance and support of a very well-known young fella Damien Skurrie, and of course his family and other Traditional Owners and their children had all taken part in what was a very successful burn. Looking at the area involved, we could clearly see how everything came back looking fresh, green and of course there were new plants and flowers that also came up, some of which had not been seen in quite a long time.

**KEVIN MURRAY, Bush Cafe**





## 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

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Corporation. We do not guarantee the accuracy or accept any responsibility for the statements or comments made by the contributors in articles submitted. GLaWAC reserves the right to amend, alter or delete any items, statements or articles that it feels is not in the best interest of the Corporation or its members.

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# GLaWAC News