



Wurruk na ingga ma

Returning to Country



Artwork:
Hand energy,
Wayne Thorpe.

Front cover image: Outer barrier and
Bunga Arm, Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park.
Sean Phillipson.

The Board commissioned Hollie Johnson to research Gunaikurnai language translations for some of the English words and phrases used in this Strategic Plan. Hollie used a variety of references including ‘Yarnin Up: Gunnai’ 2010 by Aunty Doris Paton and Aunty Lynnette Solomon-Dent for the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages; A Study of the Aboriginal Languages of Gippsland based on 19th Century Materials by Eve Fesl; and the Yirruk-Tinnor Gunnai/Kurnai Language Program. Where Gunaikurnai language is used in this document, the translation and its spelling that has been adopted is as agreed by the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, the Traditional Owner Corporation that represents the Gunaikurnai people.

Whenever Gunaikurnai language translations are included for English words or phrases, the Gunaikurnai translation appears in bold font, followed by the English word or phrase in brackets. Where English phrases have been translated into Gunaikurnai language, generally a word by word (literal) translation has been applied, although there are instances where the translation adopts the traditional Gunaikurnai grammar structure.

The Board acknowledges that there are different views held by Gunaikurnai people about the meaning and spelling of some Gunaikurnai words and phrases, and recognises that these may change in the future. Where alternative spellings have been identified for Gunaikurnai words or phrases that are used in this document, they are recognised in the glossary on pages 36-39.

There are several Joint Management partners referred to in this document.
The abbreviations we have used are:

- Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board (GKTOLMB)
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change (DEECA)
- Parks Victoria (PV)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed.

Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board

5 Year Strategy 2021–2026





Artwork:
Sunset Dance,
Alice Pepper.

Wunman Njinde.

I acknowledge the Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Owners of the land referred to in this strategy, and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We have lived on this land since its creation, when Borun the pelican travelled from the mountains in the north to Tarra Warackel in the south.

We have one of the oldest living cultures in the world, and that culture has been passed on through many generations. Our culture is embedded in our wurruk which is vital to our identity. The forest, rivers, beaches, plants, and animals are all part of 'Country' and the cultural identity of the Gunaikurnai. They are valued for the environment and as a vital part of contemporary Aboriginal culture. Protecting, managing, and enjoying the land are an important part of this connection and responsibility.

This strategy recognises that Joint Management is more than managing the 14 parcels of land within the Recognition and Settlement Agreement. It is about Gunaikurnai Self-Determination. This plan builds on the principles and achievements of the Joint Management Plan and brings them karobran (together), with an emphasis on Gunaikurnai

reclaiming wurruk and their culture, with rangers and Elders caring for Country and through art, language, and cultural practices.

By implementing this strategy, under the umbrella of the Joint Management Plan, we will have more Gunaikurnai employed in caring for Country, and our wurruk (land) and yarnda (waters) will be unmistakably recognisable as Gunaikurnai, in the way it is cared for and by the cultural markers in each park.

I wish to thank our Joint Management partners for their input and support into the creation of this strategy. GLaWAC, Parks Victoria and DEECA contributed their time and expertise at all levels to make this plan bigger than the sum of its parts. The GKTOLMB looks forward to continuing its strong partnerships as we implement our vision of Gunaikurnai caring for their Country every day.

Glenys Watts,
Chair GKTOLMB



WURRUK

{ Country }

Image:
Lower Latrobe River, near Sale Common.
Sean Phillipson.

Connection to **Wurruk** (Country).

‘Country’ has a far greater meaning for **Werna** (Us) as Gunaikurnai people than simply a reference to ‘land’.



**“Wurnalung lung gingin
wurruk (Our belonging to
the land), articulated through
the country’s dreaming, has
been passed down through
the generations.”**

Glenys Watts, Chair GKTOLMB



Image:
Pelican in flight.
Sean Phillipson.

The idea of ‘land’ was introduced to “Australia” in 1788.

The British arrived and imposed law and customs that governed ‘land’ based on English common law. Colonial rule commenced.

Land is an idea that government uses to put boundaries and barriers around Country.

Land is fragmented. Water, earth, air, minerals and all living things...are separated and managed by different departments who operate in silos. This weakens Country and makes it much more difficult to care for.

‘Land’ is owned. It is viewed as a ‘property’ that can be bought or sold to create wealth and ‘managed’ in the ‘public’s’ interest.

First Nations people have never ceded their Sovereignty over the land now called “Australia”.

The 200 year fiction of terra nullius was rebuked in 1992 as a result of the work of Torres Strait Islanders, led by Eddie Mabo.

This led to the passing of the Native Title Act in 1993, which provides a framework for all Australian Indigenous people to make claims of native title on public land.

TERRA

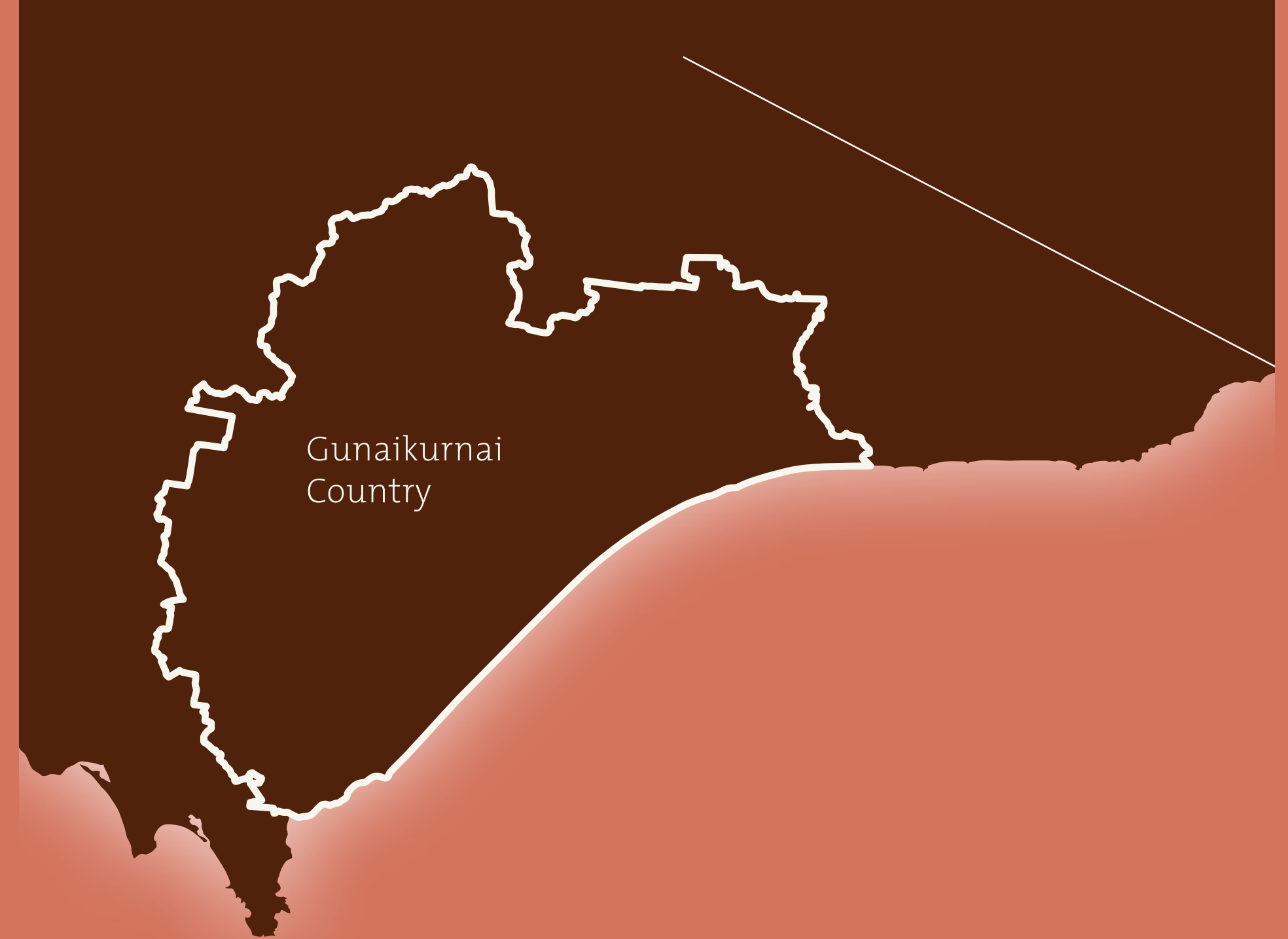
NULLIUS

ON THE 22ND OF OCTOBER 2010...

...self-determination began when it was recognised by the Federal Court that the Gunaikurnai people hold native title over much of Gippsland.

From **Yak** (West) Gippsland, near **Warragul** (Warragul), east to the **Binnack** (Snowy River), north to the **Quarail** (Great) Dividing Range and 200 meters out into the ocean.

This is Gunaikurnai Country.





Artwork:
Bung Yarnŋa Beach
Ancestors Dance gathering,
Wayne Thorpe.



Our vision is for the Gunaikurnai people to be leading the care of booloonga Wurruk ngurtana wurrin (their Country every day).

The Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board (GKTOLMB)

Image:
Smoking ceremony and clap sticks.
Wayne Thorpe.

What does that look like?

All people working on Country are being led by the Gunaikurnai people.

All Gunaikurnai Country is being cared for by Gunaikurnai people.

The Gunaikurnai people's care of Country is sustainably funded.

Image:

GLaWAC Joint Management Ranger with park visitors at Corringale Foreshore Reserve.
Jess Shapiro.



How will we measure our progress in the next five years?

1. The number of Gunaikurnai people that visit Country every year.
2. The number of non-Gunaikurnai people that have a cultural experience on Country every year.
3. The number of Gunaikurnai on Country roles that are established.
4. The number of people working on Country that are managed by Gunaikurnai people.
5. We have a sustainable funding model that generates \$6M revenue annually.
6. To support GLaWAC to ensure a plan, timeline and budget are agreed with key stakeholders for the return of all public land to Gunaikurnai Country.
7. The Joint Management Plan has been effectively monitored, evaluated, and delivered.



Wurnalung wanik

{ Our path }

Image:
Corrigan's Suspension Bridge,
Tarra-Bulga National Park.
Jess Shapiro.

Wurnalung (Our) role **is to work karobran (together) to advance pathways that return Country to Gunaikurnai leadership.**

The Gunaikurnai people's interests are represented by GLaWAC. GKTOLMB supports GLaWAC in partnering with government to transform land back into Country. They do this, karobran (together), on behalf of the Gunaikurnai people.



Image:
GLaWAC JM Rangers and Parks Victoria
Rangers at Buchan Caves Reserve.
Jess Shapiro.



Thindu bernak wunman werna (How do we grow this?)

Artwork:
Boorun Gree Pelican's canoe,
Wayne Thorpe.

STRATEGIC GOAL KOOTE (ONE):

Gunaikurnai people leading the change.

- OBJECTIVE 1**
To grow the workforce for all roles that work on Country.
- OBJECTIVE 2**
To ensure all people working on Country respect, listen to and learn from the Gunaikurnai people.
- OBJECTIVE 3**
To support Gunaikurnai people to excel in leadership roles.

STRATEGIC GOAL BOOLOOMAN (TWO):

Gunaikurnai people caring for Country.

- OBJECTIVE 4**
To advocate for all public land to be returned to Country and effectively support the care of Country through the Joint Management Plan.
- OBJECTIVE 5**
To partner with government to remove policy, legislation, language, and attitudinal barriers to Gunaikurnai people caring for Country.

**STRATEGIC GOAL BOOLOOMAN BATA
KOOTOOK (THREE):**

*Gunaikurnai people share
knowledge with the people
who live on and visit Country.*

OBJECTIVE 6

To ensure Country has appropriate facilities to support the sharing of cultural knowledge.

OBJECTIVE 7

To use Gunaikurnai language to describe Country and share cultural knowledge.

OBJECTIVE 8

To create opportunities for Gunaikurnai and non-Gunaikurnai people to experience and celebrate Country.

**STRATEGIC GOAL BOOLOOMAN BATA
BOOLOOM (FOUR):**

*Gunaikurnai people have long
term, sustainable funding in
place to care for Country.*

OBJECTIVE 9

To secure long term funding agreements with Government that support Gunaikurnai to lead and manage all people working on Country.

OBJECTIVE 10

To support Gunaikurnai people to develop income streams that contribute to the ongoing care of Country.

OBJECTIVE 11

To explore innovative models for income generation.

Image:
GLaWAC JM Ranger and
Parks Victoria Ranger at
The Lakes National Park.
Jess Shapiro.



Our Role

Karobran (Together) we advance pathways that return Country to Gunaikurnai leadership.

Artwork (right):
Hand energy,
Wayne Thorpe.

Artwork (background)
Boorun Gree Pelican's canoe (close-up),
Wayne Thorpe.

Where we are today

The Gunaikurnai people have demonstrated great capacity and skill in caring for Country and are ready to take on more of the leadership of this care.

Most roles that care for Country are delivered and managed by non-Gunaikurnai people.

Funding for the care of Country is controlled by non-Gunaikurnai people and is vulnerable to shifts in the political landscape.

Colonisation has become embedded in the language, policies, laws and norms that surround the care of Gunaikurnai country. This has led to negative impacts for all living beings on Country.

Government is committed to treaty and self-determination.

Governments have begun to understand the benefits and value for all of returning land to Country, but sometimes struggle to connect the dots within their own system to ensure this transition happens rapidly.

Where we are going

All people working on Country are being led by the Gunaikurnai people.

All Gunaikurnai Country is being cared for by Gunaikurnai people.

The Gunaikurnai people's care of Country is sustainably funded.



When we do all of this 'land' once again returns to '**Country**'. 'Land' will no longer be separated from water, air and all living things.

How we will get there

Goal 1: Gunaikurnai people leading the change.

Goal 2: Gunaikurnai people caring for Country.

Goal 3: Gunaikurnai people share knowledge with the people who live on and visit Country.

Goal 4: The Gunaikurnai people have long term, sustainable funding in place to care for Country.

Our Vision

Gunaikurnai people leading the care of their Country every day.

**Wurruk werna galamdah il
ma koote, thindu wurnalung.**

*(We acknowledge and care,
for this is our Country.)*



Image:
Lake Tyers.
Wayne Thorpe.

Image:
Walking track, Buchan Caves Reserve.
Jess Shapiro.

Boon-ya-buk werna

{Join Us }

Gunaikurnai language glossary

This glossary lists the Gunaikurnai language words used in the plan and their meanings in English. Where a number of alternative Gunaikurnai language words have been identified as having the same or similar meaning they are included below, with the variation chosen for inclusion within this document listed first and appearing in bold.

English word or phrase	Gunaikurnai word(s) or phrase
acknowledge	galamdah
air	watpootjan
all	girtgan
and	il
belonging (to)	lung
country	wurruk , wurk, wurak, wark, wrack, wurack
day	wurrin , wurin, woo-run, woorun, woorin, wooreen, wihrin, wurring
every	ngurtana
five	bret
for	ma koote

four	boolooman bata booloom , booloman batha boolung, boolooman batha boolung, bullum-an-batha-bullum, bŭlŭman bata bŭlŭm, bulumon bulumon, bBooloomun bittabolong, pul-ler-mun pul-ler-mun, booloom catha booloom
great	quarail
hear	wariga , wunga, wanggan, wang-a-wŭrk
join (to join)	boon-ya-buk
land	wurruk , wurk, wurak, wark, wrack, wurack
life (living)	tier
many	yaail , yale
one	koote , kootopan, kootook, kootpan, kootopan, kootopanà, koo-to-pau, goodabun, kiap, goottup, kŭtŭpan, kutupon, ko-der-mun
our	wurnalung , warulun, wanalun
path	wanik
returning	na ingga
sea	waring , war-ren, wahring, binginwarrie, war-ring
see	tackan , dhakar, takan, dakan
sky	warrun , wor-ruc
Snowy River	binnack

that	ketchoon
the	gingin
their	booloonga
this	thindu
three	boolooman bata kootook , booloman batha kotook, boolooman batha kootook, bullum-an-batha goot-tuk, bŭlūman bata kūtūk, bulumon kutuk, pul-ler-mun targoo-dook, booloom catha kootook
to	ma
together	karobran
touch	mud-wud-gun
two	boolooman , booloman, bŭlūman
us	werna
Warragul	warragul
water	katung , yarn, yarnda, kailtung, yurn, yan, yaan, yaarn, gattung
we	werna
welcome	wunman njinde
west	yak , yack, juk

Pronunciation

Vowels

- a** (u) – as in ‘cut/but/gun’
- i** – as in ‘sit’
- oo/u** – as in ‘look/put’
- o** – as in ‘pot’
- e** – as in ‘egg’

Consonants

- p** – as in ‘pig’/’big’
- t** – as in ‘tea’
- k** – as in ‘donkey’
- m** – as in ‘milk’
- n** – as in ‘noise’
- l** – as in ‘look’
- g** – as in ‘gate’
- ny** – as in ‘new’
- ng** – as in ‘sing’
- nh/n** – tongue touching the back of the teeth
- rt** – tongue is curled back and released into ‘t’
- d** – tongue touching the back of the teeth
- rl** – tongue is curled backwards and released into ‘t’
- rr** – as in ‘road’
- ty (yt)** – combination of ‘t’ and ‘y’
- rn** – tongue is curled backwards and released into ‘n’
- y** – as in ‘you’
- w** – as in ‘water’



Image:
Mitchell River.
Sean Phillipson.



www.gktolmb.org.au

