

HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE 39

- Community connections in Morwell
- New Discoveries at Brt Britta
- Upgrading Angusvale
- Yarning energy



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Joint Update from the GLaWAC Board Chair and CEO

Dear Members and Friends,

2024 has well and truly kicked off and GLaWAC has a number of large projects in hand.

A key focus is the re-negotiations of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA). The Gunaikurnai re-negotiation team are developing a position to put forward to the State outlining their expectations. The document will highlight areas such as:

- Funding
- Economic Development
- Aquaculture
- Forest Produce
- Old and New Energy

Economic Development opportunities continue to progress with work on Nanjet cultural tourism offering, Oyster farming, Offshore Wind projects and the potential community benefits. The Morwell Business Hub held its official Community opening in March which was a wonderful day for the local Community to gather. Please drop in to meet the team, look through the gallery shop or simply sit down and have a yarn.

The Wangun Amphitheatre has received its certificate of occupancy, and an opening is planned for Friday, 21 June. This will be a deadly space, providing great opportunity for cultural activities and events. We are looking forward to seeing and hearing dance workshops, yarning sessions, and cultural engagement sessions on Country. If you have any ideas or events you would like to hold or be a part of please reach out to us.

There are plenty of ways to get involved in the work that GLaWAC is doing on and across Country and we encourage you to join in. From sharing knowledge about Sea Country, having your say on the transition to renewable energy or joining in on an Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Workshop, and plenty more, we welcome all you mob to make your voice heard.

And GLaWAC continues to grow organisationally, so please keep an eye out on our webpage or Facebook page for future job opportunities.

TROY MCDONALD and DANIEL MILLER



GKTOLMB Update

Every year the TOLM Board gets together with Joint Management (JM) partners to talk about how the work is going and what we need to do to improve. This year we gathered at Lakes Entrance and got some great yarns from our rangers and others involved in JM.

This year, the Joint Management Plan turned 5 years old and the TOLM Board asked how it is all going. The Board asked community, GLaWAC Rangers and senior managers what they thought was working well and what needed to change. We also spoke with the other JM partners what they think.

The report was finished late last year and presented to GLaWAC and other people involved in JM in December. It was a really positive review, with everyone saying that a lot has happened because of joint management. This includes employing rangers to do cultural work on Country. It has also meant we can do cultural mapping and projects like the 5 posts and cultural interpretations signs around the JM parks.

There were some things that we need to work on, including more Gunaikurnai involvement in big decisions about Country and less red-tape for GLaWAC to do its work. The review is also a reminder that secure and long term funding is needed. One of the biggest changes from the review is to talk about the 10 most important things we want to do in the next 5 years. We have called this the story line, and it is all about the vision of Gunaikurnai leading the care of their Country every day.

New Joint Management Parks

At the same time the Board also started working on adding the new parks to the JM plan. The first thing the Board did was to bring the partners together and get agreement on the principles that will be used in writing the plan. The partners agreed to 5 principles that the plans have to meet. They are:

Focus on what we can and want to change. This means Gunaikurnai choosing the things that are important to change the things that need to change.

Ask how we can make this work. Sometimes we have to wait for the law to change, but that doesn't mean we sit back and wait, we get started on things that matter straight away.

We listen to voices on the ground. Gunaikurnai rangers and community voices must be in the new plans.

VACANCY

The TOLMB currently has a vacancy for a Gunaikurnai person. We meet between 6 and 8 times a year which includes trips on Country. The Board monitors and provides advice on the implementation of the Joint Management Plan as well finding ways to increase Country under the care of Gunaikurnai. If anyone is interested in joining the TOLMB please contact Daniel Miller on 5152 5100.

Keep working on our relationships. We work well with JM partners, but there's always more to be done.

Create our third way of knowing. Gunaikurnai knowledge and western science work together for the best ways to work with Country.

The Board has started to work on these new plans, including a visit to the Alpine National Park in February where Uncle Russell Mullett talked about the culture of the area and some of the things that the plan needs to take into account. It was an eye-opening visit for many of the Board members, and they agreed to meet on that Country more often as it works on the JM plan.

The Board has also been very proud to contribute funding to some important work being done on our Country. This includes funding design work for cultural interpretations at Buchan Munji, funding cultural mapping at Tarra Bulga National Park.

Gunaikurnai TOLMB



Above: The TOLM Board and Parks Victoria managers visited the Alpine National Park in February.





Our Community

Community connections

After months of planning, we were stoked to finally open the new Community Economic Hub in Morwell in March.

The new office is a commitment to promoting healing and connection within the Aboriginal community and beyond, and will become a resource to learn, connect and grow.

The launch kicked off with a heartfelt Welcome to Country from Uncle Lloyd Hood, followed by a Smoking Ceremony led by Michelle Dow and Shay Terrick.

Guests were treated to a deadly performance by the Boorun Boys dancers, who generously shared their cultural connection with the gathering.

The day was a chance for community to find out more about our cultural and employment initiatives, land management programs, and opportunities to showcase and sell Aboriginal products. And have we mentioned the great lunch that lunch courtesy of Laurie and the crew at Castle Park where Elders and kids alike enjoyed plenty of fun and food amongst friendly faces!

Gunaikurnai Ranger Shay Terrick credits his deepening understanding of culture to the eight years he has spent working at GLaWAC. "My goal now is to keep up my cultural journey and teach my daughters to be proud about who we are, where we come from and what we're about."

Troy McDonald, GLaWAC Chair, emphasised the space as a cornerstone for cultural exchange, education, and healing; a significant step in GLaWAC's aspirations to support all Aboriginal people living on Gunaikurnai Country.

"A Traditional Owner Corporation really is just like a big family business. We're all family so it's important to be able to work toward a self-determining future that acknowledges everyone's personal experiences."

Thanks to everyone who joined us at the new GLaWAC Community Hub, and over at Castle Park, we appreciate you coming along and hope you had an awesome time.



Our Community



Our Community

An Update on the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

In March, GLaWAC hosted a meeting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria at our Forestec office. Assembly members gathered on Country to continue developing the key ideas they'll take into the first round of Treaty negotiations with the Victorian Government!

There's still work to be done and feedback to gather from mob across the state, but the main four concepts firming up as the priorities are:

- A process and timetable for transferring decision-making powers from Government to First Peoples.
- How recommendations from the Yoorrook Justice Commission should be implemented.



- Expanding the Assembly's roles so in addition to its own decision-making powers, it can also provide advice to government and ensure accountability.
- Ways to properly respect and celebrate First Peoples' cultures and languages.

If you have any ideas or questions, get in touch via www.firstpeoplesvic.org



FORUMS ABOUT TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria is hosting upcoming South East Regional Forums and a South East Youth Forum, to bring Community together for important yarns about Treaty negotiations.

The Youth Forum will take place on 30 May in Bairnsdale. Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 12-25 are encouraged to attend, to start developing their ideas and aspirations for Treaty.

The South East Regional Forums will take place on 19, 20 & 21 June, across several locations (TBC) spread out across South East regional Victoria.

Our Community

By Aboriginal People, For Aboriginal People

GEGAC has launched a new mob-led initiative that it hopes will improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

The new GEGAC Aboriginal Health Team, made up of registered Aboriginal Health Practitioners and Aboriginal Health Workers, will provide front line to care to mob both at GEGAC and in the community, working in partnership with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal doctors, nurses and other health care workers.

Team Leader Michelle Pearce, a registered Aboriginal Health Practitioner whose family has played a key role in GEGAC's history since its creation, says the Aboriginal Health Team recaptures the spirit and practice of GEGAC's founding.

"GEGAC was built by Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people," she said. "That also means Aboriginal people providing care for Aboriginal people, how it was at the start."

Michelle said she hopes the Aboriginal Health Team continues GEGAC's efforts to make mob feel comfortable coming to the health service, or calling with questions or concerns.

The Aboriginal Health Team is:

- Aboriginal Health Practitioner + Team Leader Michelle Pearce
- Aboriginal Health Practitioner Linda Pearce
- Aboriginal Health Worker Carmel Hood

- Aboriginal Health Worker Kayla Harrison
- Aboriginal Health Worker Leteisha Bryant
- Maternity Health Worker Samantha Johnstone
- Aboriginal Healthy Lifestyles Worker Rhiannon Hayes

Aboriginal Health Practitioners can provide a range of health services, including health assessments and screenings, checking blood sugar levels and blood pressure, supporting clients with their treatment plans and rehabilitation, and helping community members navigate the health system outside GEGAC.

Although there are two Aboriginal Health Practitioners at GEGAC at the moment, that number is set to increase, with Samantha Johnstone, Leteisha Bryant and Kayla Harrison currently studying for their Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice and set to graduate in the coming months.

Rhiannon Hayes begins her Cert IV course later this year.

"We are all looking forward to being able to help people that come into the clinic, and also to get out into the community, to have those one-on-one conversations," Michelle said. "If your family or organisation is interested in arranging a visit from the Aboriginal Health Team, just give us a call or drop by."

GEGAC's medical clinic is open Monday – Thursday, 9am – 5pm, and Friday from 9am – 3pm.

Call 5150 0760 to reach medical clinic reception, and ask to speak to a member of the Aboriginal Health Team.



Our Community

Care on Country

Travelling to Melbourne to see a medical specialist is expensive, time-consuming, and takes you away from your mob.

There has to be a better way.

Now there is.

Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC), the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), and some of Australia's best doctors have teamed up to create "Care on Country," a new system of telehealth appointments that gives our mob priority access to world-class specialists at low cost and much faster than waiting for an in-person appointment.

Telehealth has improved enormously in recent years, and thanks to cutting edge technology telehealth appointments are now just as effective for patients and doctors in many situations.

Care on Country means great care for local Aboriginal people without having to leave country, friends and family.

With Care on Country telehealth appointments, you can go to GEGAC and have one of their doctors, nurses or Aboriginal Health Care practitioners sit with you while the specialist in Melbourne dials in via high definition video link.

If you prefer, GEGAC can sometimes set up Care on Country telehealth appointments in your home.

There are Care on Country appointments available now in the following specialties:

- First Nations Dermatology
- Respiratory
- Cardiology
- Endocrinology (diabetic patients only)
- Child and adolescent psychiatry
- Adult and older age psychiatry
- Addiction and pain
- Geriatrics (65+)

Want to know more about Care on Country telehealth appointments?

Call the GEGAC Medical Clinic on 5150 0760 and ask to speak with Care on Country Coordinator, Sophie Ljubic.

Kickstart your business

As a part of supporting Aboriginal businesses in Gippsland, the Aboriginal Business Development team are managing the Business Innovation Fund. It is an opportunity for Aboriginal businesses in Gippsland to receive up to \$5,000 to support your business activities with networking and capacity building opportunities also available.

Congratulations to the first five recipients of the Aboriginal Business Innovation Fund:

- Janarra Atkinson – Beautician
- Jordan Chittem – Electrician
- Wayne Thorpe – Cultural & Spiritual Practitioner
- Kevin Hood – Photographer
- Paul Patten – Musician

If you're an Aboriginal Business Owner in Gippsland or have dreams of starting your own business, call Kelvin or Caron to see what support is available or head to [gunaikurnai.org](#) and fill in your details for one of them to get in touch with you!



"My name is Janarra Atkinson and with the support of a GLAWAC Community Grant and the Business Innovation Fund I am successfully running a beauty salon called The Country Side Beauty Bar in the small country town of Tatura! I also own JGA All Things Beauty and definitely wouldn't be where I am today without the kick start from the business innovation fund!"

Our Community

Waves on wisdom

What a joy to spend a sunny day in April on the water with our Elders to connect and yarn.

Our Elders are our everything so we're grateful to LEAHA and GEGAC for supporting this opportunity to get out on Tali Katoor (the Gippsland Lakes) and yarn about Katungal (Sea Country). We're already looking forward to the next trip so keep an eye on our Facebook and Instagram pages to find out how you mob can get onboard the next one.



Our Community

Teach them young

A caring learning community is more than a motto for Bairnsdale West Primary School who have been fostering a deeper understanding and respect for the Gunaikurnai culture for decades now. Late last year, the school ran their annual “On Country” excursions, engaging students from junior to senior levels on a very hands on educational journey, designed in collaboration with Auntie Doris Paton and GLaWAC.

JUNIOR SCHOOL EXCURSION TO GRAGIN (RAYMOND ISLAND)

In November, over 130 junior students embarked on a fascinating excursion to Gragin (Raymond Island). The day began with a traditional Smoking Ceremony led by Auntie Doris Paton, Harley Finn, Cath Thomas, and Paula Harrison, marking many students’ first encounter with such a profound cultural practice.

Auntie Doris introduced the students to a captivating story, “How Towera the Fire Was Made,” and shared insights into the Gunaikurnai language. Harley and Cath guided the young

learners along the Koala trail, where they searched for koalas and learned about the island’s history, joint management, and Harley’s role in managing the land. The students were deeply engaged, crowding around Harley as they listened and walking along wanting to hold his hand.

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXCURSION: EXPLORING SIGNIFICANT LOCAL SITES

For the Grade 3 & 4 students, the On-Country Learning Day involved visiting key locations such as GLaWAC, Howitt Park, and Krowathunkooloong Keeping Place. Alice, Harley, and Robbie from GLaWAC hosted the students, emphasising the



Thank you Harley for letting us have a smoking ceremony. From Jake



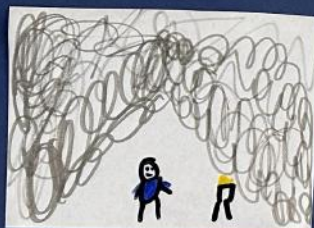
To Harley, thank you for teaching us things that I did not know about Gunaikurnai.



Dear Harley, Thank you for taking us on a walk to see the goolas. From Sayah



Harley, thank you for the smoking ceremony. From Axel



Thank you for the smoking ceremony, Harley. From Jean



Dear Harley, thank you for teaching us about koalas. I like you taking us for a walk. From Zoe.

Thank You



importance of storytelling through art and the role of rangers in environmental protection. At Krowathunkooloong, students interacted with Rob Hudson, learning about various artefacts, and impressing him with their insightful questions. Aunty Doris discussed the historical significance of Howitt Park, including its traditional scar trees and paths. This comprehensive exploration helped students appreciate the cultural and historical importance of these sites.

SENIOR SCHOOL EXCURSION TO RED BLUFF AT LAKE TYERS BEACH

In October, the senior students visited Red Bluff at Lake Tyers Beach, where they were greeted with a smoking ceremony by Aunty Doris, Robbie, Harley, Cath, and Paula. The students delved into the historical use of local resources, visited an ancient midden site, and learned basket weaving techniques with Cath and Paula. A highlight of this trip was learning a traditional dance on the beach, a powerful expression of respect for the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners, witnessed by the sight

of 70 students dancing in unison with the waves.

These excursions not only provide a platform for practical learning but also strengthen the bonds between Bairnsdale West Primary School and the Gunaikurnai community. The commitment from GLaWAC staff to share their knowledge and culture is invaluable, enriching the students' educational experience and promoting a deeper respect for the Gunaikurnai heritage within the school community.



MEN'S NETBALL COMP

Through the Community Benefit Fund, GLaWAC supported a team including a number of Gunaikurnai men to compete in their first ever VASCAL Men's Netball Carnival in Bendigo in November!

"Sport plays a massive role in our everyday lives and supports these young men with mental health and to keep active physically and emotionally. We made it to the finals but unfortunately we lost by only 5 points to Cummeragunja! But overall it was an awesome weekend with great learnings."

UNCLE GARY GALWAY TERRICK (Team Organiser)



Our Culture

Cultural Hub Update

Our Cultural Hub is continuously evolving, with some notable changes since our last newsletter.

It's a bittersweet moment as we bid farewell to Alice Pepper, our Arts & Events Manager. Alice's time at GLaWAC has been marked by some memorable achievements, including the creation of the Journey Wall at Forestec and the co-design of the Wangun Amphitheatre. Under her stewardship, the Aboriginal Art Gallery flourished, alongside the creation of the Community Arts Register, showcasing local Aboriginal talent. Our heartfelt thanks to Alice for her invaluable contributions and best wishes for her next chapter.

In exciting news, we're thrilled to welcome Shay Terrick to the culture team. Shay's role will be central to supporting our engagements and partnerships with schools throughout the region. Shay has hit the ground running and has already run a culture session at the Knob Reserve for Maffra High School students. Welcome Shay as we trust you'll do a deadly job in this role supporting our Koorie kids!

Paula Morrison is doing a deadly job to support community engagement activities across the organisation. In particular, Paula worked with you mob around the Valley to make sure that your ideas for the launch of the Morwell Community Hub were put in place; part of why it was such a big success. Sidney Murray continues to manage the functions of our service requests, liaising with stakeholders and partners to organise Welcomes and Smoking Ceremonies, and the ongoing delivery



of Cultural Awareness training programs which are booked out months in advance.

Our commitment to promoting Gunaikurnai arts, storytelling, and cultural activities across Gippsland remains strong. We're actively involved in the arts and events sector, as well as mainstream sectors, to elevate Gunaikurnai culture. We continue to support the education sector, where we advise on integrating cultural themes and spaces into new school infrastructures, reflecting Gunaikurnai heritage more prominently.

We're also excited to announce the completion of construction on the new Wangun Amphitheatre at Forestec. With landscaping and artwork installations nearing completion, we're gearing up for a community celebration to launch the space. Details will be shared soon, so stay tuned for an event not to be missed.

We will continue to keep members informed about upcoming events and opportunities through our artist's register and social media channels. Stay connected with us as we continue to foster and celebrate our rich Gunaikurnai culture together.



Our Culture

We know that not everyone creates art on a computer, or even on canvas – sometimes it's just a sketch on a bit of paper. That shouldn't stop you for getting involved in the many opportunities available to use your creativity to get involved.

GET YOUR ART ON!

Ian Harrison's new artwork for the GLaWAC Katungal Sea Country team shows how an artwork can transform into branding and merchandise.

"I've got all my own paints and canvas and I just do the painting. Sometimes they go in the art gallery at GLaWAC but sometimes organisations jump on them before they get to the gallery."

IAN HARRISON

Ian answered an Expression of Interest (EOI) put out by GLaWAC to create artwork for the Katungal Sea Country team. Ian drew on the conservation work the team has been doing tagging white tip sharks.

"I first came up with the design of the shark and just incorporated the other fish. Then I drew the patterns around the sides, and it just goes from there."

The next process is using a computer program to draw out the elements of the painting to create a digital version of the artwork and all the different components. These can then be used for branding and merchandise.

The Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property and copyright of the artwork and all the components stays with the artist!

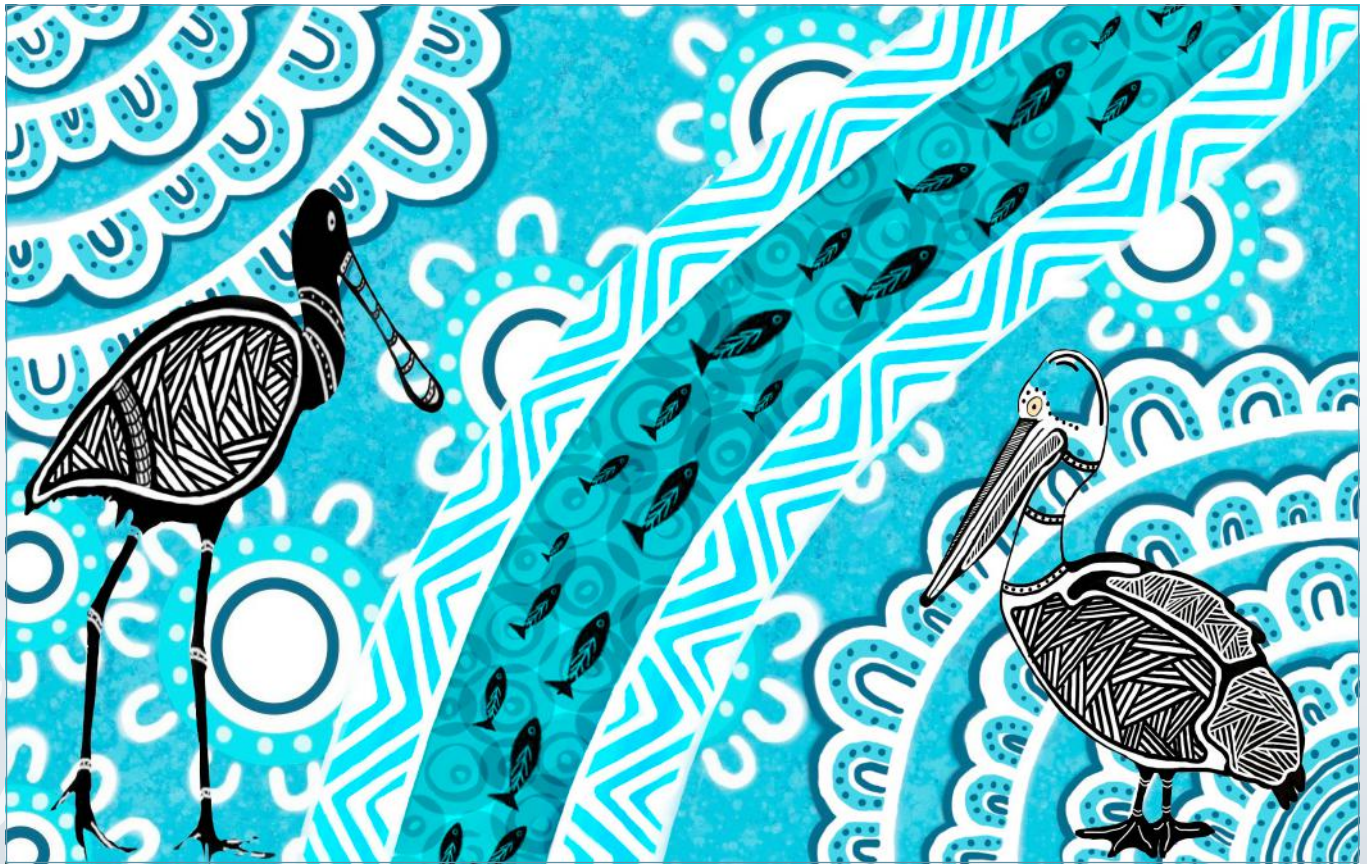
"When you do it like this, the organisation buys the artwork with a licence to use it. You say how long for, like 12 months or a couple of years, or whatever you want. When that runs out, they can't reproduce it."

Ian's now hangs in our On Country office and the designs are already being used for branding. Next step is designing the new team merchandise using Ian's work so the team gets to rock some seriously deadly designs.

"It is an opportunity for the artist to get the art out there. Then other people see it and there are more opportunities. You get to do more for other people and other organisations. That's the way I look at it."



Our Culture



But wait, there's more!

GLaWAC are rapt to be able to offer creative commissions through the GLaWAC Artist's Register and we reckon everyone with a creative streak should get on board to share the opportunities.

Recently, Alice Pepper, our former Arts and Events Manager, won a commission to create artwork for Gippsland Water that is set to make a splash on the water tower in Stratford!

The iconic tower will feature a piece called 'Cultural Flow' that celebrates Gunaikurnai connection to Country and the waterways that sustain us.

What a deadly thing for Alice to have her artwork on Country, showcasing our connection to water and land, and partnering with Gippsland Water to bring a message about caring for Country.

The artwork shows the pride we share when we look around on our Country - where we work and live and play. To see the presence of our culture through this artwork just brings pride."

ALICE PEPPER, artist

And these are opportunities are available for all our mob through the Artists Register. Opportunities to get involved, and Alice agrees that mob should get out and give it a crack.

"I'd say throw your hat in the ring. Even just putting in an application is an experience of what to expect, it all helps you to grow and develop."

"Stratford is such a special place for us, it's where we go for our gatherings and I thought maybe this could be a story about us working together. On the water tower we have Borun representing us and Wahyang, the Spoonbill, representing Gippsland Water, both coming together to connect near the banks of the Dooyeedang (Avon River)."

The artwork is planned to be completed in November 2024 (weather permitting) and will include opportunities for mob to get involved in its installation.

Our Country

Upgrading Angusvale, and our crews

The Business Enterprise civil crew has been out at Angusvale in the Mitchell River National Park working to make the area nicer for visitors while protecting the cultural and natural values throughout the campground.

As part of the first stage of construction, we've upgraded the road networks within the site, to better define the camping areas and make it easier for campers, hikers and paddlers to experience this special place.

The crew has been working in the civil space for about a year now and we were rapt to have Solomon & Sons and Cranes Civil & Surfacing join us on this job.

Working with organisations that have experience in this space already helps us to learn on our feet. We're able to upskill our lads to get hours on machinery and learn what needs to be done in the civil space.

As we progress these partnerships it's great to see our guys building relationships in a good environment. If it's a good environment, then the crews are going to enjoy doing their jobs and do it properly and safely.

"Hopefully, we can get some Elders and the community out here on a bus and do our culture days. That's the other reason we're doing stuff like this, so it doesn't take a four-wheel drive to get down here. That's probably one of the biggest benefits for what we're doing out here."

MAX SOLOMON, Leading Civil Hand



Our Country



The power of sharing culture

Our Business Enterprise landscaping crew has finished the new Cultural Garden and yarning circle for AGL onsite at Loy Yang A in the Valley. At the opening event Uncle Lloyd Hood welcomed staff to the site and a Smoking Ceremony was done by Alfie Hudson.

The Gadhu dancers, led by Trey Parsons, shared their continuing connection to culture with the power station workers watching on.

The new garden represents the four major waterways on Brayakaulung Country and was designed and constructed by the GLaWAC Business Enterprise landscaping crew. The site includes artwork by Alfie Hudson and plenty of bushfoods throughout the garden, recognising our unique connection to land and water over countless generations.

New signage on site speaks to the symbolism of the garden and the importance of Gunaikurnai culture and heritage. This place will serve as a gathering place for AGL staff and visitors to reflect on Traditional Owner knowledge for many years to come.

Liam Saunders danced at the opening and also worked on the construction of the garden as part of the landscaping crew. Reflecting on the build he puts it simply “when you leave work, you feel good”. Such are the benefits of working on a project that is community designed and steeped in cultural knowledge.



Our Country

Getting on with business

As well as the major upgrades at Angusvale, the civil team has been working across Country on heaps of different projects. At Wallers Rd towards the Den of Nargun, Fairy Dell and at Dowds Morass, the crew did essential road maintenance work to make sure these places are accessible. They supported the debris cleanup after the flash flooding at Buchan Caves Reserve and hopped on the tractors to do some serious slashing at the Knob Reserve.



Out at Forestec, the team has been working on the finishing touches of the Wangun Amphitheatre, constructing the deck and landscaping. Installation of a water feature designed by Doug Hood will be the final touch!

You'll see us out and about over the coming months kicking off the major works at Glass House campsite and repairing the fire damaged Balley Hooley campsite as well as continuing the work on the Krauatungalung Walk in Lakes.



Sip Stop at the Knob Reserve

We spent a perfect morning down at the Knob Reserve on Brayakaulung country in January, officially launching four new drinking fountains, featuring deadly artwork by Robbie Farnham, on site.

The Knob Reserve has always been special to our mob and these days it's a place for everyone to visit and enjoy.

Providing drinking fountains will reduce people's reliance on bringing bottled water to the reserve and highlights the importance of this essential resource for our health and well-being.

Big thanks to Minister for Water Harriet Shing MP, and our friends at Gippsland Water for their continued commitment to healing Country and walking the path to self-determination together.

Big wins for our mob, the local Stratford community and all the pooches who can now enjoy a refreshing drink on their daily walk.



Our Country

New Discoveries at Brt Britta

We're excited to share the latest updates from our ongoing exploration of Brt Britta (whole in the ground), by the Snowy River on Krauatungalung Country. This special place continues to slowly reveal its secrets, thanks to the hard work of our dedicated team.



In this second year of our research, we've been lucky to have world-leading experts on site, including French geomorphologist Jean-Jacques Delannoy, micromorphologist Mike Morley, Professor Bruno David and his team of archaeologists from Monash University, and a team of DNA gurus from South Australia. They've joined our community members to uncover more about the cave's history and the rock art that adorns its walls.

What We're Learning

Jean-Jacques has made some big discoveries about the cave's formation. He's found evidence that suggests the entrance to the cave was once much larger before it collapsed, changing how the inside of the cave looked and felt. This helps us imagine how our Ancestors experienced this sacred space when they created the rock art (finger fluting) we're studying today.

The team is also looking closely at the finger fluting - the delicate art carved into the cave's walls by the hands of both children and adults from our community's distant past. It's a rare and special kind of artwork that connects us to people all over the world, with only a few places known to have similar expressions.

"This art is not just beautiful; it tells a story of family, of community, and of how our ancestors not only survived but thrived in this cultural landscape."

RUSSELL MULLETT, GLaWAC RAP Manager



The background of the page is a photograph of a cave. A person is standing in the distance, near a bright opening at the end of a rocky passage. The cave walls are covered in rock art, and the floor is uneven and rocky. The lighting is dim, with the brightest light coming from the opening at the end of the cave.

Our Country

Digging Deeper

We've started carefully digging on the ground below the rock art and taking something called Optic Luminance samples to see how long ago the soils were last exposed to light. DNA samples were taken to see what kind of animals might have sheltered in the cave. All this could help us understand even more about the cultural landscape over millenia and how our Old People may have used the cave.

Already, we've learned so much more about the cave's history. We're starting to answer big questions about how much light once filled the cave and what that might have meant for the people who spent time here.

Connecting With Our Past

"This exploration isn't just about the past; it's about us, here and now. It's about strengthening our connection to our land and our history. Through this project, we're not only uncovering stories of our ancestors but also ensuring these stories can be shared with our children and grandchildren."

RUSSELL MULLETT, GLaWAC RAP Manager

As we continue this journey of discovery, we look forward to sharing more findings with you. These discoveries belong to all of us, telling the story of our people's deep connection to this land. They remind us of the creativity, spirituality, and resilience that run through our veins, passed down through generations.

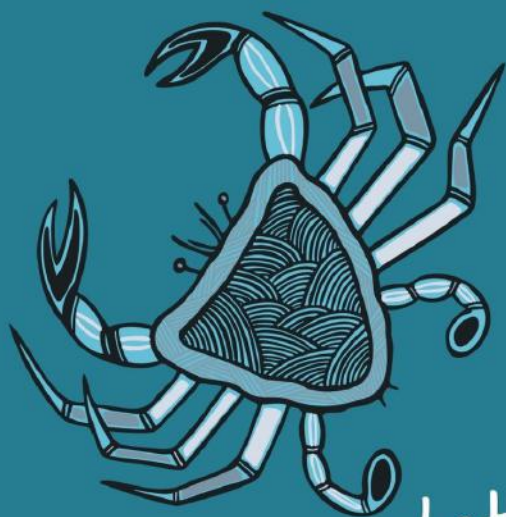
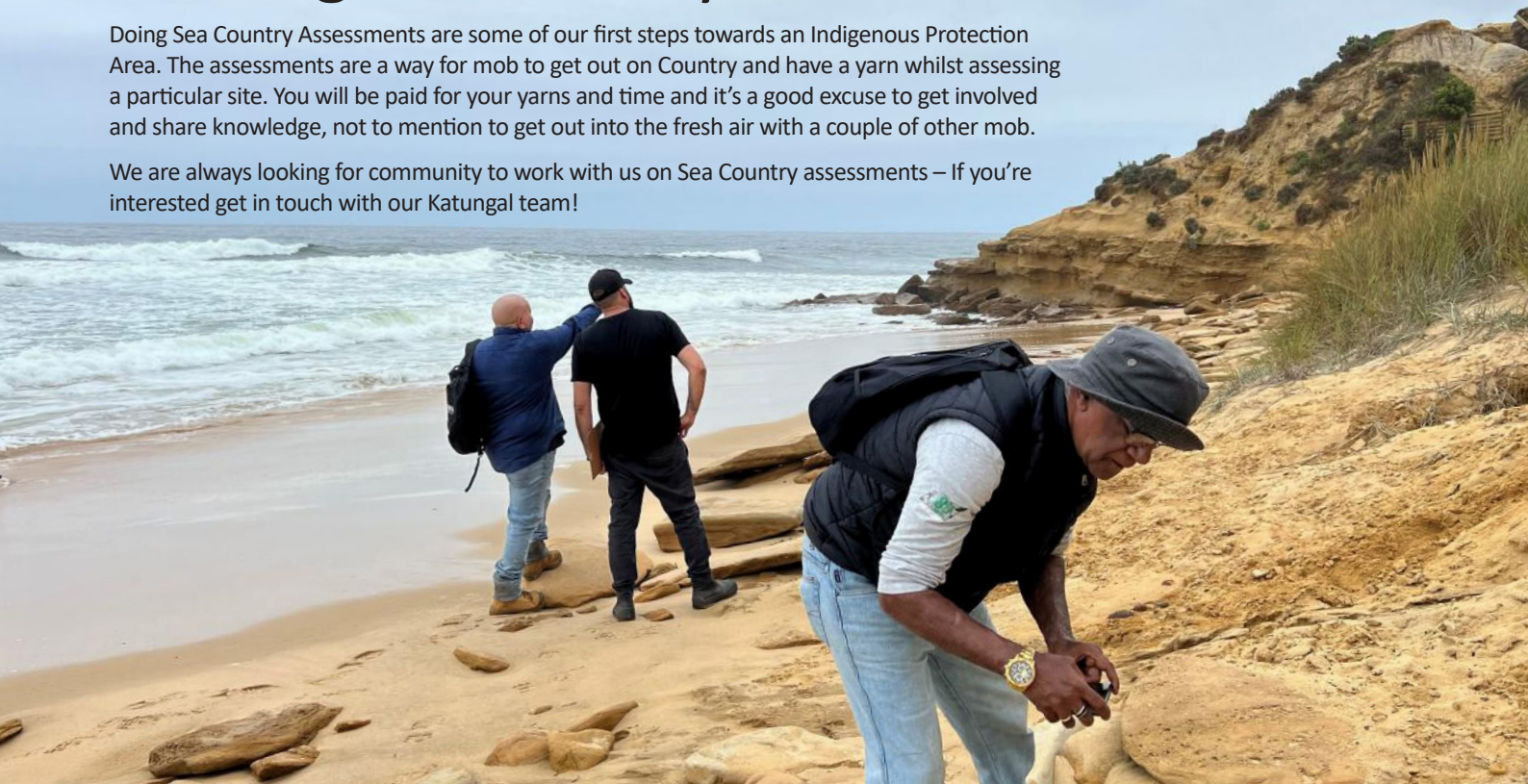
We are grateful for your support and interest in this important work. We'll keep you updated with more news as our adventure into the past continues.

Our Country

Reading Sea Country

Doing Sea Country Assessments are some of our first steps towards an Indigenous Protection Area. The assessments are a way for mob to get out on Country and have a yarn whilst assessing a particular site. You will be paid for your yarns and time and it's a good excuse to get involved and share knowledge, not to mention to get out into the fresh air with a couple of other mob.

We are always looking for community to work with us on Sea Country assessments – If you're interested get in touch with our Katungal team!



Let's Protect our Sea Country

Get involved! How we should look after our important Gunaikurnai Sea Country?

Ways for Gunaikurnai Community to be involved:

- Participate in days out on Country talking about Sea Country and how it should be looked after.
- Help Archaeologists walk Country and discover important cultural sites.
- Work with Archaeologists to undertake digs along the coast to help us understand how the old people used these important sites.

Gunaikurnai Community will get paid for knowledge and time.

Our Country

Digging deeper

Here's a great yarn about self-determination in action, West Australian style! Recently, Cultural Heritage Officers, Malcolm and Dylan Siely got to spend time with two fellas from Meekatharra and Perenjori in Western Australia- Marley Fraser and Joshua Leighton.

Marley and Josh have been on a two-month archaeology training expedition across Victoria, learning lots of new skills and techniques that they're planning to take back to their communities, which is really exciting.

They've been all over—Wadawurrung, Taungurung, Wurundjeri, and finally to Gunaikurnai Country where they met up with Mal and Dyl for a week in April. They visited places like Haunted Stream and checked out some incredible rock art in South Gippsland.

Josh has noticed some big differences in how archaeology's done here compared to back home, especially in the level of detail in subsurface assessments, which they plan to start implementing in the West.

"They don't even look for archaeology in the West. It's all about the surface. They don't want to find it. We're going to start doing subsurface testing when we get back."

Marley and Josh are also driven to use this opportunity to take control over their cultural heritage management and open up economic opportunities that were previously out of reach.

"I'm going to be an archaeologist and work for my people. We're going to be the black-fellas and the archaeologists, all in one. The rangers and heritage people, all in one. Then all the money is coming back into our community."

Dylan has enjoyed working with these fellas.

"It's deadly. They've been really soaking up how to read and interact with the landscape here, which could transform how they manage resources at home. It's going to be set up a lot better for them back home. They can bring all the money back into their own organisation. I'd rather black fellas be doing everything. The more they can learn about the archaeology, the artifacts, the tools, recording it, and doing all the mapping themselves, it's a hell of a lot better. That's how it should be everywhere."



Our Country

Programs Update

eDNA Samples

The On Country crew are learning more about what critters are living in our rivers and waterways with the help of a little science to better protect Country.

The team are taking water samples across 36 different sites throughout the Gippsland Lakes, and local rivers and wetlands, to look for environmental DNA (eDNA).

Our water systems are incredibly important so it's important to understand what significant species are using them, and what their homes are like, so we know how to better care for them.

Cleaning up after the storm

After the wild storms at the start of the year, our On Country team was on hand helping the cleanup. There was a lot of damage at the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust and we spent the following day at the Lake Tyers State Park and the Colquhoun State Forest to clean up the tracks and make sure they were clear of debris. Huge thanks to everyone who helped it, it certainly took a community wide effort to do the cleanup!



Mother of a million weeds

In November, our NRM team was out at Steamer Landing on the Gippsland Lakes with Parks Vic, pulling out hundreds of Mother of Millions weeds by hand.

The name comes from the weeds ability to spread very quickly and over run native vegetation. We had to pull the plants out before their flowering period and bag them up so that the seeds wouldn't spread.

This working bee was part of our GLCC (Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee) project to help protect the Lakes system. Unfortunately, it's going to take a long time to get rid of all of the seed already buried in the sand, so we'll be going back again soon to do more control works.



Aiming high

Gunaikurnai JM Rangers, Parks Victoria Rangers and members of the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board have been out on Country, talking about the four new parks that came under joint management in 2023.

Plenty of great discussions about how to manage the parks together and what is important to our mob.

The group spent a few days in the Alpine National Park on Gunaikurnai Country, visiting sites and yarning about culture and the environment.

Our Rangers are keen to start cultural surveys to find and protect heritage sites and get more interps signage in the park to share our culture.



Do you have knowledge you want to share about this unique cultural landscape? Get in touch with GLaWAC on 5152 5100 if you do.

Our Country

TALKING TOWERA

At the start of April, our Towera crew undertook the first Cultural Burn of the year, putting fire on the ground around the Lookout at the Knob Reserve. This is the first-time fire has been a part of that landscape in over 30 years.

"This is one of the last meeting places of the five clans of the Gunaikurnai so it is a really good thing to have fire back here. It has been a very long time since this block has been burnt. There have always been obstacles or things that got in the way of letting us burn. It is a milestone to get fire back in here."

MICK FARNHAM

Shout out to the NRM crew who made sure the significant scar trees were protected and the JM crew for getting the site prepared for the burn. All the planning in the lead-up to the day, as well as the experienced crew on site, meant that the burn was a calm and controlled delivery.

JM Ranger and Towera crew member Mick Farnham understands how our slow cool burns help to protect and heal Country.

"With low-intensity fire, all the bugs have a chance to get up to safety and not get trapped in a wall of fire. They climb the trees and have a chance to move outside of the fire. It might also regenerate a lot of plants here that haven't been here since the last fire and put a canopy on the weeds that are around as well."

This is an awesome achievement for all our mob who have been working hard to ensure that we can undertake our cultural practices and heal Country in a self-determining way!



Our Organisation

Welcome new staff

GLaWAC has grown so much over the last few months so keep an eye out for all the new team members at Forestec, Morwell and out on Country!

The RAP team has grown to include John Proctor and Trevor Mullett, out on Country ensuring our cultural heritage is looked after.

Jahmahla Morgan, Jared Brown, Michael Atkinson, Skie Roberts, Tyrone Hayes, and Tyson Lee have joined the NRM teams in Forestec and at the Valley, getting more community working out on Country and building their knowledge.

In the Economic Development team, we have Rod Short as Economic Development Manager and Robyn Wayside as Executive Assistant. Our new Aboriginal Business Development Officer, Kelvin Moffatt is helping Aboriginal business owners across Gippsland to build their dreams bigger.

Philippe du Plessis fills the new role of General Manager Business Services, providing strategic financial leadership to sustain the growth of GLaWAC. Joining the Administration, HR, and Finance teams we have Taylor Dow, Tahlia Goodall, Whitney Atkinson, Taryn Price, Susan Wormington, Chloe Hammond, Lisa Savage, Rachel Watt and Brad James.

The Communications team welcomes Rosie Frecheville, Communications Coordinator and Harry McDonald, our new Digital Media Specialist working to keep you all up to date with what's happening at GLaWAC and on Country.

And let's not forget the Bush Café at Forestec with the addition of Claire Luke helping out Kevin and Trish in the kitchen!



Jahmahla



Jared



Michael



Tahlia



Taylor



Whitney

GLaWAC is growing!

We're always looking to create new opportunities for community. If you would like to know more about our jobs and training packages, or need a little support with your application, please get in touch with Mardi Edwards at jobs@glawac.com.au

Learning on the job

A big part of working at GLaWAC is making sure that everyone keeps learning and growing new skills and knowledge.

Congratulations to Robert Baxter, Kevin Hood, Jordan Harrison, Harley Wanganeen and Sandra Fenton who all completed their Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management at the end of last year.

In addition, fifteen more staff have completed the 3-day 4WD training, 7 have completed their ACUP and 1080 certifications and 5 completed the tree felling and chainsaw course.

Wilfred Carter has been selected for this year's Gippsland Community Leadership Program and Grattan Mullett has begun the Certificate IV in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management.





Our Economy

RENEWABLE ENERGY UPDATE

You might have seen that GLaWAC is working to assert Gunaikurnai rights in the energy transition from coal to renewables. We want to ensure that mob are well represented and that the rights and views of the Traditional Owners of Country are respected and understood.

If you are interested in learning more or having your voice heard on energy matters, our team will be running Cuppa and Yarn sessions every month at our Community Hub in Morwell.

What's it all about? Everything energy: solar power, offshore wind, power lines and closing coal mines.

We invite Aboriginal community members to join us on the 3rd Wednesday of every month, to yarn about the mob's aspirations for renewable energy. From jobs to energy bills, from healing Country to business opportunities, we want to know what you think about what's happening in energy on Country.

Have you heard about the new energy industry coming our way?

JOIN US FOR A CUPPA AND A YARN ON ENERGY

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

It's about everything energy: solar power, offshore wind, power lines and closing coal mines.

Each month, we'll come together to yarn about the mob's aspirations in renewable energy.

From jobs to energy bills, from healing Country to business opportunities, we want to know what you think about what's happening in energy on Gunaikurnai Country.

This is your chance to learn about the issues and opportunities in renewable energy, and it's your opportunity to be heard.

WHERE?

GLaWAC Community Hub
235-237 Princes Drive, Morwell

WHEN?

Third Wednesday of every month:
20th March, 17th April,
15th May & 19th June

WHAT TIME?

Mornings: 10:00-11:30AM
Afternoons: 1:00-2:30PM

CAN'T MAKE IT?

Get in touch with us at ecodev@glawac.com.au or call us on (03) 4163 4200 to line up a chat.



GUNAIKURNAI LAND AND WATERS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION | www.gunaikurnai.org | (03) 5152 5100

Spreading the word

What a fabulous day filled with teamwork, collaboration, and community spirit!

Our team was rapt to participate in the 10 years on Community Event, marking the anniversary of the Hazelwood Mine Fire, in February. It was a community gathering to reflect, share, listen and celebrate the community's resilience and renewal!

The GLaWAC team had many conversations, tested the community's perception of what we do, and gathered thoughts about healing Country at the mine site!

It's wonderful to be able to share the aspirations of Gunaikurnai people with the broader community. We welcomed plenty of curious folk asking questions, the NRM team gave away over 300 plants they've propagated and we were excited to share the news of our new office and Community Economic Hub in Morwell.

Our Economy

Bush to Bowl - Bush Foods Project

Stage 2 of GLaWAC's Bush Food Project is moving along well with plenty of on-ground action in the latest outdoor nursery space. Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place men and the GLaWAC Morwell crew have worked together installing new shade sail poles, decking, benches and outdoor potting area.

We moved the bush food plants into the summer shadehouse as the igloos become too hot. The shadehouse survived the wild storms in February and is working perfectly to protect the heat sensitive plants. We also re-potted over 200 Mountain Pepper plants into larger pots and watering is carefully monitored daily.

At the Lakes Entrance Bush Foods facility, we have installed new plumbing and air conditioning systems as well as equipment for the commercial kitchen – ready for the Wulgunggo Ngalu and GLaWAC crew to set up the kitchen benches in April!

Bush Food Cook Ups across Morwell, Lake Tyers, Lakes Entrance, Bairnsdale and Forestec will start up again after Easter – dates coming soon so keep an eye on facebook and our website!



Our oysters rock!

We recently welcomed Steve Dimopoulos MP, Minister for Environment, Tourism, Sport, Major Events and Outdoor Recreation to our oyster trials site on the Gippy Lakes. Safe to say he was very impressed with the results, and rapt to be out on the beautiful lakes system.

Over the past 12 months, our oyster trial with the Victorian Fisheries Authority has been going from strength to strength. The data we are collecting from the four sites where the oysters are growing are giving us great information about the environment and the potential for developing a commercial business in the Gippsland Lakes.

From weekly testing of water quality and oyster health, we're seeing similar growth rates of the more established oyster farms in the estuaries of southern NSW in Merimbula and Pambula. So good!

Everyone is very excited about the potential opportunities for our mob in the oyster business and we can't wait to keep you posted on future developments!



Aboriginal Business Development Network

Now our doors are open at Morwell, we're taking the next step to support Aboriginal Businesses across Gippsland!

Are you dreaming of starting your own business? Maybe you have plans to grow a business you already have? Come and talk to Kelvin and the Aboriginal Business Development team to get some insights and support.

You can contact us directly on 5152 5100 or come on down to one of the Open Door sessions run by the team every Wednesday from 10AM - 2PM at the Community Hub in Morwell - 235-237 Princes Drive, Morwell to be precise.

Our Economy

Cultural Tourism

GLaWAC is working on developing a Cultural Tourism Strategy. Tourism is a big opportunity for Gunaikurnai to share culture while creating jobs and strengthening economic and social outcomes. We've been looking at what cultural tourism is currently happening in the region, what has happened in the past and what are some future opportunities.

Some things GLaWAC is already involved in include:

- Managing and joint managing Country that visitors and tourism operations use.
- Creating interpretation signs, panels, and guided tours.
- Providing input into local and regional destination management planning.
- Planning the development of a water based cultural tour.
- Developing plans for a multi-faceted accommodation and cultural tourism attraction at our Gunya Yanakie Nanjet Brataualung property near Wilsons Promontory.

Economic Development Manager Rod Short explains

"We're looking at all the things that community have previously sat down and discussed over many years - what sort of tourism enterprises are there, what we would want to do and where we might want to do them, and how that aligns with the Gunaikurnai Whole of Country Plan."

The next step is talking through the ideas with community. And while all the planning is going on, don't forget to get in touch with us if you have your own ideas you want to share or be supported with!

Nanjet Update

GLaWAC have been working to understand what community would like to see happen to the Gunya Yanakie Nanjet Brataualung property purchased in 2022.

Over the last 12 months we have worked with a consultant to look into the details of community's ideas, understand what the opportunities are and to build a business case for the site. This work will help us to find funding to bring your ideas to life!

"Nanjet will be a place to Care for Country, stay on Country and grow on Country."

The vision for Nanjet is to develop a significant First Nations tourism attraction that delivers cultural tourism through experiences and accommodation. But it's not only about tourists, there will also be designated camping areas and group accommodation for mob to get connected.

The idea is to partner with Parks Victoria in the rehabilitation work being done on Yiruk (Wilson's Promontory), and establish an arboretum of native scented and bushfood species for use in visitor experiences, food and beverage and art.

We will build a cultural hub, visitor & function centre, cafe and restaurant on the property. Various forms of tourist accommodation will be offered including powered camp sites and self-contained cabins.

The next steps from here will be to progress site studies (such as Cultural Heritage and Environmental Assessments), design work, and approvals so that we are ready to commence site works once funding is secured.

We are also planning more engagement with community so we can share more details about the project and answer your questions and hear your feedback in person. We are currently exploring options to install a small temporary building to have a suitable all-weather space to meet on the property.

Please contact us if you have any questions or ideas for this exciting project!



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