



Strategic Plan 2023-2033

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters
Aboriginal Corporation

Foreword

The GLaWAC Board and Executive have been reviewing our plans to ensure that our priorities are consistent with the current needs and expectations of our Mob.

As the organisation grows, our capacity and needs change also.

We have been in a period of growth for several years, which provides opportunity to further our Whole of Country Plan goals and aspirations.

This strategy reflects our current needs, is more confident of the positive future we seek and is more assertive regarding our self-determined pathway. As a living document it will be reviewed at regular intervals.

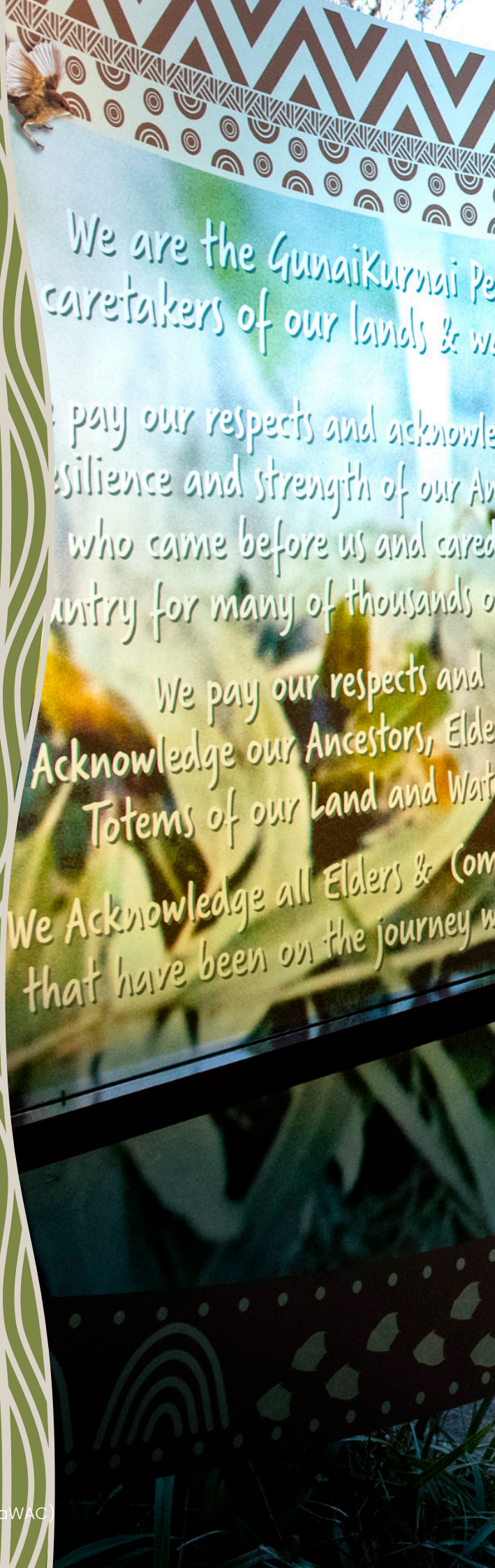
The Board has set a planning framework that establishes priorities and accountability and then guides our structure and actions.

It includes the following:

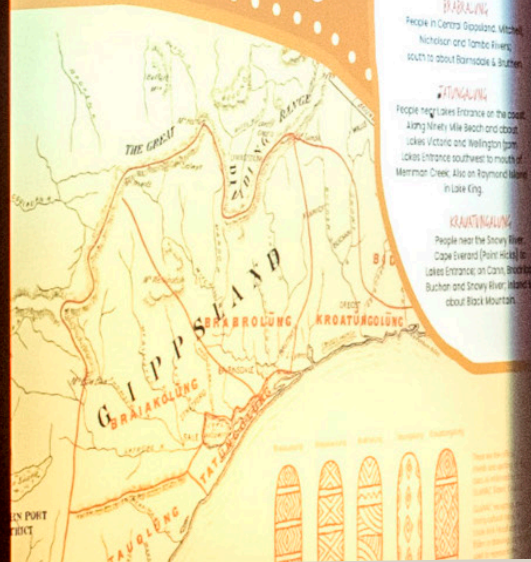
- A description of what we do (Our Work at a Glance)
- Our strategic focus areas
- Our implementation strategy and some key actions

On behalf of the Board and Executive, I present this strategy to you and invite you to partner with us.

Troy McDonald
Chair



Our Country



BUTANANG

People in South Gippsland, from Cape Jaffa and Tarwin Meadows east to the mouth of Werribee Creek, inland to near Wilson's Promontory.

BUTANANG

People around the current side of Lake Providence Ponds, near Lake Jaffa, west of Lake Wellington to Mount Bowden and Howitt.

BUTANANG

People in Central Gippsland, Mitchell, Nicholson and Tamar Rivers, south to about Ranscombe and Brathens.

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People near Lakes Entrance on the coast, along Ninety Mile Beach and about Lakes Victoria and Wellington (near Lakes Entrance) south to mouth of Merriman Creek. Also on Raymond Island in Lake King.

BUTANANG

People near the Snowy River, Cape Everard (Point Hicks) to Lakes Entrance, on Cape Breckin, Buchan and Snowy River, inland to about Black Mountain.

Our Creation Story

The story of our creation starts with Boondjil Noorook, who travelled our Country from the mountains in the north to the place called Tams Noorook in the south.

As Boondjil travelled down the mountains, he could hear a constant tapping sound but he couldn't identify the sound or where it was coming from. "Tap Tap Tap."

He traversed the cliffs and mountains and forged his way through the forests. "Tap Tap Tap."

He followed the river systems across our Country and created songlines and storylines as he went. "Tap Tap Tap."

He walked on alone and when he got down into the deeper plains near Tams Noorook (now known as Port Albert) he put down his canoe and, much to his surprise, there was a woman in it.

She was tall, like a Mallee duck. Boondjil was very happy to see her, and they married and became the mother and father of the blue clams, the creation of Gunaikurnai.

The creation story is about the origin of our people. It helps to explain the bonds we have to our Country and reminds us that our ancestors are still watching over the landscape today.

It is important for us to be able to walk in their footsteps and follow the journey from thousands of years ago – it is a powerful, spiritual aspect to our cultural heritage, and fundamental to our recognition and respect.

We are guided by the spirits of our ancestors when we walk through the Country.

Boondjil Noorook is covered Cook

Discovery of Captain Cook on Gunaikurnai shores

On April 18, 1770 Boondjil Noorook was carrying on his journey across our Country from the mountains in the north to the place called Tams Noorook in the south. He was carrying his canoe and his family. He was also carrying his spirit.

Boondjil Noorook was a very brave man. He was a leader and a warrior. He was also a very kind man. He was a very good man. He was a very smart man. He was a very strong man. He was a very brave man.

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Our Vision

That the Gunaikurnai community is proud of the way that we represent and include the mob in achieving broad respect for our culture, for the protection and healing of our land and to gain genuine economic independence.

Our Values

- Respect:** We respect our Elders, past and present, and the journey they have travelled to bring justice today.
- Encourage:** We encourage and value leadership by example, creativity and new ideas.
- Service:** We serve the good of all Gunaikurnai people.
- Persistence:** We are persistent in our journey towards self-determination and social justice.
- Empathy:** We listen to understand all views before judgement and decision-making.
- Courage:** We demonstrate courage and integrity in all we do.
- Teamwork:** We encourage and value teamwork.

Our work at a glance

1. The GLaWAC team supports our mob to reconnect with our living Culture, Country and Community.
2. We support opportunities for cultural events and storytelling.
3. We train people to participate in an effective workforce.
4. We are a voice for managing Country how we want to see it done.
5. We help our mob gain employment on Country and in other areas of interest.
6. We build and maintain mutual and enduring relationships.

Continued teamwork is critical to progress further towards our Whole of Country Plan goals, and to self-determination.



At GLaWAC, we are guided by the Gunaikurnai Whole of Country Plan (WOCP), established in 2015 in consultation with our mob.

The WOCP is designed for long-term success and outlines shared goals and responsibilities among various organisations, individuals, and groups.

The goals and success measures for the Gunaikurnai community are listed below. GLaWAC plays a major role in some of these:

1. To have a strong, healthy and happy mob

We will know we are achieving our goal when health indicators and housing rates improve, and our mob are participating in gatherings.

2. To heal our Country

We will know we are achieving our goal when we see the health of our Country improving, we are being involved in land management decisions, and have more of our mob working on Country.

3. To protect and practice our culture

We will know we are achieving our goal when our sites and artefacts are no longer being damaged, our Ancestors are returned to Country, and we have more ceremonies and cultural events being performed.

4. To be respected as the Traditional Owners of our Country

We will know we are achieving our goal when our Welcome to Country and other ceremonial services are in demand, we have partnership agreements with all of our key stakeholders and we have GLaWAC offices across our Country.

5. To have the right to use, manage and control our Country

We will know we are achieving our goal as our Aboriginal Title land estate grows, we have built up enterprises based on natural resource use, and have clear cultural copyright protocols in place.

6. To be economically independent

We will know we are achieving our goal as we build diverse enterprises providing income to the corporation and the mob, and employment of Gunaikurnai people increases.

7. To have a strong focus on learning

We will know we are achieving our goal when we see more young Gunaikurnai finishing school going on to secure employment, and our culture and stories are being taught.





Some great things we have achieved to date

1. The connection between the Elders, Mob and GLaWAC has strengthened, leading to an improved sense of purpose.
2. We have a greater involvement in land management decisions and on-ground works on Country.
3. We have increased the number of ceremonies and cultural events we hold, and many people are getting involved.
4. We have formal partnership agreements with some key strategic partners.
5. Our land estate and our own business enterprises have grown.
6. The number of people employed has increased by about 3 times in 10 years.



Our strategic focus areas

We will be more focused, not busier, to ensure we get to the next stage towards the Gunaikurnai WOCP Goals as follows:

1. **Returning to our cultural and social connection**

We will practice our culture and share our stories more often and in a coordinated way.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 3

2. **Building a strong and respectful team environment**

We will focus on learning and development, and values and behaviors to work as one mob.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 1 & 7

3. **Improving our communication**

We will focus on communicating to each other through formal and informal means.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 1 & 7

4. **Taking care of our Country**

We will set our expectations for managing Country properly and negotiate expectations with our partners.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 2

5. **Strong and effective partnerships**

We will establish self-determination agreements with all our major partners and ensure they are implemented.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 4 & 5

6. **Leveraging economic opportunity**

We will sustain GLaWAC with funds we source for ourselves.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 6

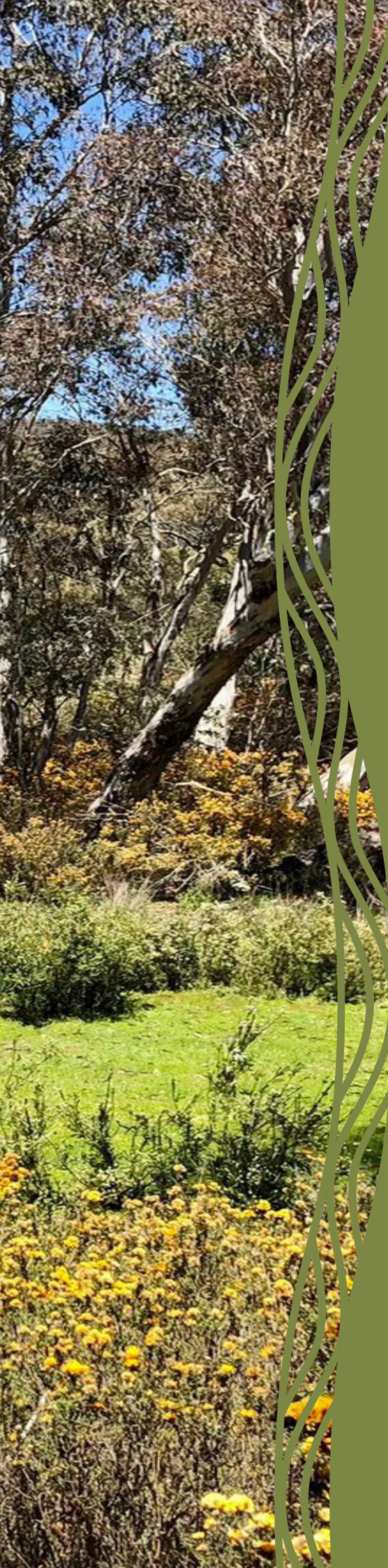
7. **Looking further ahead**

We will continue discussing our next steps together and plan to implement our goals over the long term.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goals 1 – 7







How we will implement the strategy

Our actions and behaviours

1. The Board and staff will communicate the strategy to all partners.
2. The CEO and Executive will ensure our structure, projects and programs align with our strategy.
3. Our Managers will ensure team work-plans are completed with actions in line with the strategy. The teams will report against the actions to their Managers.
4. To stay focused, we will decline involvement in work that is not leading us towards our goals.
5. To continue to build respect, everyone will work together to ensure our behaviours are consistent with the expectations of GLaWAC.

Our Strategic Plan Actions

We have developed some high-level actions to guide our strategic focus areas. They are described to provide guidance regarding strategic priority as follows:

Returning to our cultural and social connection

1. Continue to foster ways to include Elders in cultural discussions, meetings and gatherings and increase gender diversity in these matters.
2. Gradually expand the number of cultural events. e.g. continue monthly cultural experience days for staff and invite GLaWAC community members to attend.
3. Establish a language working group to establish a consistent language and embed language into every day operations and discussions.
4. Develop capacity for GLaWAC to take full custodianship of cultural heritage materials across our Country.
5. Establish a sustainable funding stream for this priority area.



Building a strong and respectful team environment

1. Establish a set of standards for communicating together that are aligned with our purpose and narrative.
2. Document a minimum standard for welcomes and acknowledgements conducted by GLaWAC.
3. Create a supportive environment for team & personal development and communicate expectations.

Improving our communication

1. Link our written, verbal and web based communication to our strategy and purpose (our work at a glance described at beginning of this plan) and simplify our methods to create consistency.
2. Create an environment that ensures our Mob are heard in a respectful way, and that does not tolerate disrespectful communication.
3. Provide opportunities for ongoing conversations, feedback and project updates on how we are going.
4. Increase communication of both small and large successes.

5. Communicate the GLaWAC holistic service offer based on our work at a glance, particularly the cultural and social outcomes we create.
6. Seek early opportunities to be involved in policy matters with government that are relevant to Gunaikurnai interests.

Taking care of our Country

1. Ensure effective delivery of On Country and statutory programs.
2. Work through GLaWAC descriptions of healthy Country and begin to communicate these.
3. Challenge, and seek change, to poor practices on Country.
4. Review the Joint Management Plan for all joint managed parks and reserves and include new areas of land from the RSA outcomes.

Strong and effective partnerships

1. Set an expectation that all of GLaWAC will seek and work within partnerships for better long-term outcomes.
2. Establish formal self-determination agreements with all our major partners.
3. Utilise partners to build employment opportunities for our people, especially insisting on early discussions about best ways to employ our mob.

Leveraging economic opportunity

1. Complete the RSA negotiations.
2. Leverage partnership opportunities by seeking co-investment in GLaWAC priorities.
3. Review and implement a revised pricing framework for GLaWAC participation and services to ensure we can invest in our own priority outcomes.
4. Complete feasibility studies regarding best use options for joint managed parks and other locations such as Buchan Caves and Nanjet.
5. Create an investment portfolio that provides long term income to GLaWAC.





Looking further ahead

1. Review structures regularly to ensure appropriate fit for purpose.
2. Foster a culture for everybody to look to the future and contribute to discussions about GLaWAC future priorities e.g. next RSA renewal priorities.
3. Encourage participation from our people in future discussions.
4. Complete priority landscape plans and position papers for important matters such as water, renewable energy and forests.
5. Document major issues on our Country that need our input and position GLaWAC in these decision-making forums. If required, utilise external technical assistance to ensure maximised input.
6. Set long term objectives beyond the life of this strategy.
7. Re-visit and review the Gunaikurnai Whole of Country Plan.
8. Contribute to the Treaty process and ensure GLaWAC is Treaty ready.

Helping our people achieve their goals

1. Work together to identify and help people achieve their own working goals.
2. Work closely with our partner agencies on securing more long term work opportunities for our people.

Funding our Strategic Plan

Our work at a glance listed at the front of this strategy underpins our service offer for community, agencies and businesses working with GLaWAC. We cannot separate the value of these services for financial purposes as many are so closely intertwined. For instance, if we are asked to plant trees, the outcome for our community and the investor is far greater than just trees planted.

Our own purpose and self-determined goals guide the service offer we provide, so these matters are a high priority for GLaWAC that must be funded in some way.

Therefore, GLaWAC will move gradually to a pricing model that better represents the full-service offer. Our decisions in regards to allocation of those resources will be guided by our own strategic priorities.

Implementation will be gradual. Initially, we will develop, communicate and apply full cost pricing based on our service offer for all projects delivered with our government and agency partners.

Further, GLaWAC will seek to retain the capital balance of our trust account and fixed assets to the equivalent of accumulated CPI. This means we are aiming for the original \$10 million trust fund, any additional funds and purchased fixed assets to retain the same value including inflation. Surplus funds above that mark may be allocated to our self-determined priorities.

The GLaWAC Board will monitor the performance of these funding changes on an annual basis and adjust our pricing or priorities accordingly.





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 Gunaikurnai people and their aspirations for Native Title, cultural heritage, land, water and natural resource management.

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