

HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE 42

- NAIDOC - Our day, our way
- Reading the gestures of the Ancestors
- Growing together – garinga djimbayang
- Wurruk after coal



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GLaWAC CEO and Chair update

Wow! The amount of work and commitment from the team at GLaWAC continues to astound the Board and Executive. The ask on our staff, our teams, and our organisation is immense, and the desire for cultural input is immeasurable. There's often an expectation that we know everything and should be willing to share everything. That's a heavy load to carry.

We also want to formally acknowledge Charee Smith, who stepped into the role of Interim CEO in May. Charee has brought strong focus and steady leadership during this transitional period, working closely with the Board and Executive to ensure GLaWAC remains aligned with community priorities. Her commitment to cultural integrity and strategic clarity is helping guide the organisation while we continue the process of recruiting a permanent CEO.

Culture is at the heart of everything we do. With deep respect, it guides us, supports us, and gives us the strength to say no when needed. Our core business, looking after land and waters, remains our priority. We are proud leaders in Traditional Owner-led research, and this is reflected in our strong partnership with Monash University and the extraordinary work to understand and preserve the ancient gestures of our Old Ancestors at Waribruk (pg 15).

This same spirit of leadership extends to Sea Country, where community members are guiding the development of a Sea Country Indigenous Protected Area Plan for Gunaikurnai Country. The planning group is now meeting regularly to ensure this work stays grounded in community values. Alongside this, research with Monash University is helping map what the coastline looked like before, during, and after the last Ice Age, to rebuild our knowledge of the cultural landscape and add depth to our understanding of place and story.

We've also continued to advocate strongly for a seat at the table in conversations about the energy transition. Our Wurruk After Coal position statement (pg 20) speaks clearly to the future our Elders

and community have long called for – one where healing Country and healing relationships go hand in hand as the Latrobe Valley coal mines shut down.

The RSA renegotiation (pg 5) remains a critical focus. We've heard clearly from members that this needs to be done right, and that means making sure the path forward reflects mob's aspirations, protects our rights, and strengthens our foundation for generations to come.

Internally, we've launched a Cultural Leadership Team, made up of respected staff from across the organisation. This group is providing dedicated cultural guidance to ensure that GLaWAC's work continues to be driven by values, not just deadlines.

There's still a lot to do, and at times, the pace and pressure are high. But we're committed. We're committed to doing the work, creating space for mob to shape the direction, and making sure culture leads the way.

We thank everyone – our members, staff, and partners – for their continued trust and support.

TROY MCDONALD and CHAREE SMITH



GKTOLMB update

The TOLMB has started work on the Joint Management Plans (JMPs) for Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park and for the Alpine Parks. The first thing we are doing is writing all the current rules and plans for each park into one document.

This is important because we need to be able to see what is happening on Wurruk now so we know what needs to change under joint management. Once we know this, we will be meeting with community to hear what your expectations are as the parks are managed more under Gunaikurnai leadership. This is very exciting work and we will let you know when we are ready to speak with community.

We recently met with members of Djaara and Yorta Yorta TOLMBs and staff from the Barenji Gadjin Land Council and Taungurung Land and Waters Council. This was the second time we have all got together, with the last meeting being in 2023. We heard from Parks Victoria's chief scientist about the realities of climate change and how it is changing our parks. He spoke about some practical ideas we could use to help adapt to these changes, and all the boards are now thinking about how the JMPs can include actions for healthy Country in a hotter drier climate. He also spoke about the importance of protecting species when natural disasters happen to help them recover afterwards. This means things like collecting and

saving seeds in high-risk areas or getting into a disaster zone quickly to help surviving animals with food and shelter. This talk gave us a lot to think about, including how the JMPs can have actions to support healthy cultural landscapes.

We also talked with the other boards about things that are happening in JM, the different ways each mob look after their country and things that Parks Victoria and DEECA could be doing to give more authority back to us as rights holders. People from DEECA were at the meeting and will report back on what they heard. We all agreed to meet again soon and keep these yarns going.

The Board has recently been recruiting for new members and were really excited with the level of interest in the vacancies. We will be announcing the new members later in the year. We will be looking for members again in the middle of 2026, if you want to know more about the board or to be a member, let us know and we will be happy to have a yarn with you.

Gunaikurnai TOLMB



Your Rights Your Voice



We're getting closer to a big moment in the RSA renegotiation. After years of negotiating with the State, and months of community webinars, drop-ins, and yarning, we're preparing for a full group meeting where Gunaikurnai members will have the opportunity to decide whether to accept the Victorian Government's final offer. This decision is yours.

The Recognition and Settlement Agreement affects our rights, our future, and how we speak for Country. That's why it's so important that every member understands what's on the table and has their say.

You can find more information, FAQs, and updates at:
gunaikurnai.org/know-your-rights

Treaty, it's here

People thrive when they can set their own course in life - when they can make choices about what works best for them and their families based on their own needs, experiences, talents and aspirations.

Treaty is our chance to make sure Aboriginal communities are always able to use local knowledge to come up with and deliver practical solutions at a community level.

The reality is we cannot keep doing the same thing and expecting a different result. The Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap Review confirms that we will only achieve better outcomes for our Communities and use resources more effectively when First Peoples have the ability to make decisions about our own Communities and lead local systems of governance.

On 9 September 2025, the Statewide Treaty Bill was introduced to Parliament. It is the first of its kind in Australia.

So, what's next? As is normal parliamentary process, the Treaty Bill will now enter a period of consideration and debate. After passing the Legislative Assembly it will enter the Legislative Council and go through a period of review. When both houses have approved the Bill, it will then be given Royal Assent by the Governor and become law.

We thank all First Peoples across Victoria who have shared their ideas, came along to every yarn and meeting. This Treaty would not be possible without the tireless efforts of our community.

First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria



BREAKING NEWS

**FIRST TREATY BILL
TO ENTER PARLIAMENT**



If you want to read the Statewide Treaty Bill, you can at:

firstpeoplesvic.org/reports-resources/statewide-treaty-pending-assent

And don't forget you can enrol here:
firstpeoplesvic.org/enrol

Our Community

NAIDOC - Our day, our way

Well ... the weather gave us everything but a rainbow and still, you turned up strong! Wetter, windier and colder than we'd hoped? Yep. Still one of the best days on the calendar? Absolutely.

Cos this is how legacy is lived. This is how vision grows. This is how we show our strength. Together.

Huge thanks to everyone who helped make the day so deadly – the cultural leaders, musicians, dancers, stall holders, food trucks, kids entertainers and everyone who worked tirelessly behind the scenes.

In no particular order, and with apologies to anyone we've missed, huge shout out to:

Uncle Wayne Thorpe and Zane for the Welcome and the Smoking; the Boorun Boys & Djeetgun Girls, Gadhu Dancers, and Cultural Connections Dance Group for dancing up a storm; the Deans of Soul, DJ Lionel Rose Jnr, and Uncle Lindsay and Aunty Gail for keeping our toes tapping; Wacky Wombat, My Barn Babies and Black Snake Productions

bringing the fun for young and old; and Ringo Morgan and Susan & Kylie Martin for sharing culture.

Big shout out to all the stall holders – Da Mob 3875, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, Cultural Connects, The Koori Way, VAHS, GippsTAFE – Morwell Campus, TAFE Gippsland Koorie Unit, Deadly Wears, Yoowinna Wurnalung, East Gippsland Shire Council and the DEECA Gippsland First Custodians Networks for bringing down their fire truck.

How deadly were the t-shirts designed by Brad Brown, kindly handed out by Lizzy and her awesome crew.

To all the folk behind the scenes who pulled the day together – First Nations Traffic Management, Lake Tyers First Responders Unit, Bruthen Music, Entertainment Gippsland, Zagame Security, Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association



Our Community



(LEAHA), Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation and Gippsland & East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd for showing such deadly support.

Huge thanks to Ngwala Coffee Van, Guiltfree Gourmet, Big Bear Donuts, Doin' Dumplings, Melting Momentz, Stratford Pony Club, Wheelie Pizza, and Bairnsdale Charcoal Chicken for keeping us so well fed, and the Bush Cafe for supporting the Elders.

Finally, to all the GLaWAC crew who contributed their everything in the weeks and months leading up to NAIDOC, you've outdone yourselves – we couldn't be more thankful or prouder!

It really does take a village, and we can't wait to do it all again next year!



Our Community

NAIDOC - Our day, our way



Our Community



Our Community

Yarning with Yoowinna

Yoowinna Wurnalung Healing Service are creating plenty of spaces for Culture and connection.

The women's groups in Lakes Entrance, Sale and Orbost meet weekly for craft, culture and time together. Group facilitator Sharlene Martin says:

"We've just taken the women down to the beach, had lunch, talked a little about the middens. We also do basket weaving, possum skin cloaks, art and craft. It's a safe space - we always take a clinical worker with us."

The Sale group attracts women of all ages. Team leader Sarah Brown says she loves the yarns and laughs with the older ladies:

"A lot of knowledge has come from having those older ladies and the young ones that are there. It's definitely something we all need."

On Tuesdays the men's group gathers at the Nicholson Farm site for woodwork – building not just furniture, but confidence, skills and connections.

"Some of the guys just got their White Card and are also keen to do First Aid," explains project worker Kobey Dorber.



Meanwhile, on Fridays, Sione Tuiono, Robert Wilson and Kobey take the fellas out on Country. They might go fishing, trail walking, visit culturally significant sites, or just get out to see new places. There are also both men's and women's camps – a great time to relax and reconnect.

In schools, the Cultural Connect programs at East Gippsland Specialist School and Lakes Entrance Primary are student-led, covering art, cooking and cultural learning.

"The schools have said to us that they have seen massive growth in the kids ... they are just thirsty for the knowledge," says Team Leader Mel Farnham.

And the benefits flow both ways. Robert has noticed he's grown more patient, while project worker Emma Kilby says she has become more adaptable. When it's from the ground up, everyone grows.

If this sounds like something you want to be part of, follow the QR code, call them on 4100 2100 or head to the YWAHS Facebook page. It could be the start of something special.



Celebrating strength and spirit

Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation had a great turn out for our NAIDOC Flag Raising in July, followed by a BBQ to mark 50 years of honouring and elevating Indigenous voices, culture, and resilience.

We were pleased to present the following awards to such deserving recipients as part of the ceremony. Each award tells a story of care, culture, and connection – and we are proud to celebrate them here.

Elder of the Year:

Aunty Bess Yarram

Community Member of the Year: Jye Morris

Youth of the Year:

Allora Quigley

Sportsperson of the Year:

Kiah Douthat

Educational Achievement

Award: Mercedes Coombs

Organisation of the Year:

Victoria Police – Sale Police Station

Sew deadly!

On a Monday at The LEAHA Factory, the women's group is busy sewing up some amazing stuff - and it's more than just clothes and bags.

The group brings together local women who love to sew, have a yarn, and share their skills. They've been making everything from clothes and gifts to cultural items, and every piece is made with care, pride and community spirit.

It's a place where the women support each other, learn from each other, and have a good laugh while they work. More than just a sewing group, it's become a strong and safe space where the women can feel proud, stay connected, and just be themselves.

The LEAHA Women's Group is growing stronger every week, and the work they're doing shows how powerful it is when women come together through culture, creativity and connection.



Our Community

A proud milestone for LEAHA

In July, the Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (LEAHA) celebrated a historic moment with the symbolic turning of the soil to begin construction of its new Aboriginal health clinic.

This important milestone follows a journey that began in 2004, when a group of visionary local Elders first approached former Gippsland Lakes Community Health CEO Bruce Hurley to seek support in developing culturally appropriate health and wellbeing services.

Bruce remembers when Auntie Phyllis Andy knocked on his office door and said, "We have to do something for my people. Many are not comfortable attending the health clinic, and too often they don't feel welcome in the town."

That powerful call to action led to the formation of the Elders Group and, in 2007, the incorporation of the LEAHA Board.

Since then, many respected members of the local Aboriginal community have served on the board, carrying forward the vision of a culturally safe, inclusive, and welcoming health service – built by the community, for the community.

Over the past two decades, LEAHA has grown to become a trusted provider of holistic Aboriginal health services in East Gippsland, underpinned by the

values of culture, community, and self-determination.

Thanks to the dedication of past and present Board members, the hard work of LEAHA staff, and the unwavering support of the local Aboriginal community, this long-held dream is now becoming a reality.

The turning of the soil is far more than a construction milestone it's a moment of pride and progress for our whole community. It symbolises everything our Elders hoped for and everything we continue to build together.



The new LEAHA clinic will provide culturally appropriate, community-led healthcare in a purpose-built facility, supporting improved health outcomes for Aboriginal people in Lakes Entrance and surrounding areas.



Nailed it!

There's something really special happening at The LEAHA Factory, where the LEAHA Men's Program is busy turning timber into tables, benches, tools – and stronger connections.

The men in the program are learning woodwork skills, working on some deadly projects, and having a good yarn while they do it. But it's not just about what they're making it's about coming together, building confidence, and keeping culture strong.

From practical things like furniture to cultural pieces with real meaning, every item tells a story. It's a place where the men can support each other, have a laugh, learn from one another, and take real pride in their work.

The Men's Program is showing how strong things can be built not just with wood, but with connection, culture and community. We're proud of the work they're doing and can't wait to see what they create next.

Our Community

A new Yarning Circle for Moe

Moe's Edward Hunter Heritage Bush Reserve now has a brand new Yarning Circle – a place for culture, learning, and coming together, in a beautiful bush setting.

The Edward Hunter Heritage Bush Reserve Committee led this special project, bringing many hands and hearts together to make it real. The idea came from Auntie Michelle Briggs and the whole project was guided by her and local community, with Michael Welsh Dalton and the crew from GLaWAC's NRM team designing and installing the Yarning Circle. It is a welcoming cultural space that the community has embraced with excitement.

With the late afternoon sun bathing the site at the opening, and friends and family watching on proudly, the Elizabeth Street Primary Koorie Culture Club lit up the new circle with dance. Koorie kids from Elizabeth and South Street Primary Schools in Moe proudly pointed out the colourful ceramic tiles they had made – their pride and joy beaming through. Each

tile is as unique and beautiful as the child who made it and reflects their experience of being Koorie.

Committee member Jane Sultana captured the feeling best:

"What I love the most about this is that it's really brought the community together."

In true community spirit, many hands made it possible – including the local Aboriginal community, GLaWAC, Moe Men's Shed, Tycass Constructions, Ruslin Timber, EnergyAustralia, and the local schools and community groups who brought their spirit and skills to the project.



Young fellas gather at GEGAC

The Young Fellas Gathering at GEGAC in May was the first in what will be an ongoing series of events specifically for young men in community.

Hosted by GEGAC Engagement Officers Peter Harrison and Zac Stewart, the aim of the gathering was to give young men in community a space to contribute their ideas for things GEGAC can do to better engage and serve them and their peers.

"There was a real interest in organising some on-country activities," Peter said. "Things like fishing trips, camping, bushwalks - all the fellas were really keen to provide more opportunities to get out on country. Hopefully this is just to beginning. We want to continue bringing young fellas together to share their ideas and make good things happen."

Keep an eye out for this, and other deadly things happening at GEGAC, at gegac.org.au/events



If you'd like to contact Peter or Zac about events for young people, you can call 5150 0700 or email CulturalTeam@gegac.org.au

Our Community

Partnerships in action at Wulgunggo Ngalu

Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place continues to build strong partnerships across the local community.

The long-standing connection with Yarram and District Health Service continues, with events including Closing the Gap, NAIDOC, men's health check clinics on site at Wulgunggo Ngalu, and Pit Stop health check days. Wulgunggo Ngalu was again involved in this year's NAIDOC event conducting cultural activities and putting on a Bush foods BBQ together with staff and aged care residents of the service. In earlier years, Wulgunggo Ngalu also gifted the service the five Gunaikurnai clan shields, which are proudly displayed at its entrance.

The guys kept tradition alive at the annual NAIDOC celebration in Memorial Park, conducting a Smoking, a Welcome and cultural dances. Children and local scout groups joined in the cultural activities before tucking into a bush foods BBQ. Art, education and training are also a big focus, with an exhibition of men's artwork at the Yarram Court House Gallery, and renewed partnerships with TAFE Gippsland and some great training opportunities.

Sport plays an important role too, with the partnership between Wulgunggo Ngalu and the Woodside Football Netball Club highlighted during the NAIDOC footy and netball matches. The ground was prepared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and marked with travel lines symbolising people coming



together to share in culture. A bush BBQ with emu, roo, wallaby and croc – all prepared with bush herbs – added something special to the day.

These great initiatives show how strong partnerships with the local community continue to support the men at Wulgunggo Ngalu and create lasting connections across the community.



Our Culture

Culture Hub update

The Culture Hub has seen some changes in the past few months with the departure of Paula Morrison-Wandin.

Paula has contributed to the Culture Hub team with community engagement both at Forestec and the Morwell office. We extend our appreciation to Paula and wish her all the best on her future journey.

We are happy to still have Shay Terrick supporting the delivery of education and will be recruiting several positions to support our continuing work in community engagement, education and the arts.

We have been collaborating with the team at the Gippsland Art Gallery at the Port of Sale to arrange an artists' visit to the site. This visit will coincide with a meet and greet and an opportunity for established and emerging artists to use the Borun and Tuk gallery to showcase and promote their works at this central location which attracts visitors from across the region and beyond. The visit is planned for October, so keep an eye out

on our socials for more details.

GLaWAC partnered with the East Gippsland Art Gallery to co-host the annual South East NOW art exhibition. We hope to continue this partnership, as it offers our local artists more exposure over the two sites – both at the art gallery in Bairnsdale and our gallery at Forestec. A huge shout out to Sidney who coordinated and managed the exhibition over the duration of the event.

We saw another successful NAIDOC Week, and events were well attended by community members in East Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley. The GLaWAC Family Day again proved to be a huge success with many mob coming along to support our day and gathering to catch up with family. Lots of deadly yarns were had around the fires, and everyone enjoying the entertainment and food.

CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

There are plenty of important conversations coming up.

We are already looking at Full Group Meetings for next year and want to make sure you don't miss out.

Please take a moment to update your contact details. Having the most up-to-date information means we can make sure you receive important news and updates without any hiccups.

To update your details please call our offices on (03) 5152 5100 or email admin@glawac.com.au

The Culture Hub continues to support the functions in the art gallery, arts and community events, service register and community artists register.

Grattan Mullett
Senior Strategic Advisor



Our Country

Waribruk

Deep inside a cave known by Elders as Waribruk, more than 950 finger grooves have been found etched into the once-soft, glittering rock walls and ceilings.

Made by the Old Ancestors moving through the dark with firesticks in hand, these impressions are traces of movement—gestures captured in stone.

Some grooves are so small they were likely made by children, lifted by adults. Others stretch along narrow chambers, fingers trailing overhead across the ceiling.

The grooves appear only in the deepest part of the cave, well beyond the reach of natural light and away from any evidence of everyday activity. We know that places like Waribruk were visited by mulla-mullung—knowledge holders and healers—to carry out specific cultural practices.

This work, led by GLaWAC, with Monash University and researchers from Spain and France, helps us better understand how people moved through and interacted with this place. What we know is that these grooves are more than markings - they reflect the presence, movement and knowledge of those who came before.



Our Country

Caring for Country, wherever it needs us

You don't have to look too hard to spot our dedicated On Country crews! You'll find them in the bush, out on the water and even deep in the weeds – working hard to care for Country in all seasons.

We've been carefully reintroducing Towera into Country at Jack Smith Lake – a slow, thoughtful process that shows us how landscapes respond over time. Putting fire on Country is all about the right fire, at the right time and at the right place.

A few months back, we hosted Parks Victoria and DEECA fire staff at Forestec for a yarn about all things burn-related. These conversations are powerful – building a shared understanding of how different burns affect Country.

"It was an awesome opportunity to share our perspective on cultural fire." Rob Baxter



Our Country



In the Mitchell River National Park, our JM Rangers are on the hunt for the elusive Spot-tail Quoll! While right across Country we monitor for native critters and their predators, here, the crew monitor the cameras and check the pictures with Grace from DEECA to see what was around. No quolls this time, but plenty of other cute critters!

"There have been sightings of quolls on the Lindenow flats. This triggered us to set up about 10 monitoring stations in the Mitchell River National Park. Fingers crossed we spot some soon!"

Rob Baxter, Joint Management Coordinator.

Rob and Liv attended the Spot-tailed Quoll Conference in Jindabyne, learning about conservation efforts across Victoria and NSW and bringing that knowledge back home to Country.



It's not all sun and games in the life of a JM Ranger. Even on wet and windy days, the teams rug up and head out. This time it was to Tarra-Bulga National Park to install bollards to stop cars driving where they shouldn't. It's cold, it's muddy, it's dirty – but it's one of those jobs that makes a big difference to park visitors.



At Lake Tyers State Park and Corrigle Foreshore Reserve near the mouth of the Snowy, our NRM team has been working with DEECA and Parks Victoria on camera-trapping projects to monitor foxes and deer.

"It's great, just being out on Country and learning in general about baits, cameras, and the importance of placement. Skilling up, getting rid of invasive species and bringing back natives - that is always a good thing."

Philip Solomon



Our Country



The NRM crew don't need to look far to see the impact of their fox baiting program in the west – the cameras tell the story.

Images show koalas carrying joeys, superb fairy-wrens darting about, and even an emu family bedding down for the night right in front of the lens. These snapshots capture the quiet return of native wildlife on Country.



But the cameras also keep it real. Among the heartening images are stark reminders of why this work matters – like a fox carrying what looks to be a wallaby tail past one of the cameras.

This program is playing a vital role in reducing the pressure from introduced predators and giving our native critters the chance to thrive again.

Our NRM crew has been working long and hard to tackle invasive weeds that threaten our coastal rainforests. These weeds spread quickly, choking out native plants. By removing them, the team is giving native species the space they need to grow and thrive, helping to restore the rainforest's natural balance. It's tough, hands-on work – but every cleared patch makes a real difference for these sensitive ecosystems.

"It's great having been doing this work from the start, learning all the way. Now I'm leading a crew and able to share my knowledge, knowing that this work can keep going into the future."

Corey Jack, NRM Crew Leader



It's not just pest animals that threaten Country, but pest plants as well. Weed control is a big focus, including across the Gippsland Lakes where the team – working with East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Parks Victoria and DEECA – joined forces to deal with the aptly named Mother of Millions. If left alone, its dense growth can crowd out the local plant life.



Our Country

The NRM team has been out on Country, protecting Cultural Heritage in the Red Gum Woodlands. Their work involves carefully checking the condition of registered sites to ensure they remain protected, while also keeping an eye out for any that may not have been recorded. By walking these landscapes and monitoring closely, the team is helping safeguard important heritage from harm, making sure stories, knowledge and connections held in Country are respected and cared for.

"For me, seeing the old scarred trees out there was informative because I try and keep that practice going today. Some scars could be directional marks, some are for other reasons. It's all significant." Phillip Solomon



Some of the On Country team recently joined Melbourne Water at the Thomson Dam. The day was all about looking ahead – exploring training opportunities, discussing future works for the NRM crew, and considering potential cultural heritage surveys. Spending time together on Country and yarning in this way not only helps plan for what's next, but also strengthens the partnerships that support our work.



Our Country

On the ground with the koala crew

Raymond Island's koalas were due for their annual check-up and our JM Rangers were out there doing what they do best. With care, knowledge and a deep connection to Country, they helped make sure the koalas stay safe and healthy.

For the Rangers, it's hands-on experience that builds confidence and skills to lead this work in the future. As always, massive thanks to Parks Victoria, DEECA, Zoos Victoria, the specialist tree climbers – and all our staff who came to help out. It takes expert knowledge, care and teamwork to do this right.

"As Rangers and Traditional Owners who manage the land and assist with biodiversity, it is a great opportunity to work in the Koala program with our partners. We have been given key decision-making roles, which gives us the confidence and knowledge to be able to lead the project when it becomes our turn. We now have quite enough experience to not just capture the Goola but to handle these endangered native animals carefully while reading microchips, checking their condition and collecting data for the vets."

Rob Baxter, Joint Management Coordinator.



Wurruk after Coal

GLaWAC has released Healing Wurruk After Coal – a position statement that shares community's views on what should happen when the Latrobe Valley coal mines close.

We've listened to community concerns about the long-term impacts of mining and are advocating for a future where Country is remediated, water is protected, and Gunaikurnai people are decision-makers, not just consultees.

Mine remediation is not just a technical task – it's cultural, social and environmental. Our people weren't consulted when the industry first began over a century ago. This is a chance to heal landscapes and relationships, to

respect Gunaikurnai values, and to set new standards for partnership and accountability.

As GLaWAC Chair Troy McDonald attests

"If this transition is done right, it can deliver reconciliation, self-determination and healing for both Country and community. If it's done poorly, it risks repeating the mistakes of the past. The choice is clear."

Our Country



What's next for The Knob?

We've started work on a masterplan for The Knob Reserve to shape how it will be cared for and developed in the years ahead – protecting cultural heritage, looking after the environment, and ensuring it works for both everyday use and major community gatherings.

The Knob has always been a place for us to gather. Now, the Masterplan will help us balance the needs of mob, locals, schools, visitors and everyone who enjoys it – with better facilities, stronger protection of Country, and a stronger role as part of the Bataluk Cultural Trail and our annual NAIDOC Family Day.

This is about respecting and celebrating the cultural significance of The Knob while planning for the next generation. If you have questions or ideas, please get in touch with GLaWAC.

Our Country

Sea Country yarns

Community continues to help shape the Sea Country Indigenous Protection Area (IPA) Plan. Recent boat trips have been all about yarning – talking about what makes Sea Country healthy, what threats it faces, and how we can care for it together. Stay tuned: more opportunities for community members to head out on these trips are coming up over summer – including on weekends.



Our Country

Part of protecting Sea Country is about protecting the special places alongside it. That is why we're developing a Landscape Design Plan for Jack Smith Lake State Game Reserve and nearby McGaurans Beach.

These places are part of a living cultural landscape with a powerful history. It's not about stopping people going there, but we need to make sure our Culture — tangible and intangible — is protected. At the same time, we have a responsibility to protect the waterways and the native plants and animals that live there. Once these things are damaged, they're hard to bring back. That's why the Landscape Design Plan is all about protecting cultural and environmental values while making sure people can keep enjoying this area for years to come.

If you want to be involved or just want more info, contact Matt Holland at our Kalimna office on 5152 5100.



Our coastline holds important cultural and natural sites, and like many places around the world, they continue to feel the impacts of the changing climate. At Red Bluff in Lake Tyers, the On Country teams got to work in July to stabilise a midden site that had been exposed by recent high tides. Places like these hold generations of knowledge and work like this helps to ensure they're not lost to erosion. It also gives our young leaders a chance to spend time together learning and listening to the Old Ancestors.



Our Organisation

Growing with GLaWAC

Anthony (Ant) Mobourne's journey with GLaWAC has taken another exciting step. After working with the NRM crew in the Valley, he's now stepped into a new role as Joint Management Ranger in the west. This move highlights his dedication, hard work, and passion for caring for Country. We're proud to see Ant growing strong with GLaWAC and taking on this next chapter.



Honouring Black Summer service

Sometimes we are asked to dig deep – to find strength and determination from places we didn't know we had. The devastating Black Summer bushfires of 2019/20 were such a time.

For many, it was a test of endurance. For some of our staff it was also a time to stand tall for community and Country.

In August, the extraordinary efforts of Gippsland Forest Fire Management Victoria personnel – including past and present GLaWAC staff – were formally recognised. At a ceremony in Bairnsdale, National Emergency Medals were awarded to Mick Farnham, Shay Terrick, Kobi Cook, Patrick Mullett and Grattan Mullett Jnr, alongside hundreds of firefighting colleagues.

For Shay Terrick, the medal brought mixed emotions. Called up for what became a 90-day deployment, not long after completing firefighter training, he recalls:

"It was good to be able to help and be part of it, but so sad to see what was happening - homes burnt, people crying by the side of the road. It was hard. I am grateful to receive the medal, but we were just doing our jobs. I would do it again - 100%. It really highlighted for me how important the cooler burns are to help prevent the really bad wildfires."

Mick Farnham was also deployed in the campaign and reflected: "I was happy to be part of the Black Summer bushfires to help protect and save people's homes, and I would do it again if we were back in the same situation."

These medals honour not just service, but the courage and heart it takes to step forward in difficult times.



Welcome to our new staff

There are a lot of new faces at GLaWAC, and with that comes fresh ideas, new roles, and some big steps forward for our organisation. From in the office to out on Country, these changes help strengthen the work we do every day.

We have six new staff in the On Country Space. **Bryce** and **John Baxter** both come on board as Joint Management Field Rangers in the east, as part of the early outcomes of our RSA. **Jess Fox** has joined as Katung (Water) Officer in the west, helping to protect our waterways and support community connections. **Cam Fleet** has been seconded from Parks Victoria as Joint Management Implementation Project Manager, helping coordinate our JM works programs. **Ronan Hudson** is on board as a RAP Site Monitor, while **Elizabeth Foley** is our new RAP Technical Specialist, bringing her expertise to cultural heritage projects. Holding it all together, **Matthew Paterson** leads the team as Acting Executive Director Country Operations.

Sharnika Wade joins us as our new Front Desk Administrator in Kalimna, welcoming community and visitors with a smile. Staying in the east for a moment, **Kylie Martin** and **Kim O'Donnell** are the new faces you will see when you get yourself a coffee at the Bush Café. **Melita Liddy** joined us as Program Manager - Contracts, based in Morwell and **Azwad Chowdhury** has started as Finance Officer, working alongside our new Payroll Officer, **Natalie Durrand**. Helping keep everything and everyone safe and in good working order, **Ed Kelly** rejoins GLaWAC as Safety Manager, while **Troy Wilson** looks after our spaces and equipment in his role as Facilities and Assets Manager.

There are some new faces in the Eco Dev team too. As Senior Manager – Major Projects, **Julie Gibson** will lead key initiatives in the energy transition space, alongside **Aron Cane** as Renewable Energy Project Manager.

We are excited to have everyone on board as GLaWAC keeps working to support the aspirations of our Elders and community. If you see these folk around, say hello and help them feel at home!

Our Economy

Growing together – garinga djimbayang

Over 50 hardy souls from across Victoria braved the chilly August winds to celebrate the launch of the garinga djimbayang's Growing Traditional Foods On Country (Wurruk), project at Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place in August.

This visionary project is all about growing traditional foods right here on Country – and putting food sovereignty firmly back in community hands.

As GLaWAC Chair Troy McDonald put it:

"With control over our foods and the systems that support them, we can really control our futures. That's what food sovereignty is about."

The day opened in a powerful way, with the fellows from Wulgunggo Ngalu sharing dance and ceremony. Guests then toured the bush foods nursery, a space our crews helped bring to life alongside the Wulgunggo Ngalu team.

'Culture is a vehicle we use to promote change, and growing bush foods is another step in that process.' said Shaun Braybrook, General Manager, Wulgunggo Ngalu.

And this is just the beginning – a new pilot program is on the way, offering 20 students from GLaWAC and Wulgunggo Ngalu hands-on, accredited training, guided by Aboriginal traditional knowledge and practices, through the AHC20422 Certificate II in Horticulture.

Garinga djimbayang means to grow and learn in Dja Dja Wurrung language. The grant program helps RAPs and TAFEs work together to bring First Nations knowledge and practices into accredited agriculture training. This project brings together GLaWAC, TAFE Gippsland and Wulgunggo Ngalu, with support from the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations, and SuniTAFE delivering the program on behalf of Agriculture Victoria.

"Our day was a happy celebration of all the hard work that's gone into our bush foods program - growing and learning together. It also brought us a big step closer to realising Head Chef Kevin Murray's long-held dream of sharing Gunaikurnai Bush Spice with the world."

Program Manager Sam Monks



Our Economy



Tourism, our way

We've been steadily building our work in cultural tourism – and in June our tourism team, together with Visit Victoria, proudly hosted the very first Gunaikurnai Tourism Development and Tour Guide Introduction Workshop at Forestec.

Over two big days, we explored what tourism can mean for us – a way to share culture, create opportunity, and shape our future.

We began in ceremony, with Kelvin Moffatt leading a Smoking and the Boorun Boys following with dance. Cath Thomas spoke about the program and what lay ahead. From there, the day evolved into yarns on culture, identity and business, before heading to Raymond Island and The Keeping Place in Bairnsdale. Guided tours and shared stories highlighted how tourism can be a strong platform for cultural expression and economic independence.

The workshop was a chance to come together to talk about real pathways into guiding, storytelling and business – from training and support, through to what it takes to deliver tours grounded in Gunaikurnai values.

We also explored cultural safety and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property

(ICIP) – vital building blocks for respectful tourism. Hands-on sessions on Country gave participants a true feel for what it means to lead tours that are safe, engaging and led by culture.

This workshop marks an exciting milestone in community-led cultural tourism – guided by community, grounded in Country, and driven by Culture. We can't wait to see where it takes us all next!

"This is just the first step in a powerful journey," said Cath Thomas from our tourism team.

"Together, we're creating opportunities that protect our stories and build a future where Gunaikurnai people lead tourism on our terms."



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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Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation

Forestec, 27 Scriveners Road
Kalimna West, Victoria, 3909
Phone: 03 5152 5100
Fax: 03 5152 1666
admin@glawac.com.au
www.gunaikurnai.org



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