19/20 annual report

GUNDITJ MIRRING
Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation
RNTBC

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Aboriginal Corporation
RNTBC

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are respectfully advised that this publication may contain names and images of deceased persons, and culturally sensitive material. GMTOAC apologises for any distress this may cause.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

DENISE LOVETT

First I honour and respect our Gunditjmara country and ancestors for the cultural legacy that we have responsibility for.

The 2019/2020 period has changed Gunditjmara country through the UNESCO World Heritage Inscription in July 2019, the bushfires on our country in January 2020 and the global Coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic which hit home around March 2020..

The bushfires burned through 7,000 hectares through tungatt mirring (stone country) on our community owned properties, the Budj Bim National Park and threatened the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission site.

Our resilience was tested and we came through with Gunditjmara people working as part of the Parks Victoria and DELWP fire crews and alongside the CFA and our neighbouring land holders to limit the damage.

I was filled with pride to witness our mob across the other side of the world in Azerbaijan attending the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting and to have our Budj Bim Cultural Landscape inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List.

World Heritage Listing for the genius of our Gunditjmara ancestors was first talked about in 1989 with our community and our partners working for the following 30 years to achieve the inscription.

The Budj Bim World Heritage Inscription represents the first time in Australia that Aboriginal cultural values were properly recognised.

The impact of the global pandemic changed the world and continues to affect how we live and work. The travel restrictions severely limited our continuing connection to Gunditjmara country with our families not being able to visit with each other, while being extremely worried about the spread of virus and our health with particular concern for our Elders.

The impact on the Sorry Business of our community meant that we could not look after each other when grieving and laying our loved ones to rest. This situation leaves many of us with unfinished business.

The work of GMTOAC continued as best we could with our staff working remotely in line with the pandemic restrictions and our voluntary Board of Directors continuing to oversee the governance of the corporation via online resources.

We worked out the challenges before us and have safely maintained our operations in caring for Gunditjmara country through the pandemic.

Hopefully the travel restrictions are soon fully lifted to allow us to gather again to talk Gunditjmara country and our culture especially with the Treaty for Victoria work that is happening.

I thank the GMTOAC Board of Directors for their commitment to GMTOAC and our staff for the past 12 months of incredible impacts and changes to how we work together.

Denise Lovett

Denise Lovett
Chairperson of GMTOAC Board

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

DAMEIN BELL

I pay my respects to Gunditjmara country, ancestors, elders and community.

I thank the GMTOAC Board of Directors for their governance and voluntary service.

I share my appreciation of GMTOAC staff especially with the frustrating conditions that the global pandemic restrictions have placed on our work together.

The 2019/2020 period was incredible with having the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2019, the bushfires that went through our properties and the Budj Bim National Park in January 2020 and on the onslaught of the global pandemic. These three events radically changed the way that GMTOAC works especially with our staff and the use of technology.

For me, the biggest impacts of the year was our Gunditjmara community not being able to gather for business, culture and connection; and for our community not being able to properly grieve our Sorry Business for those we lost during the pandemic restrictions.

GMTOAC has always been busy over the years with work but the momentum created by the Budj Bim World Heritage Inscription as well as government response to Traditional Owner priorities across Victoria greatly increased our workload. It has been such a shame that the pandemic restrictions have stifled our progress.

That being said, our mob and staff have built some beautiful work around our caring for country through water projects and forest projects. With the upcoming focus on sea country, the water and forest projects will support and strengthen our cultural identity with practice and language.

The 2019/2020 period also progressed us towards our economic independence through the Budj Bim Master Plan projects. There has been a huge amount of preparation and planning to build new community and visitor infrastructure across five sites along the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

Our sustainable tourism business will be right to commence in 2021 with construction being scheduled to commence before the end of 2020 and be completed by August 2021. There will be many jobs coming up.

Once we work out what 'COVID normal' works to keep our community safe, we will be gathering as soon as we can.

Wuuwook

Damein Bell
Chief Executive Officer

INFORMED CONSENT & GOVERNANCE

MIKE WEISE

GMTOAC operates under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) Act 2008 and is registered under the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations. GMTOAC governance information is available at **www.oric.gov.au.**

GMTOAC Members are eligible to be nominated and elected onto the GMTOAC Board of Directors. The GMTOAC Board of Directors are responsible for the governance of the organisation and the oversight of operations through the GMTOAC CEO.

Please see the table below for the GMTOAC members who participated as GMTOAC Directors for the 2019/2020 period and their attendance for each meeting.

ATTEND / APOLOGY	2019 July 26	Aug 22	Sep 20	Oct 25	Nov 8	2019 Nov 22	Dec 20	2020 Feb 14	Mar 27	Apr 24	May 29	Jun 26
Denise Lovett												
Eileen Alberts												
Tracey Onus-Bamblett			A				A	A	A			
Donna Wright	JOINED BOARD AT 2019 AGM									A		
Erin Rose												
Laura Lovett-Murray												
Marie Thornhill								A				
Narelle Carter										A		
Jason Kanoa						LEFT THE BOARD AT 2019 AGM						
Candice Day	A	A	A	A								
David Arden	A	A	A	A	A							
Shane Bell		A		A								
Janice Lovett												

GUNDITJMARA SCHOLARSHIPS

From the Gunditjmara Native Title Holders negotiated Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) under the Native Title Act 1993, the SEAGAS Port Campbell, Vic to Torrens Island, SA gas pipeline ILUA was finalised in 2015.

In September 2019, the Gunditjmara Native Title Holders considered the nearly $120,000 in benefits and instructed GMTOAC to distribute the funds as one-off scholarships for Gunditjmara primary, secondary and TAFE/teritary students.

The Gunditjmara Scholarship applications were distributed to GMTOAC members that resulted in 43 primary students, 38 secondary students and 20 TAFE/tertiary students receiving scholarship payments.

PRIMARY SCHOOL RECIPIENTS

- Hannah Austin
- Nikyrah Bamblett
- Jessey Bannam
- Mayson Bannam
- Annabelle Barr
- Maddelin Barr
- LJ Bell
- Jida Bell
- Eva Byrnes
- Harry Chatfield
- Amirah Chaudhry
- James Close
- Cleo Day
- Kayden Drake Leech
- Ruby-Jenna Edwards
- Marley Gaita
- Cleo Day
- Kayden Drake Leech
- Ruby-Jenna Edwards
- Marley Gaita
- Wilarn Gaita
- Liam Harman
- Isiah Hobbs
- Shae Jackson
- Nurra-Mudgee Johnson-Walker
- Jida Kanoa
- Billy Kelsey
- TobiasKing
- Alexander King
- Maverick Lovett
- Tyrell Lovett
- Jmara Lovett
- Nason Lovett-Murray
- Lasharni Malseed
- Somah Malseed
- Amara Masatora
- Gracie Mayberry
- Xavier Mayberry
- Rhani Reiri
- Bonnie Rose
- Neidjie Rotumah
- Kewarra Saunders-Joseph
- Laylarni Taylor-Lovett
- Mayah Thorpe-Church
- William Walker
- Makkai Willder
- Nakaya Yarran
- Narla Yarran

SECONDARY SCHOOL RECIPIENTS

- Kashayla Austin
- Akala Austin
- Violet Bamblett
- Freya Bamblett
- Jyndamarra Bannam
- Preston Bannam
- Peter Barker-Lovett
- Tyleah Barr
- Kayden Bell
- Saige Bell
- Taryn Bell
- Nathaniel Close
- Isla Cue
- Mikayla Farrant
- Nakaya Frankland
- Jmara Harrison
- Paige Jackson
- Leon-Jade Johnson-Walker
- Kylan Johnson-Walker
- Maddison Kanoa
- Amelia Knight
- Ethan Knight
- Kyle Knight
- Saoirse Lovett
- Regan Malseed
- Lilly Mayberry
- Samuel Morrison
- Jarra Morrison
- William Nicholson
- Jayden Orchard
- Maea Rose
- Brayden Rose
- Wilarn Rotumah
- Yarra Rotumah
- Sam Shelton
- Jakobe Walker
- Ryli Walker
- Malakai Walsh Bannam

TERTIARY RECIPIENTS

- Yakirah Agnew
- Sean Bell
- Keicha Day
- Jannah Firebrace
- Shannon Gaita
- Liam Gallagher
- Jacinta Harman
- Shanaya Harrison
- Melissa Lovett
- Jessica Lovett-Murray
- Leigh Malseed
- Rebecca Mayberry
- Jacinta Harman
- Shanaya Harrison
- Shea Rotumah
- Shane Saunders
- Corey Theatre
- Tahlia Warren Brand

BUDJ BIM COUNCIL

DAMEIN BELL

The Budj Bim Council was established in 2009 from the Gunditjmara Native Title Consent Determination in 2007. The Budj Bim (fmr Mt Eccles) Cooperative Management Agreement enables the Budj Bim Council to oversee the development of management plans for the national park and to make recommendations to the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change on the care and control of Budj Bim National Park.

The Budj Bim National Park was severely affected by the bushfires in January 2020 and closed. The following months saw still smouldering fires, ongoing tree falls and the threat of the scoria walls of the volcanic crater being destabilised.

The bushfires burnt through nearly 8,000 hectares of the national park and neighbouring GMTOAC properties including Allambie, Vaughans and Muldoons.

Neighbouring properties and assets were burnt through as well. The bushfires lasted for about two weeks. For the safety of visitors and workers, the national park remained closed for several months while clean up and fencing activities were assessed and completed.

The national park was reopened in early March 2020 but not long after, the park was again closed due to the global pandemic placing heavy restrictions on public places, visitors and gatherings.

The Budj Bim Council convened on three occasions before the bushfires to oversee and advise on management activities within the national park.

A workshop to progress development of the Stone Country Implementation Plan associated with the Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara South West Management Plan was held by Budj Bim Council in October 2019.

The workshop prioritised goals and strategies. A small number of strategies that could not be prioritised during the workshop were referred back to agencies for completion.

An application to Parks Victoria from a Budj Bim National Park neighbour to clear vegetation in the National Park to allow construction of a replacement fence line was referred to Budj Bim Council for comment.

The Budj Bim Council considered the cultural and environmental implications of the application and recommended to Parks Victoria that vegetation removal should not permitted in the National Park. The Council's comments reflected the new World Heritage status of the site.

Following the bushfire, there has been a rampant growth of thistles and some other pest plants in restricted areas. The pest plants have germinated in unburnt areas or areas burnt at low intensity but it appears that the seed source may have been killed in areas of high fire intensity. Pest plants have been treated in the past two years in the visitor precinct with funds provided by Budj Bim Council. The current circumstances may allow a level of long-term control with appropriate current treatment.

Pest plants have been treated in the past two years in the visitor precinct with funds provided by Budj Bim Council. The current circumstances may allow a level of long-term control with appropriate current treatment.

Budj Bim Council endorsed a DELWP proposal to improve the road surface of Natural Bridge Road, Park South Track and Long Paddock Track.

The works will improve access for emergency vehicles through the centre of the National Park. The works were scheduled to be completed by 30 June 2020.

A new Budj Bim Council nomination process was held in June 2020 with Gunditjmara nominees being endorsed by the GMTOAC Board of Directors and forwarded to the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change.

The Minister for the Environment and Climate Change appointed the people listed to the Budj Bim Council for the 2019/2020 period.

The new appointments are to be confirmed early in the 2020/2021 period.

	PRIMARY MEMBERS	ALTERNATE MEMBERS
GMTOAC MEMBERS:	Deb Malseed – Convenor Aaron Morgan Eileen Alberts Denise Lovett Damein Bell Denis Rose	Dale McDonald Tracy Bamblett-Onus Jessica Lovett-Murray
PARK VICTORIA:	Jason Borg	Peter Livitsanis
GLENELG HOPKINS CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY:	Michael Rees	Jane Walker
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, LAND, WATER AND PLANNING:	Ross Martin	Mark Mellington

Gunditjmara Family Engagement Project

Right People for Country Program

UPDATE
2020

Project Summary

Right People for Country program is supporting Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation to hold a family engagement process with Gunditjmara families.

The project aims to:

- Give Gunditjmara families an opportunity to come together, to address issues and propose ways forward.
- Ask families to provide guidance about how the Gunditj Mirring board can best represent its members.
- Contribute to a better decision-making environment for Gunditjmara people.

The project wants to hear from family members who descend from any of the fourteen Gunditjmara Apical Ancestors.

Right People for Country program is supporting families to come together for discussions. Aboriginal facilitators Lindon Combs and Alison Whittaker are available to guide and record conversations while maintaining families' confidentiality and anonymity.

Feedback family meetings will influence Gunditj Mirring's next steps in representing Gunditjmara people and their aspirations for Country and community.

Project update

Because of restrictions related to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) health crisis, all face-to-face meetings and gatherings scheduled as part of this project were postponed from March 2020.

Before the COVID-19 restrictions, Right People for Country program held 2 family gatherings, and had another four family gatherings scheduled to take place. We are currently exploring with the Gunditj Mirring board and Gunditjmara families whether there is interest in progressing the project virtually or whether the project should remain on hold until families are able to once again gather in person.

If you are interested in being part of this project, we would love to hear from you. We are working remotely, available to discuss the project over the phone and keen to understand how your family might want to have your say.

For more information contact:

Lucy De Kretser, Right People for Country program facilitator
Phone: 0428 875 268
Email: lucy.dekretser@dpc.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA State Government

TREATY FOR VICTORIA

DAMEIN BELL

The Treaty for Victoria process commenced in 2016 and following consultations between the State of Victoria and the Traditional Owner and First Peoples community in Victoria, the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018 (VIC) was established.

Under the new Act, the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria Pty Ltd was established with reserved seats for recognised Traditional Owner corporations, including GMTOAC, and 21 regionally elected Traditional Owners from Victoria. Following the nomination and election process through to November 2019, the elected and reserved sea holders were confirmed.

At the GMTOAC AGM in November 2019, GMTOAC members confirmed an annual election process for a GMTOAC representative onto the Assembly.

Donna Wright was elected by GMTOAC members as the GMTOAC representative to the Assembly.

The Assembly convened its inaugural chamber meeting in December 2019 at the Victorian Parliament House in Melbourne.

The second chamber meeting was held in February 2020 where the Assembly prioritized and established structures to advance the following activities:

- The Treaty Authority.
- The Treaty Negotiation Framework.
- The Self-Determination Fund.
- The Design of an Elders' Voice.
- The review of the Cultural Governance of the Assembly.

The coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic restrictions impacted on the Assembly's consultative processes to online sessions during the period.

Even with pandemic restrictions, the Assembly continued its work in preparing for a Truth-telling process while strengthening inclusion of all Traditional Owners in the process especially our Elders voice.

OUR STAFF 2019/2020

AARON MORGAN	**Budj Bim World Heritage Ranger** Full time employment - From 03/02/2020
BEN CHURCH	**Aboriginal Water Officer** Full time employment - Finished 03/04/2020
BILLY BELL	**Cultural Heritage Manager** Full time employment - ongoing
DAMEIN BELL	**Chief Executive Officer** Full time employment - ongoing
DENIS ROSE	**Knowledge and Estate Manager** Full time employment - ongoing
GREG SHELTON	**Budj Bim World Heritage Ranger** Full time employment - from 03/02/2020
JODIE HONAN	**Ecologist and Documentation Support Officer** Part time employment - from 02/03/2020
KEICHA DAY	**Treaty Traditional Owner Engagement Officer** Part time employment - from 02/03/2020
LESLEY DAY	**Cleaner** Part time employment - ongoing
MICHAEL BELL	**Business Development Officer** Part time employment - from 04/05/2020
MICKO BELL	**Knowledge and Estate Officer** Full time employment - ongoing
MIKE WEISE	**Board Secretary** Part time employment - ongoing
NATASHA MOORE	**Corporate Services Coordinator - Finance** Part time employment - ongoing
ROGER MORRIS	**Caretaker - Lake Condah Mission** Full time employment - ongoing
SHEA ROUTMAH	**Forestry and Engagement Coordinator** Full time employment - from 28/10/2019
TAHLIA WARREN BRAND	**Administration - Business Trainee (12 month contract)** Traineeship completed - 23/06/2020
TALARA HARRISON	**Caring for Country Liaison Officer** Full time employment - from 11/11/2029
TRUDY THORP	**Human Resources and Risk Management Officer** Full time employment - from 28/10/2019
TYSON LOVETT-MURRAY	**Knowledge and Estate Officer** Full time employment -ongoing

HUMAN RESOURCES & RISK MANAGEMENT

TRUDY THORP

HUMAN RESOURCES

The GMTOAC Human Resources program is responsible for the delivery of a wide range of people services including workforce planning, recruitment, pay and conditions, performance management, learning and development and workplace diversity.

During 2019-2020, the rapid growth and employment requirements required the Human Resources and Corporate Services program to review the attraction and recruitment processes undertaken by GMTOAC to ensure we allow for a standardised, effective and objective approach to all recruitment activities undertaken. During the year, 12 successful recruitment campaigns were undertaken.

These campaigns included the engagement of 8 new starters, of those 7 new roles were established.

- Treaty Traditional Owner Engagement Officer
- Caring for Country Liaison Officer
- Forestry & Engagement Co-ordinator
- Budj Bim World Heritage Rangers x 2 positions
- Business Development Officer
- Ecologist & Documentation Support Officer
- HR & Risk Management Officer

Many Casual positions were also filled including:

- Kooyang Killara Research Assistants
- Land Management Workers
- Cultural Heritage Site Monitors

Preparation and funding applications for other new roles occurred during this time to ensure the organisational compliance and governance reporting obligations.

These roles will be filled in the 2020-2021 year and will include:

- Budj Bim World Heritage Executive Officer
- Media & Communications Officer
- Policy & Research Officer
- Accounting Clerk

In March 2020, the ensuing Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic Restrictions put restraints on the operation and normality of the work situation and staff. The health and wellbeing of staff, contractors, members, partner organisations and the community was a priority to the organisation.

Changes to work life balance was interrupted by now having to work from home. Supporting staff to find balance and a new work “normal” has been the focus over the past months to ensure staff have the resources, support and communication to continue to fulfil their roles and remain positive with a good mental health outlook throughout the journey.

During this time it became apparent that the GMTOAC IT System and Human Resources/Payroll platform was antiquated, and we required to join the modern "cloud based" practices to support staff to be able to complete their roles from any place, at any time, and from any device. Research, trials, webinars all pursued.

New Laptops were purchased and Zoom meetings and conferences entailed to make sure communication remained a normal part of the working week.

Further new systems to make the daily tasks of staff are under investigation including an online HR/Payroll/Timesheet/OH&S /Onboarding and Induction system, which is compliant with governance standards and makes reporting to the GMTOAC Board easier and clearer for all parties. And transition to cloud-based Office 365 for easy of communication with Microsoft Teams, and Sharepoint for documentation storage. This will be implemented in the 2020-2021 year.

RISK MANAGEMENT

COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) Pandemic took over every Australians life when declared in March 2020. This grossly changed the operation of every business, including GMTOAC and new operations had to quickly form to ensure survival in todays market. GMTOAC has been very fortunate to be so unique and quickly adaptable, to be able to continue working in many departments in the current environment.

GMTOAC implemented new policies, COVID Guidelines for staff, working from home assessments, Covid Safe Plans and has followed all Victorian Government restrictions, regulations, and legislation requirements, adapting these to every change that has occurred. Our Staff and Board of Directors have been informed throughout this time of the changes occurring.

When the change of restrictions occurred our Land Management Crew and On Country workers were deemed "Contract Essential Workers". All protocols were implemented to ensure the safety of staff and that they had a clear understanding of their obligations to themselves, each other, their families and the community.

Being able to go back out on country was literally "a breath of fresh air" even through mandatory facemasks.

GMTOAC has had to present our Covid Guidelines and Covid Safe Plans to Government Departments, Funding Bodies and Partnership organisations and has been commended by many of these organisations on the thorough and compliancy of the documentation.

Additional requests of sharing has been made to assist other struggling organisations with their plans.

Having this compliance has gained GMTOAC the respect of ensuring we are taking the safety of all involved in our organisation seriously.

Ongoing monitoring and compliance will continue to ensure risk assessments are complete and risk management strategies are in place and compliant to the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (the OHS Act) or the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017.

Since the beginning of January 2020, the OH&S committee has been meeting every fortnight. All staff have been attending these meetings so all staff are aware of the changing requirements and importance of OH&S as well as being able to raise any concerns or queries they may have. During this period GMTOAC reported 14 incidents or near misses. During 2019/2020 the GMTOAC Risk Management Framework and Policy/Statement and the Risk Register were endorsed and implemented.

FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

A schedule to address risks at the FARC Committee as a regular agenda item has been implemented to endeavour every risk to the organisation is monitored throughout the year.

New legislation and laws pertaining to the Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2019 and the Workplace Safety Legislation Amendment (Industrial Manslaughter and Other Matters) Bill 2019 (Vic) came into compliance in 2020.

New policies were endorsed, and education and information were provided to Staff, Finance Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee, and the Board of Directors regarding both laws and how they effect each person in their represented roles for the organisation.

The Finance Audit Risk and Compliance Committee also updated their Terms of Reference ensuring the Guidelines for Audit Committees provided by ORIC and the Department of Finance were complied with. These Terms of Reference were endorsed by the Board in this period.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

The staff at GMTOAC have been quite busy this financial year.

Micko Bell and **Greg Shelton** started their **Cert IV in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management** with LaTrobe University. **Greg** also intends to studying an **Indigenous Mapping course.**

Roger Morris completed a **Cert III in Conservation Land Management** with South West TAFE.

The **Land Management Crew** have completed a number of short courses, including; **Operate and Maintain Chainsaws, Construction Induction, AgVet Chem Cert & Weed Management** and **Basic Fire Management.**

Aaron Morgan, Shea Rotumah and Tahlia Warren Brand began their **Graduate Diploma in Land and Sea Country Management** with National Indigenous Knowledges Education Research Innovation (NIKERI) Institute - Deakin University in March 2020.

Tahlia has also completed a short course in '**How to write Media Releases**'. During this financial year, **Tahlia** completed a traineeship with GMTOAC and successfully gained a **Cert III in Business** with SWTAFE in Portland.

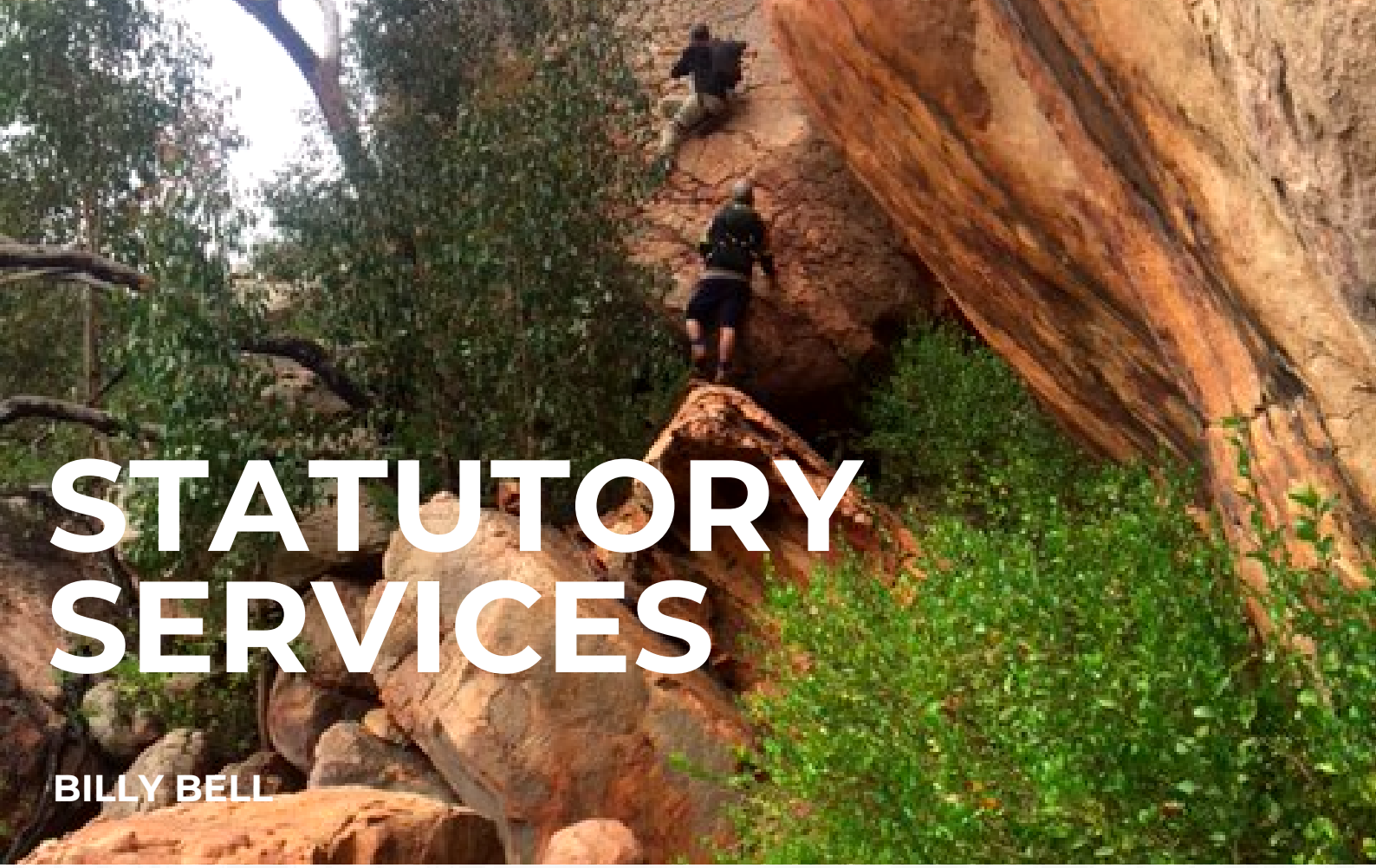
Tahlia also won the **2019 Koorie Student of the Year award** at South West TAFE's annual Graduation and Awards Ceremony in March, 2020.

Majority of the Staff at GMTOAC completed their **First Aid Level 2** - with the remainder intending on completing their's next financial year due to COVID-19 restrictions. In addition to this next financial year all staff will be undertaking their **Snake Handling and Awareness training** once restrictions have eased.

GMTOAC Staff as well as **Gunditjmara representatives** for the Kooyang Killara Aquaculture Facility completed their **Construction Induction** short course and **Animal Ethics and Handling** training with Deakin University – Warrnambool Campus

Corporate Services Staff and **GMTOAC Cleaners** also completed a **DHHS Infection Control** short course and **Trudy Thorp** completed all required **COVID-19 Training Modules** for her role as the GMTOAC COVID-19 Officer.

Pictured: Tahlia Warren Brand (centre)and the other recipients of the SWTAFE Outstanding Student Awards 2020



STATUTORY SERVICES

BILLY BELL

GMTOAC maintained its obligations and operations under its role as a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

During the reporting period GMTOAC received and responded to Notice of Intents (NOIs) for the preparation Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs).

The table below contains the NOIs received by GMTOAC and the CHMP approvals provided by GMTOAC.

NOTICES OF INTENT RESPONDED TO BY GMTOAC

CHMP NAME	NUMBER	RECEIVED
1518 TIMBOON RD SUBDIVISION	16790	August 2019
BRIDGEWATER PROPOSED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT	16933	November 2019
CODRINGTON LIMESTONE QUARRY EXPANSION	16973	February 2020
CAVENDISH TO HURT STREET FOOTPATH	17129	March 2020
CASTERTON WATER RECLAMATION PLANT AND REUSE FARM.	17238	May 2020

CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Due to COVID-19 field work came to a standstill since March 2020. There were a few CHMP's that were in the field work component. Due to this only 2 Management plans were approved by GMTOAC for this year. The table below outlines the approved CHMP's.

TITLE	NUMBER	DATE APPROVED
WALKERS QUARRY EXPANSION, MOUNT NAPIER	16471	1/10/2019
CHETWYND SAND EXTRACTION	14312	30/4/2020

FIELD WORK

The beginning of the 2019/2020 financial year was busy as usual, this continued on into February 2020. We were hit with COVID-19 in early March 2020, and due to the restrictions in place we did not complete any field work. We have had community members requesting for field work, but we have not risked our site workers health during this time.

Sponsors of the CHMP have been very understanding of this situation. Below is a table of all field work that was completed during 2019/2020 financial year.

NAME	DAYS
SEAN BELL	5
MALEIK BANNAM	5
NICOLE HUDSON	19
TRAVIS BANNAM	18
NORA KING	2
BRAD WILLIAMS	3
LUCAS BANNAM	13
SHARON BAMBLETT	2

NAME	DAYS
ADAM WALKER	4
LEROY MALSEED	3
STEPHEN LOVETT	2
BRADLEY ROSE	18
KIERAN MALSEED	1
WALTER SAUNDERS	2
KEICHA DAY	4

TOTAL DAYS	*101*

REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY PROGRAM UPDATE

During the beginning 2019/2020 financial year, GMTOAC attended MoyJil (Point Richie) committee meetings. These meeting are held roughly every three months. The meeting on the 4th of October was regarding a salvage permit.

Late last year GMTOAC conducted a cultural heritage induction before the works for the new Keeping Place/Business Centre at the Lake Condah Mission. There was a condition of the Management Plan that was approved before the project.

Also, late 2019 GMTOAC conducted a cultural heritage induction for the Glenelg Hopkins CMA and the Nelsons Men's shed group.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs appointed Billy Bell and Micko Bell as Aboriginal Heritage Officers (AHO's) . To keep this appointment, we must attend bi-monthly meetings. These have been done via zoom since March 2020 as travel has been restricted state-wide.

The role on an AHO's is to check compliance issues regarding the Aboriginal Heritage Act and approve Cultural Heritage Management Plans.

In January 2020, GMTOAC joined Aboriginal Victoria (AV) to assess the damage that was done to a shell midden site at a property in Bridgewater. This was the first time GMTOAC AHO's were asked to perform a compliance check.

We are required to do another check but that has not been completed due to COVID-19. We hope that in the next financial year we will be able to complete this requirement after restrictions ease.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the annual RAP conference that is usually held in April was cancelled.

We are still yet to hear if it will be rescheduled for next financial year in late 2020.

A lot of our work stopped due to COVID-19 and we are hoping that restrictions will begin to ease soon and that Cultural Heritage work can recommence in the next financial year.

If anyone would like any more information about any of our **Cultural Heritage Management Plans** or would like to be on our **Cultural Heritage Network.**

Please contact **Billy Bell** via email **bill@gunditjmirring.com**

GUNDITJMARA NATIVE TITLE FUTURE ACT NOTIFICATIONS

1 JULY 2019 TO 30 JUNE 2020

GMTOAC received seven Future Act notifications under the Native Title Act 1993 for comment during the period.

GMTOAC responded to the notices with advice to sponsors to reference the Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara South West Plan 2015 and the ensure the proposed works comply to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

The GMTOAC responses also refer to the Gunditjmara Non-Extinguishment Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) 2010.

GMTOAC did not receive any Future Act notifications under the Native Title Act 1993 for negotiation during the period.

SECTION OF NATIVE TITLE ACT	ISSUER REFERENCE	CLIENT	DATE OF NOTIFICATION	ISSUER OF NOTIFICATION	OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORKS
S24KA	SW1626	Gunditjmara	12/07/2019	DELWP	Glenelg Shire Council	Construction of netball courts, cricket nets and a sealed road in Alexandra Park, Portland
24KA	SW1628	Gunditjmara	23/08/2019	DELWP	Glenelg Shire Council	Construction of a pipeline and discharge pit
24EB	P043131	Gunditjmara	25/10/2019	DELWP	Narrawong Mechanics Hall Inc	Construct a BBQ shelter at rear of Mechanics Hall
24EB	P040615	Gunditjmara	25/10/2019	DELWP	Portland Little Athletics Club	Construction of an Athletics Long Jump Pit
24JA	Nelson Community Hub	Gunditjmara	25/10/2019	DELWP	Nelson Public Reserve Committee of Management	Construction of a Community Hub Facility
24GD	P403477	Gunditjmara	2/03/2020	DELWP		Construction of a stock crossing across Henty Creek, Merino
24EB	SP470877	Gunditjmara	2/04/2020	DELWP	Glenelg Shire Council	Construction of a gate keepers shed and realignment of an access road

GMTOAC RESPONSE TO EASTERN MAAR NATIVE TITLE CLAIM

DAMEIN BELL

When the Federal Court of Australia provided notification of the Eastern Maar native title claim, the Gunditjmara native title group met in September 2019 and directed GMTOAC to become a respondent to the claim.

The major concern for Gunditjmara traditional owners is the area between the Shaw and Hopkins rivers and up to Mustons creek which is included in the Eastern Maar native title claim.

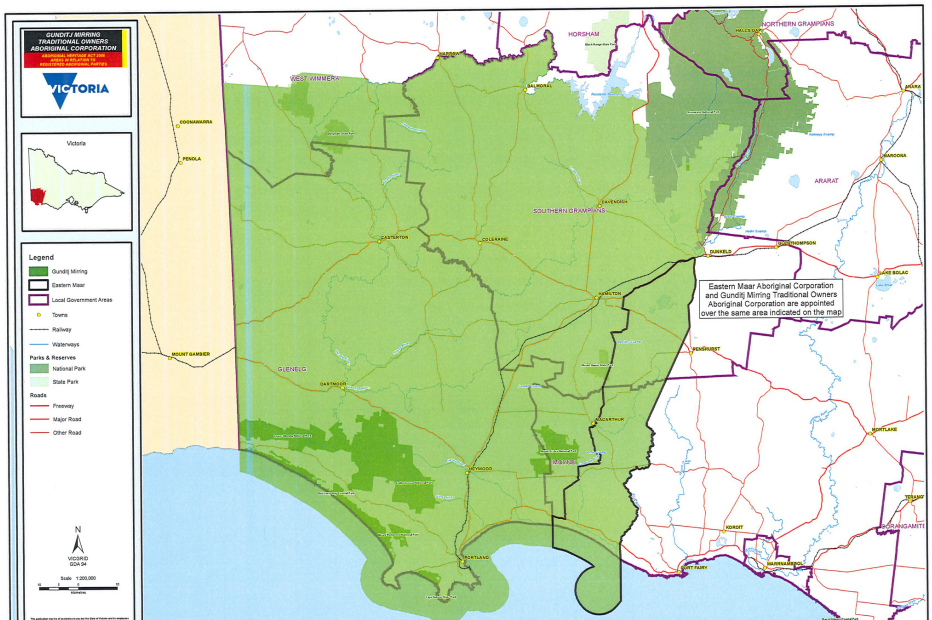
Gunditjmara traditional owners and GMTOAC are seeking to have our Gunditjmara apical ancestors recognised for area between the Shaw and Hopkins rivers and up Mustons creek alongside the Eastern Maar apical ancestors.

The sought recognition will be the same as how both sets of apical ancestors were recognised in the shared country covered by the 'Part B' native title consent determination in 2011. 'Part B' covers the area from Yambuk up to Lake Linlithgow just south of Dunkeld and Gariwerd lifted.

The Federal Court of Australia has registered GMTOAC and Gunditjmara individuals Eileen Alberts, Damein Bell and Denise Lovett as respondents to the Eastern Maar native title claim.

There are other First Peoples and organisations that have been registered as respondents for other parts of the Eastern Maar native title claim as well as many non-Indigenous interestse.g. commercial fisheries, recreational users groups, etc. In April 2020, the Federal Court ordered the commencement of formal mediation between the Eastern Maar native title claimants and Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents. The start of mediation via videoconferencing was conducted in May 2020.

Justice Murphy indicated that the Federal Court is seeking all mediations for the Eastern Maar native title claim be completed by December 2020. GMTOAC will be seeking a gathering of Gunditjmara with the Eastern Maar once the Coronavirus / COVID-19 restriction are eased and lifted.



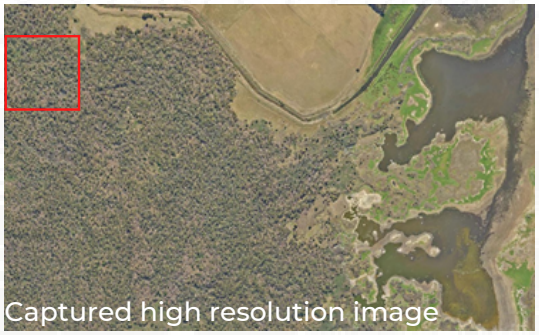
KNOWLEDGE & LEARNING PROGRAM

DENIS ROSE

GMTOAC have been working with DELWP to get high resolution airborne LiDAR data captured over the Budj Bim Lava Flow.

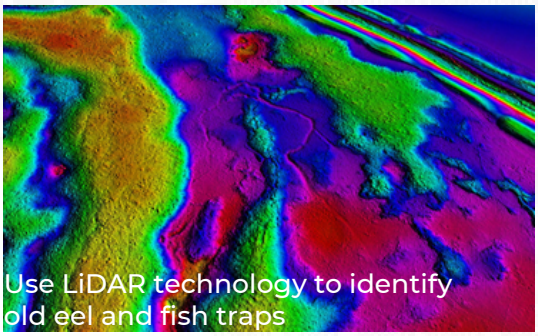
Aerial Photography and LiDAR was captured over Budj Bim between January and April 2020.

This project was tailored to support cultural heritage mapping and represents a 'world first' opportunity to use innovative technology in Australia to map and visualise the natural and man-made landscape over Budj Bim.

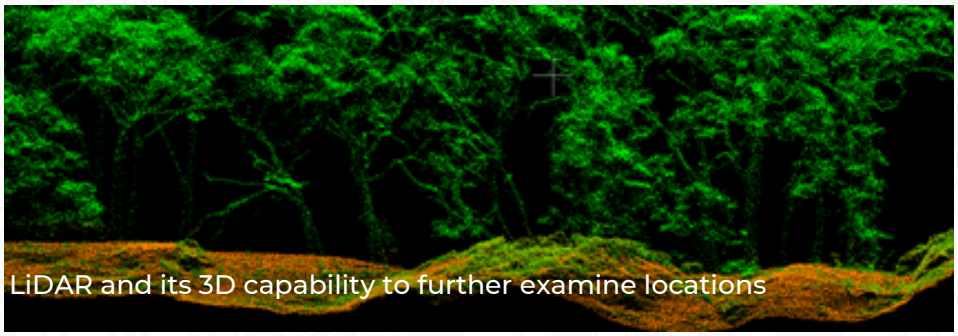


Captured high resolution image

Zoom into location



Use LiDAR technology to identify old eel and fish traps



LiDAR and its 3D capability to further examine locations

INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

DENIS ROSE

The start to 2020 was extremely busy. The year commenced with the continued wildfires that burnt from December 20 until January 10. There were two fires that burnt a total 6,400ha of country within the World Heritage listed Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

The fires affected parts of the Budj Bim Indigenous Protected Area (1,400 ha of the Allambie and Muldoons sections) as well as approximately 5,000 ha of the Budj Bim National Park. A large number cultural sites (stone fish traps and stone house sites) are located within the fire area. We did not appear to have suffered any serious fire damage to these cultural features.

There has also been quite a lot of publicity from the fires, with a focus on cultural burning practices and the uncovering of previously unknown number of fish traps and house sites

A major concern with bushfires on the lava flow has been any potential use of earthmoving machinery (dozers or graders) which would cause immense damage to the important cultural sites.

I would like to acknowledge and congratulate both DELWP and CFA firefighters and planners who recognized and respected the cultural importance of country and they did a lot of work to ensure that heavy machinery was not used on the lava flow.

Pictured below is a line of fire retardant that was dropped on the western fire edge along the eastern and western edges of the fire. On Monday 30 December the temperature reached 41 degrees and extremely strong northerly winds up to 70 km/h hit the fireline, which held and contained the fire. There was also limited damage to the infrastructure on the properties with the major loss the old Woolshed at Allambie and about 2 km of fencing was damaged.

Louise Thomas has been engaged by GMTOAC to review and revise our Budj Bim Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management (2020 – 2025). Louise has worked with us for a number of years and her last role at GMTOAC was to develop the 2015-2019 Plan.

It is expected that the Plan of Management will be finalised by February 2021. GMTOAC continues to work closely with the Budj Bim Rangers to carry out cultural and land management activities throughout the year.

Damage to old wool shed

Fire break line during summer fires of 2019-2020

Newly dicovered fish traps at the Muldoons complex

ABORIGINAL WATER

NICKY HUDSON

The Victorian Government Aboriginal Water program continued to provide opportunities and resources to Traditional Owner corporations during the 2019/2020 period.

Funding from the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning and our partnership with the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA) provided for the following activities:

- Outcomes of the Aboriginal Waterway Assessments from early 2019 informed part of the Environmental Water Flows in 2020 for Bocara (Glenelg River) in March 2020.
- Hydrology studies of the Budj Bim water catchment that highlighted the potential of water restoration at Lake Gorrie and how to retain water at the Kurtonitj property for environmental and cultural requirements.
- Installation of a temporary weir at the Tyrendarra IPA to divert water from a European drain to flow through the traditional aquaculture channels. There will be regular monitoring of waters levels at the sand bag weir during this and the following winters with the aim of installing a permanent weir if the trial is successful.
- Ongoing provision of the GMTOAC Aboriginal Water Officer position.

GMTOAC hosted and participated in a series of research workshops with the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN), Southern Rural Water, the University of Melbourne and DELWP to progress the Water for Aboriginal Economic Development Study.

The study is looking at appropriate First Peoples governance models to hold water and to participate in the water market. The study is due for completion by the end of 2020.

Tae Rak (Lake Condah)

Sandbagging at Tyrendarra IPA

Sandbagging at Tyrendarra IPA

KOOYANG KILLARA WATER PROJECT

The Kooyang Killara Water Project is funded by the Victorian Government Aboriginal Water Program and established a Pilot Aquaculture Facility at the Lake Condah Mission.

The pilot facility is overseen by GMTOAC, Deakin University School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Deakin Research, Wannon Water and the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

The program provides for Research Assistant positions to conduct the daily care, monitoring and reporting for the kooyang in the pilot system.

Once the pilot aquaculture facility was completed in September 2019, GMTOAC staff and Gunditjmara community members participated in a training program.

This program covered animal welfare and use of the monitoring and reporting equipment and chemicals, some kooyang were netted and relocated to the pilot facility.

The Gunditjmara Research Assistants commenced in October 2019 with the care, monitoring and reporting research program at the mission.

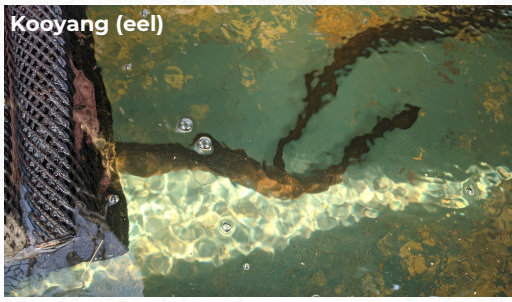
That also required the supervision and management of the six-tub system with in and out flows powered independently by a solar and battery system.

The Gunditjmara Research Assistants successfully built their competence with the daily schedule of feeding the kooyang, monitoring water levels and flows and recording the results.

The program was safely maintained even through the January 2020 bushfires that burnt up to Killara (Darlots Creek) on the other side of the mission property.

Unfortunately the onset of the global pandemic restriction, the program had to be suspended with the kooyang released back into Lake Condah Tae Rak.

With around six month remaining for the program, GMTOAC will be recommencing the pilot program once the pandemic restrictions are lifted.


Kooyang (eel)

Ben Church with kooyang (eel)

Tahlia Warren Brand and Aunty Donna Lovett removing kooyang (eel) from quarnatine tank

Gunditjmara on site at Aquaculture Facility on one of the training days with Deakin University

CULTURAL BURNS

DENIS ROSE

Cultural Burning was carried out in partnership with DELWP and Budj Bim Rangers.

The burn offs were done at Tyrendarra IPA and Kurtonitj IPA.

These were done for a number of reasons including fuel reduction, protection of sites and improving habitat for important plants and animals. During the year Tyson Lovett-Murray from GMTOAC and Leigh Malseed from DELWP developed the Weeyn Yarkeen Fire Management Plan.

A plan that outlines our burning program for the next 3 years.

Roger Morris and Leigh Malseed (DELWP) on site at Cultural Burn

Aaron Morgan and Leigh Malseed

Aaron Morgan on site at Cultural Burn

REGIONAL FORESTRY PARTNERSHIPS

SHEA ROTUMAH

GMTOAC was engaged by the State Government of Victoria through the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Parks Victoria (PV), on behalf of the Commonwealth Government to assist with the modernisation of the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA). RFA's are long-term plans for the sustainable management and conservation of Australia's native forests. Shea Rotumah was appointed the Gunditjmara Forestry & Engagement Coordinator in October 2019.

The West Region RFA project area covers around 144400 hectares and over 120 Parks and Reserves RFA's are long-term plans for the sustainable management and conservation of Australia's native forests and seeks to expand the forest conservation estate – to provide for the protection of Australia's unique forest biodiversity.

Other considerations include Native Title Rights and Interests, Aboriginal Heritage Act and protection of Cultural Heritage, both tangible and intangible. GMTOAC conducted a community engagement meeting to discuss matters of Traditional Owners significance in regards to the future of forest management.

The Cultural Values Project was initially designed to conduct two x three day trips on Country. The first trip was held from the 11th to the 13th of December 2019 and attended by 20 Gunditjmara TO's. and included a cross section of men and women, from the ages of 17 to 60+, representing various families and Clans.

The group visited Bryans Swamp in the Victoria Valley, The Cavendish Ring trees and the Wannon River, Wannon Falls, Bailey's Rocks at Dergholm State Park, Casterton and surrounds, Bahgallah and Drajurk Reserves, Lower Glenelg National Park and a site on the Crawford River.

Unfortunately the Corona Virus pandemic put a stop to the larger gatherings. As a result, the second trip had to be postponed.

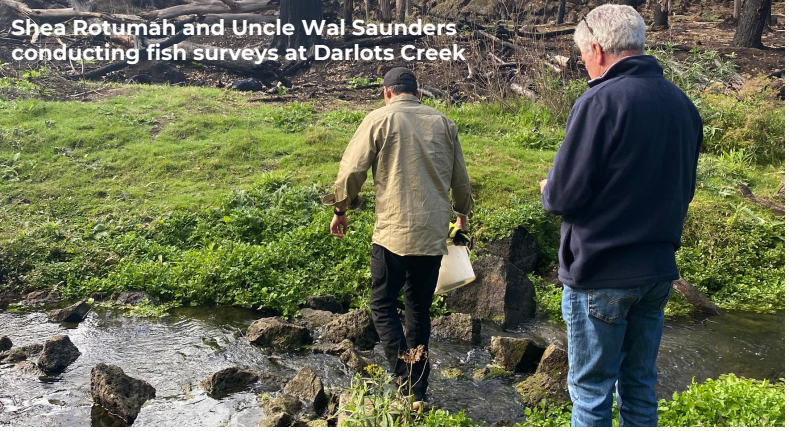
We held a couple of smaller trips in regards to specific themes including a coastal trip to Swan Lake to harvest seasonally abundant coastal fruits, inspect the Karst Rising Springs, to assess Cultural significance, associated biodiversity and recent bushfire effects on the landscape.

GMTOAC hosted a State wide, 3 day Traditional Owner's RFA workshop at the Lake Condah Mission at the beginning of 2020.

The Forestry & Engagement Coordinator is also working on two other projects:

- Supporting the nomination of the Karst Rising Spring and Alkaline Fens (KSAF), to be listed under the Environmental Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act (EPBC). The Springs contain many species of cultural and natural significance and are also responsible for the formation of limestone caves throughout the region. Some of these caves are known to contain a unique form of rock art known as finger fluting as well as engravings and it is estimated that these very significant sites are between ten and fifty thousand years old.]

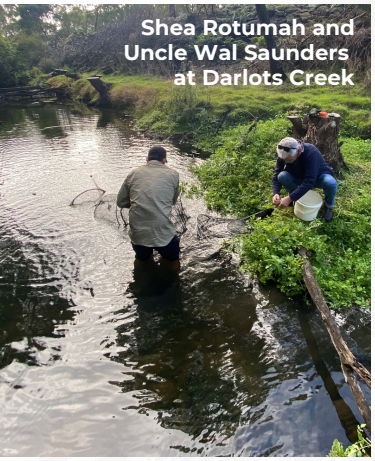
- The Tae Rak and the Darlots Creek fish monitoring project is a monitoring program for native and non-native species in our special waterways. There are many invasive species that have infested the area including Redfin and Tench and these species have the potential to seriously impact on populations of native species, in particular rare and endangered species such as Galaxia and Pygmy perch.



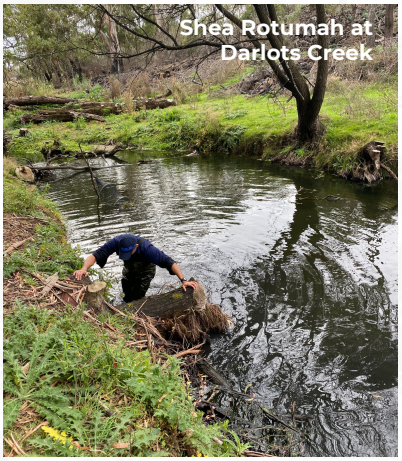
Shea Rotumah and Uncle Wal Saunders conducting fish surveys at Darlots Creek

Gunditjmara men at Bahgallah

Statewide Forestry Forum participants at Tae Rak (Lake Condah)



Shea Rotumah and Uncle Wal Saunders at Darlots Creek



Shea Rotumah at Darlots Creek

Gunditjmara visiting snow gum

Gunditjmara at Cavendish visiting ring trees

LAND MANAGEMENT WORKS CREW

The GMTOAC Land Management Works Crew was established to respond to government and industry contracts for environmental works.

During the period, GMTOAC received Commonwealth funding to consolidate the Works Crew with better management and capacity.

The Land Management Works Crew received contracts to conduct pine wilding, weed removal from state forests, bait and manage feral pig traps, install solar panels and cabling and other works.

GMTOAC plans to grow the Works Crew in line with the availability of upcoming contracts during the 2020/2021 period.

Land Management Team completing revegetation work

Installing Solar Panels at the Lake Condah Mission

Solar Panels in progress

Land Management Team at Cultural Burn with DELWP

PROPERTIES & CIMS

MICKO BELL

LAKE CONDAH MISSION & KURTONITJ

During the 2019/2020 financial year the number of visitors to the Lake Condah Mission was over 1,000 people this included Gunditjmara family groups and organisations such as Winda-Mara, Melbourne Uni, RMIT, Parks Vic, DHHS, CFA DELWP, Glenelg Shire and MLDRIN.

At Kurtonitj the number of visitors was 48 which consisted of Gunditjmara family groups.

The Mission and Kurtonitj were both closed from March due to the coronavirus.

The caretaker continued ongoing maintenance of the Mission and Cemetery these include: Cutting the grass of the mission grounds; Keeping the gardens presentable around the Recreation Room; Cleaning the Rec Room and all the cabins;

Keeping access tracks safe to drive on and clear of any overhanging limbs; Maintaining footpaths and ensuring that the Mission is suitable for visitors all year round.

Fire protection activities including burning off, clearing of fuel and mowing the grass are done by the caretaker and the Budj Bim Rangers

CULTURAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CIMS)

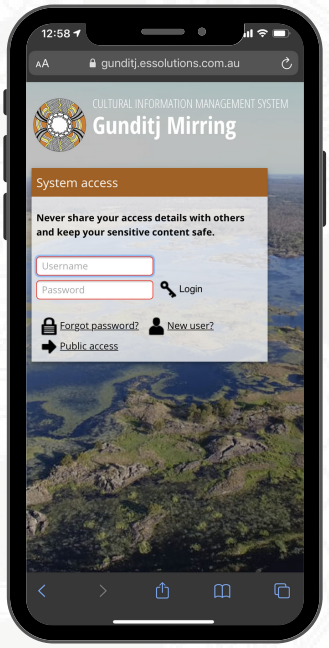
The Cultural Information Management Systems (CIMS) was established in 2010.

GMTOAC had engaged Environmental Systems Solutions to use their platform and program to design our data base to hold our cultural knowledge including the Gunditjmara Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) resource.

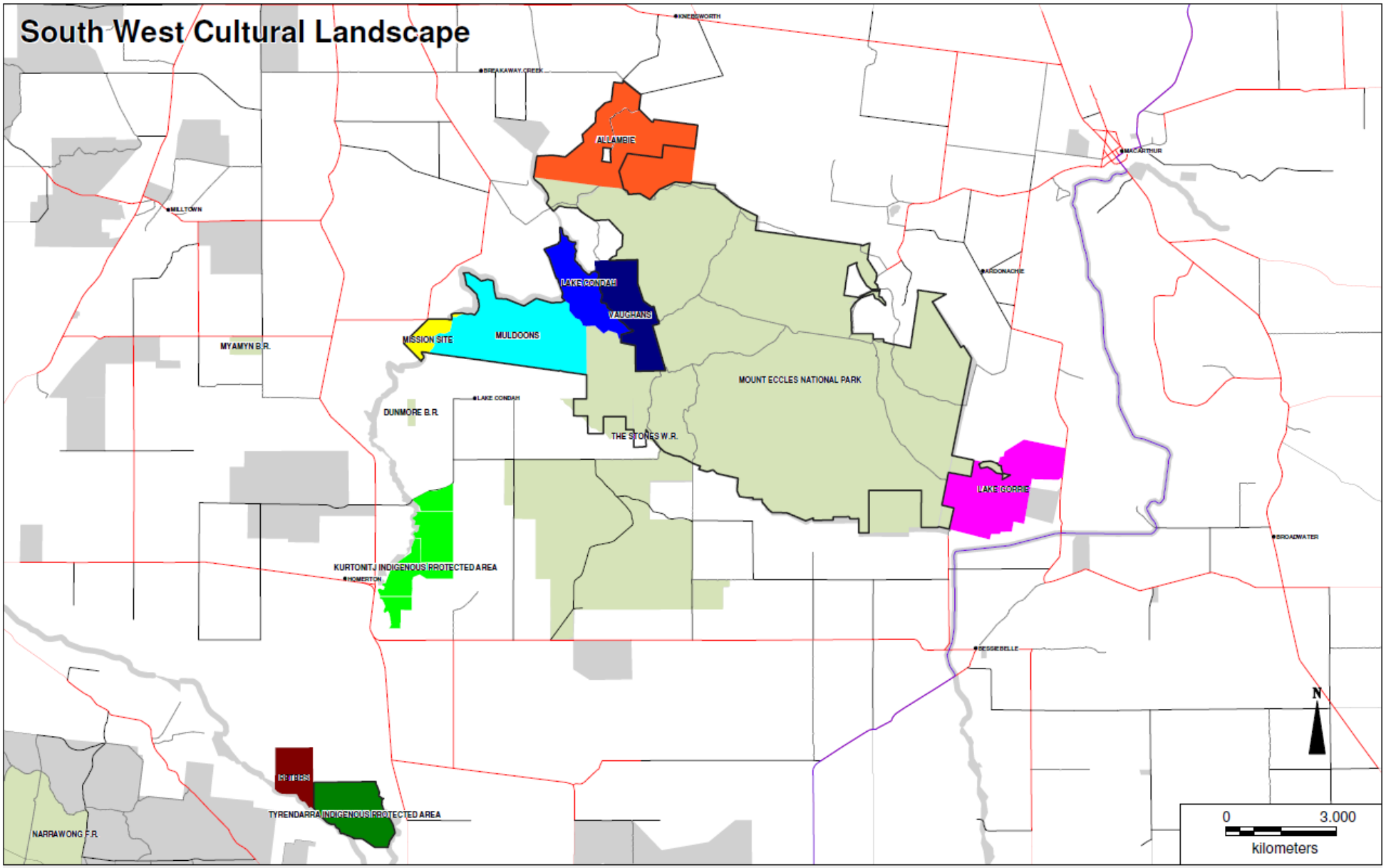
The CIMS is able to record a wide range of data including cultural mapping, seasonal calendars, project management, photos, documents, videos and voice recordings.

The IEK resource is now uploaded to the CIMS with keywords programmed to link the resource to the six Gunditjmara seasonal calendars. Gunditjmara community members are able to create their own accounts to appropriately access sections that include womens business, mens business, family groups, rangers, etc.

Please visit: **https://gunditj.essolutions.com.au** to register and create your own CIMS profile. If you need help to create an account, please contact Micko Bell via email on **micko@gunditjmirring.com**



PROPERTIES MAP



KEEPING PLACE & BUSINESS CENTRE

DAMEIN BELL

Construction of the Keeping Place and Business Centre commenced in October 2019 with Phillips / Pilkington (Adelaide) as design architects and project managers and Nicholsons Constructions (Ballarat) as builders.

Funding for the $3.2m facility came from the 2007 Gunditjmara native title settlement, the Victorian Government's Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program and GMTOAC funds.

By June 2020, the construction had completed the main structure of the building and the installation for the off-grid solar array and batteries.

GMTOAC organised its Land Management Works Crew to be trained by Keppel Prince to successfully install the solar array and batteries.

Discussions with Museum Victoria commenced early in the design of the Keeping Place to make sure that the facility can safely keep our cultural heritage objects made from natural materials e.g. possum skin, feathers, wooden tools and spears, etc. Stone objects can be stored alternatively.

The Keeping Place is required to be sealed with 50% humidity in line with museum standards.

Further discussions with Museum Victoria continued through the period to prepare for the repatriation of the Gunditjmara cultural heritage objects to the Keeping Place.

Alongside the proper storage facilities and humidity, the required documentation and catalogue information system is to be built.

The return of the Gunditjmara cultural heritage objects including the Lake Condah Possum Skin Cloak is scheduled for NAIDOC Week in 2021.

Solar Panels at Lake Condah Mission

Land Management Team installing solar panels

Keeping Place/Business Centre under construction

Keeping Place/ Business Centre

Keeping Place/Business Centre under construction

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DAMEIN BELL

In June 2020, the Department of Jobs, Regions and Precincts (DJRP) announced a funding package for Traditional Owner corporations in Victoria. The package aims to build economic development and participation of Traditional Owners in their respective regions. The package requires corporations to identify opportunities and implement initiatives in the 2020/2021 period. Planning on the new opportunities and initiatives are required to be completed by September 2021.

Economic Planning for Nation Building

Nation Building Principles	
Self-Governing:	The nation makes the decisions about issues that affect it. The nation exercises genuine decision-making authority.
Effective Governing Bodies:	The nation creates processes, mechanisms and structures that help them to make and implement decisions for their nation. It creates governing bodies that implement decisions effectively and efficiently.
Cultural Match:	The nation creates governing bodies that 'match' the nation's contemporary culture, values and norms. That is, their methods of decision-making and implementing those decisions make sense to community members and are seen as appropriate for exercising their nation responsibilities.
Sustainable Strategic Planning:	The nation is proactive and makes long-term and strategic plans for sustainable futures and collective well-being. The nation's strategic decision-making is about how, when and where to assert rights and authority over the long-term.
Community Focussed Leadership:	The nation's leaders are community-focussed and put the nation ahead of individual interest or family-only concerns.

GUNDITJ MIRRING Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

UTS:JUMBUNNA INDIGENOUS HOUSE OF LEARNING

NATIVE NATIONS INSTITUTE for Leadership, Management, and Policy

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA. Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy

BUDJ BIM MASTERPLAN STAGES 1 & 2

DAMEIN BELL

For the 2019/2020 period, the Budj Bim Master Plan (BBMP) Stages One and Two progressed design and planning requirements. The BBMP Stages One and Two activities is building the following infrastructure:

BUDJ BIM NATIONAL PARK
- New cantilevered lookout.
- Upgrade of visitor facilities e.g. toilets / showers.
- Upgrade of old
- rangers centre to an interpretative centre.

TAE RAK (LAKE CONDAH)
- New Traditional Aquaculture Centre.
- New upgrade of current track and new crossing south of Kerrup Jmara weir.

KURTONITJ
- New cultural seasons installation and raised walkways.

TYRENDARRA INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA
- Upgrade of current carpark and installation of new toilet.
- New pedestrian bridge.
- New raised walkways.

TYRENDARRA RECREATION RESERVE
- New visitor space, toilet and interpretation space between tennis courts and Killara (Darlots Creek).

The Budj Bim Master Plan was completed in 2013 with the Victorian Government announcing in 2016 an $8m investment towards the proposed activities. In 2019, the Victorian Government announced a further investment of $3m to go towards construction.

The project is overseen by a Project Control Group with representation from the following land holding and planning organisations:

- Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.
- Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation.
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.
- Parks Victoria.
- Glenelg Shire Council.
- Moyne Shire Council.
- Tyrendarra Recreation Reserve Committee.
- Visit Victoria.
- Department of Premier and Cabinet – Aboriginal Victoria.

In 2018, Accuraco Pty Ltd was appointed as project managers with Cooper Scaife appointed as design architects.

Land surveyors, heritage advisors, design engineers, electrical engineers and other professions and consultants have also been engaged to work on the wide range of requirements for the projects.

Planning components of the projects include the cultural heritage management plan, the environmental assessment and various planning permits were still underway during the period.

Design documentation for all sites was completed during the period with additional work on the Lake Condah Tae Rak site being done to take into account new potential flood level data.

The development of the cultural heritage management plan (CHMP) for activities across the five locations commenced in early 2019 with site investigations and surveys commencing in March 2019 through to September 2019.

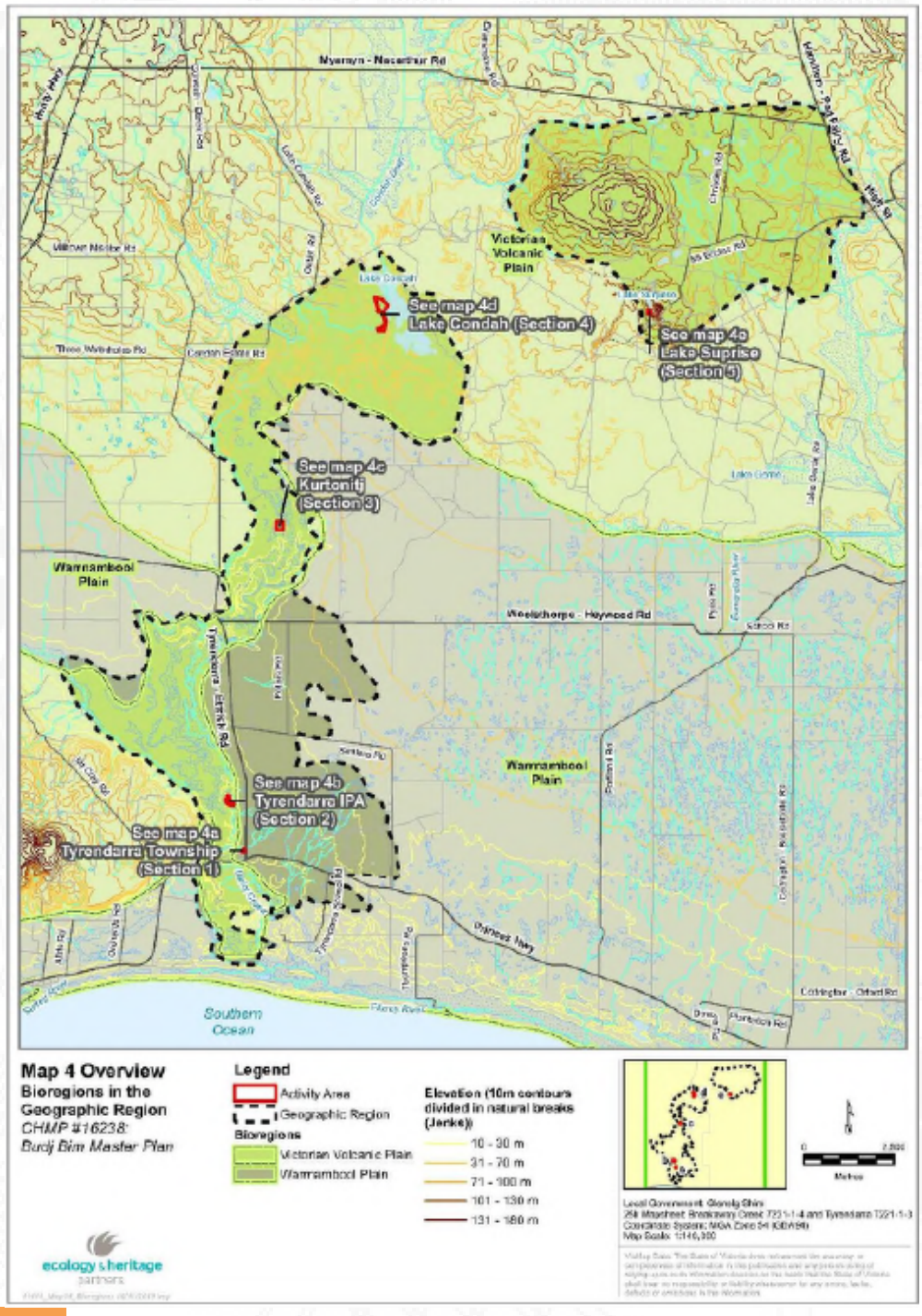
A single flake was surveyed at the Lake Surprise crater. 29 flakes were surveyed at the Tyrendarra IPA sites.

Around 160 flint and flakes were surveyed at the Tyrendarra Township site with charcoal deposits also being surveyed.

Following radiocarbon dating by the University of Waikato, NZ, the results demonstrated a campsite with 600, 800, 1348, 6600 and 7200 year intervals. The design of the interpretation board, benches and toilet were reconfigured to protect the site with additional gabion walls to keep vehicles off the campsite area.

In November 2019, a Gunditjmara community consultation was held in Heywood to review the findings and confirm cultural heritage management conditions, recommendations and contingency plans for inclusion into the CHMP.

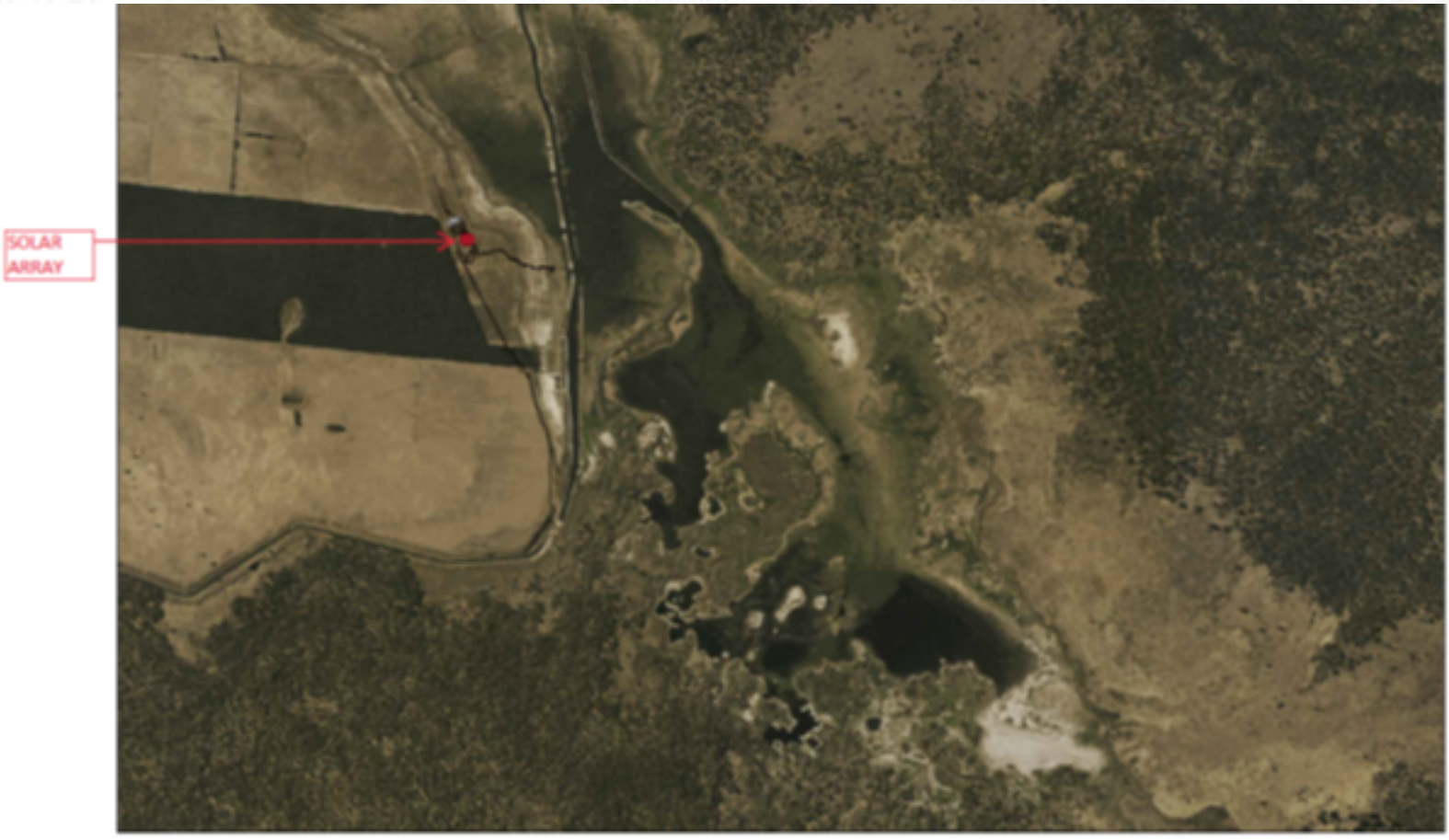
With GMTOAC being the Registered Aboriginal Party under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 as well as the sponsor the proposed works, GMTOAC requested that the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council conduct the formal evaluation of the CHMP.



Following the installation of a solar and battery system at the Keeping Place and Business Centre at the Lake Condah Mission, consideration of a similar system for the Traditional Aquaculture Centre at Lake Condah Tae Rak was investigated.

The cost of installing new power poles and above ground lines to the Traditional Aquaculture Centre determined at $500,000 + GST with an ongoing electricity bill of $38,000 per annum.

The cost of installation an independent off-the-grid solar and battery was determined at $438,000 + GST with an ongoing maintenance bill of $2,500 per annum.



05.11.2020 TAE RAK (LAKE CONDAH) AERIAL VIEW
(Plan showing proposed site of Traditional Aquaculture Centre with PV array, car park & jetty)

COMMERCIAL TOURISM PROGRAM

DAMEIN BELL

In 2018, the GMTOAC engaged Cooee Traveller Pty Ltd to develop the strategic and business planning frameworks, the new 'trading as' company and the www.budjbim.com.au website.

The three activities were completed successfully in late 2019. Following discussions with Regional Development Victoria (RDV),funding was provided to GMTOAC for the following activities:

- Budj Bim Visitor Ranger position for 16 months.
- Establish 'trading as' company for sustainable tourism operations.
- GMTOAC and Cooee Traveller Pty Ltd partnership to commence sustainable tourism on GMTOAC properties.
- Provision of commercial legal advice from Terri Janke and Company.

From early 2020, the advent of the global pandemic with regional, state and international boarder closures and travel bans devastating the global tourism industry and the visitor economy.

The pandemic pushed back the implementation of our tourism strategy and the commencement of our commercial operations.

GMTOAC continues to work with Cooee Traveller Pty Ltd to be ready for when the pandemic restrictions are gradually lifted.

As highlighted in the Budj Bim Master Plan 2013, the need for new commercial tourism accommodation in the far south west of Victoria remains an industry priority.

Over the past decade, GMTOAC has sought funding opportunities to acquire suitable property along the Budj Bim landscape for tourism accommodation.

As part of the discussions with RDV in early 2020, funding was provided to GMTOAC to locate a suitable property for tourism accommodation. With initial enquiries being made it is planned to secure a new property by July 2021.

Pictured below: Tyson Lovett-Murray and Braydon Saunders in front of the reconstructed stone houses at the Tyrendarra IPA Photo credit: www.racv.com.a

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation member distribution - Australia

Maps by CartDeco

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation member distribution - Victoria

Maps by CartDeco

GARIWERD

DAMEIN BELL

The greater Gariwerd landscape include the Grampians National Park continued to be a high priority for Traditional Owners and GMTOAC, Barenji Gadjin Land Council and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation during the 2019 / 2020 period. The three Traditional Owner corporations continued to work with Parks Victoria on the following activities:

- The development of the draft Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan.
- The Grampians Peaks Trail and cultural tourism walk experience.
- The development and operations of the Brambuk Living Cultural Centre.
- Impacts on cultural heritage places by recreational users (including rock climbing).
- Truth-telling and healing forum.
- The ongoing Gariwerd Strategic Partnership Committee; and
- Traditional owner governance structures for Gariwerd.

The coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic restrictions closed the national park and the Brambuk centre while impacting on the number of visitors to the landscape. Work continued online between Parks Victoria and the three Traditional Owners corporations.

The development of the draft Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan saw the preparation of several reports on environmental values, broader community values, recreational values and interpretative plans.

For traditional cultural values across the Gariwerd landscape, Traditional Owners gathered for a workshop in February 2020 at Brambuk, Halls Gap. The draft landscape plan is scheduled for release before end of 2020.

The impacts on cultural heritage places by recreational users in the national park was an ongoing concern during the period. The impacts of rock climbing were a priority for the period as climbing sites were reassessed for the risk of potential harm to traditional rock art and quarry sites.

The Traditional Owner corporations worked with Parks Victoria and called on the Gariwerd Wimmera Reconciliation Network for advice.

Following on from the Gariwerd native title claim that was withdrawn in 2018, the Traditional Owner corporations with Parks Victoria have continued working on the development of an appropriate cultural governance model to oversee engagement with the Gariwerd (Grampians) National Park and the Brambuk Living Cultural Centre.

With the progress of the Greater Gariwerd Landscape Plan, the Grampians Peaks Trails and the proposed enhancement of the Brambuk Living Cultural Centre, 2021 will be a very busy year and the need for cultural governance will be required.

PARTNERSHIPS

DAMEIN BELL

Although our partnerships were affected by the pandemic restrictions during the reporting period, the work continued as best it could through online meetings and COVID-19 safe conditions.

GLENELG ABORIGINAL PARTNERSHIP

The Glenelg Aboriginal Partnership 2011-2020 is between GMTOAC, Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, Dhauwurd Wurrung Elderly and Community Health Services and the Glenelg Shire Council.

The Partnership focusses on the following themes:

- Early Childhood
- Economic Participation
- Governance and Leadership
- Schooling
- Engaged, Safe and Healthy Communities
- Country and Culture

The Glenelg Quorin Committee has membership from the four partners and oversees the implementation of the partnership action plans.

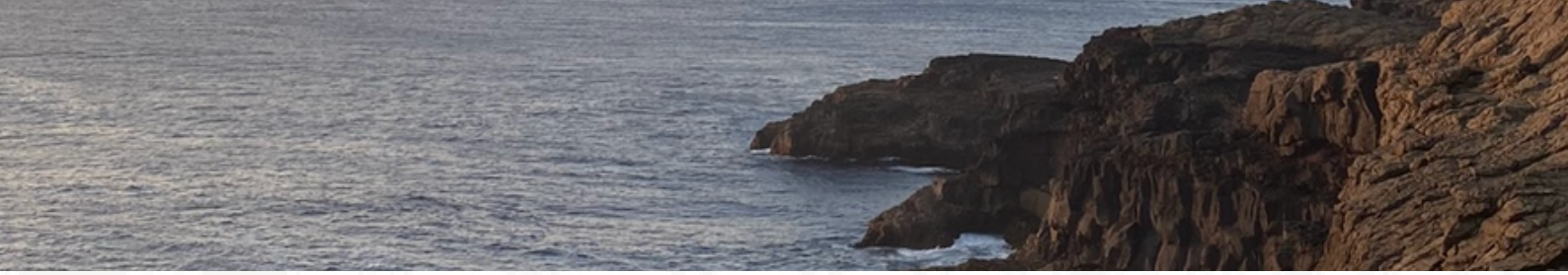
During the 2019/2020 period, the main activities and issues that were addressed by the Committee included:

- Glenelg Aboriginal Scholarships awarded to Janaya Firebrace and Marlee Bryant.

- Preparation of the 250th anniversary of the Endeavour to dock in Portland with Gunditjmara engaged to speak on the true history and impact of invasion and colonisation. The activity was cancelled due to the global pandemic.

- The annual Reconciliation Week activity held at the Portland Civic Centre with district school students was cancelled due to the global pandemic.

- The all-abilities playspace on the Portland foreshore was designed and completed during the period. The place space design is based on the Gunditjmara seasonal calendar and features a kooyang slide, large native animal and bird sculptures and traditional aquaculture. The playspace is part of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement 2018 between Gunditjmara and the Glenelg Shire Council for the broader Portland Foreshore area. The all-abilities playspace is named “Pulambeet” after the original creek that connected the lagoon to the ocean.



GLENELG HOPKINS CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

The partnership between GMTOAC and the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA) 2015-2021 progressed Aboriginal Water issues relating to healthy waterways in the far southwest of Victoria. While the global pandemic slowed down the on - country activities relating to cultural flows including the cultural works at the Tyrendarra IPA, hydrology studies for the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape with a particular focus on the Kurtonitj and Lake Gorrie properties were completed during the period. The studies will be used for the restoration of more permanent water at the properties.

Talks between GMTOAC and GHCMA will commence in 2021 to review the existing partnership with the view to identify the need for a new relationship between the organisations.

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE: SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

The ten year partnership agreement between GMTOAC and the University of Melbourne: School of Engineering was signed in July 2018.

The partnership shares traditional engineering knowledge of the traditional aquaculture systems and with Indigenous and non-Indigenous engineering students.

Students also workshop the engineering needs for smaller infrastructure works on GMTOAC properties.

The students travelled to Gunditjmara country in August and September 2019 and stayed at the Lake Condah Mission and Kurtonitj.

Due to the global pandemic restrictions, the program was conducted online.

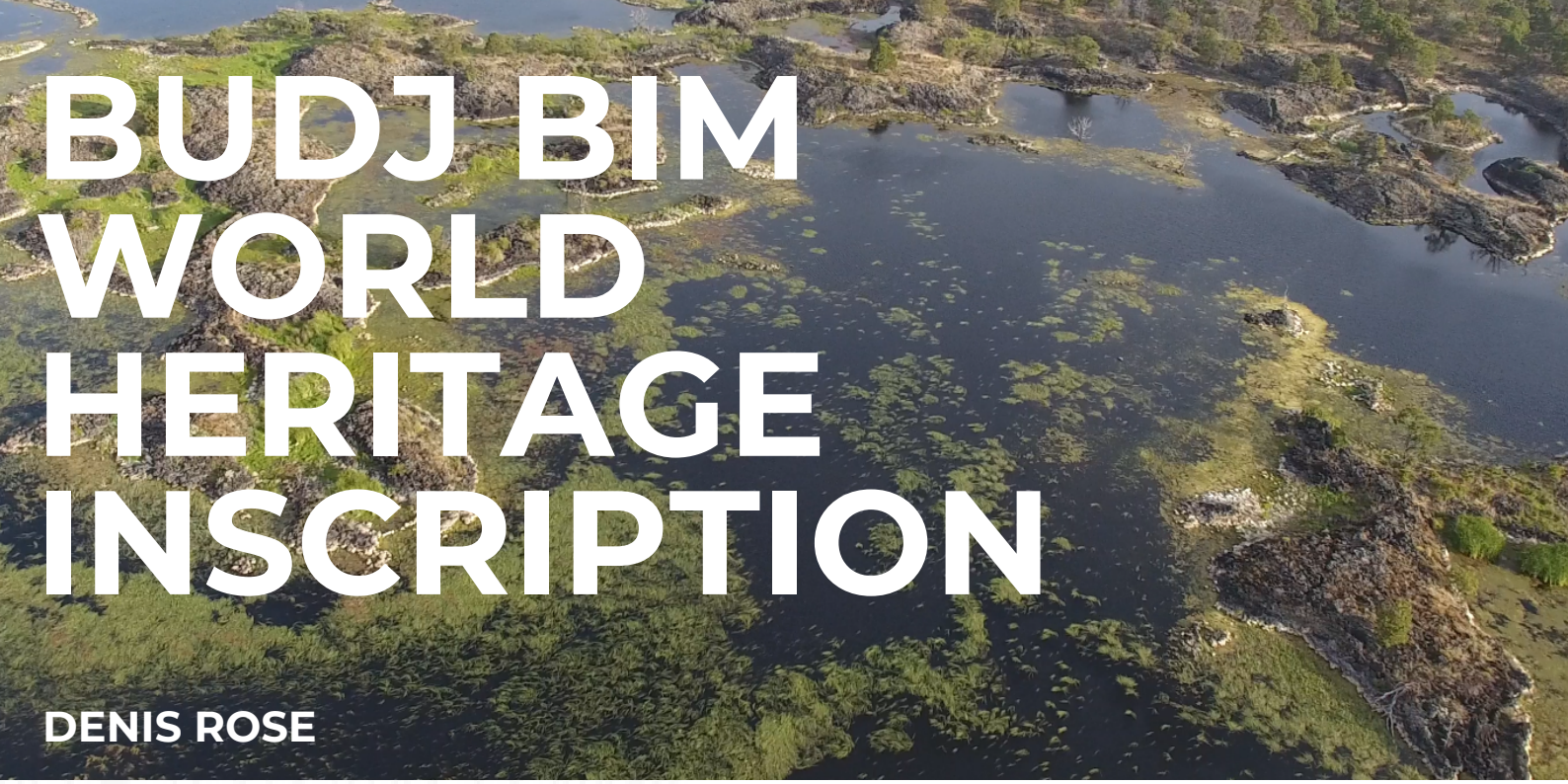
Melbourne University: School of Engineering Students

INDIGENOUS NATION BUILDING

with Gunditjmara, Ngarrindjeri and Wiradjuri Mobs and Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research: University of Technology Sydney.

The Indigenous Nation Building team was scheduled to travel to Gunditjmara country in March 2020 to assist with the Gunditjmara Community Engagement program. The program was cancelled due to the global pandemic restrictions.

BUDJ BIM WORLD HERITAGE INSCRIPTION



DENIS ROSE

In July 2019 14 GMTOAC members travelled to Baku, Azerbaijan to attend the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee meeting. On July 6th the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

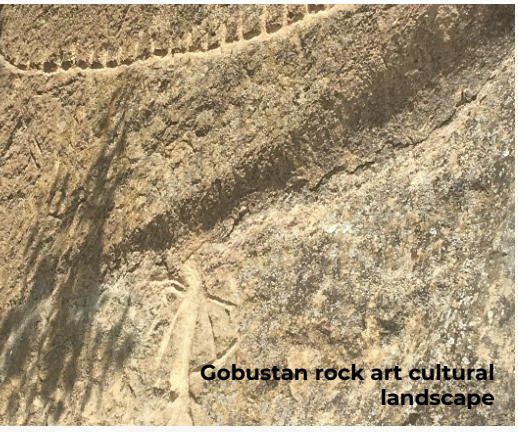
Being present for the inscription was a deadly experience, as most are now aware the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape is Australia's 20th World Heritage site.

Whilst there we visited two world heritage sites, the Walled City of Baku and Gobustan rock art cultural landscape.

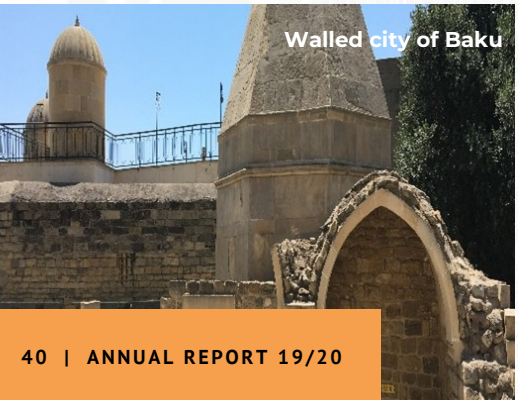
At the beginning of July 2019, Aaron Morgan participated in the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan and he arrived a little earlier than the rest of the Gunditjmara representatives to attend this forum.

Aaron's time spent on the forum was a terrific experience, spending half of the time on site visits to Azerbaijan's World Heritage sites and the other half of the forum learning about the requirements and processes of the World Heritage Committee.

Aaron facilitated a Traditional dance with 10 of the representatives (5 male, 5 female) to perform for the World Heritage stage which was the first Gunditjmara performance on the World Heritage stage.



Gobustan rock art cultural landscape



Walled city of Baku

Gunditjmara representatives in Baku

BUDJ BIM WORLD HERITAGE UNIT

AARON MORGAN & GREG SHELTON

Greg Shelton and Aaron Morgan commenced work in February 2020 as our World Heritage Rangers.

Their major roles are; to assist with the development of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape World Heritage Strategic Management Framework, assist with implementation of the Budj Bim and Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) Plans of Management and other relevant management plans, and to liaise with land managers (inc WMAC, Parks Victoria (PV), Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) to ensure World Heritage values are protected and enhanced.

Kilcarer Gunditj sign Aaron and Greg painted - located on the corner of Huxleys Rd and the Princes Hwy, Allestree

Aaron Morgan with Bathurst Burr infestation at Tae Rak (Lake Condah)

Aaron and Greg with the Kilcarer Gunditj Sign

BUDJ BIM WORLD HERITAGE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

TAHLIA WARREN BRAND

On Wednesday 25th September 2020 GMTOAC held the Budj Bim World Heritage Community Celebration at the Heywood Community Hall.

With over 250 people in attendance including State and Federal Ministers, partnering bodies and of course Gunditjmara community.

Mark Olive from the Black Olive catered for the event and even brought hundreds of his newly released Australian Native flavoured Connoisseur ice creams.

The Gunditjmara Koondoom Yarkeen dance group opened with event with over 45 Gunditjmara participating.

Over the next few pages you will some photos of the event, courtesy of Michael Peters Photography.

If you would like to watch the video from the event, please head to our YouTube page.

All photos curtesy of Michael Peters Photography www.MichaelPeter.co

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