CONTINUING CONNECTION TO COUNTRY

GUNDITJ MIRRING
Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation
RNTBC

2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT

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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 CHAIR

Ngata and Ngatanwarr everyone

Firstly, I would like to pay my respects to our Elders, our old people, families and clans, and to our Ancestors for their sacrifice and the activism of our old people having never ceding our Sovereignty and ensuring our survival as the oldest living culture in the world.

As the second year of global pandemic continued, being constantly separated from our families and communities hurt us deeply, unable to grieve together and care for each other during Sorry business was devastating. We endured 247 consecutive days of hard lockdowns, travel restrictions, online meetings, home schooling, working from home, whilst continuing to do our cultural business, the lockdowns challenged everyone and our peoples self-determination.

We continued to make history, honouring the activism of our Matriarchs, their fight for Land Rights, justice for Stolen Generation survivors and a Victorian Redress Scheme, sadly the Victorian Government announcement came too late for our Elders and survivors who had passed, our family is honoured our Mother Eunice Wright led this fight.

The 40th Anniversary of the Onus v Alcoa Land Rights case won in the High Court of Australia celebrations were postponed and delayed, both Aunty Sandra Onus and Aunty Tina Saunders families are working towards being able to celebrate and honour their remarkable achievements later in the year.

In March 2021 we were able to meet with the community to continue our work on Country and celebrate the fourteenth anniversary of our Native Title Determination, we also celebrated our two year anniversary of the inscription of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage List, after receiving international recognition solely for its Aboriginal Cultural Values.

GMTOAC staff continued to work remotely throughout the reporting period, as did our voluntary GMTOAC Board of Directors, meeting online, overseeing the governance of the corporation, and the development of the Budj Bim Tourism Infrastructure projects continued across our IPA areas, we are looking forward to their completion.

We continued to meet online with our mob convening a series of COVID safe community engagement 'hybrid meetings' to ensure all Gunditjmara people were able to attend the consultations on the co-design of key infrastructure Tourism projects, most importantly having our Elders attend, share their stories knowledge and voice their opinions at these meeting was invaluable. The GMTOAC Board of Directors established a subsidiary company and commercial tourism venture as the Budj Bim Tourism Services Pty Ltd, the purpose of the company is to create local employment and jobs for our mob, we are looking forward to the launch of and official opening of Budj Bim Tours later in the year.

I would sincerely like thank the GMTOAC Board of Directors for their commitment, volunteering their time and continued efforts in managing the Corporation undertaking a huge workload with all the infrastructure development throughout the year. On their behalf we thank the amazing and dedicated GMTOAC staff, for their hard work caring for Country, and look forward to being able to get back together and back to business as usual, and finally get on with our work to progress towards a Treaty and achieving our aspirations and vision for our children's future and our community.

In closing, the Yoo-rrook Commissioners are prioritising consultations with Elders across the State of Victoria, with consultations in our community happening over the next few weeks, at the same time the First Peoples Assembly works towards establishing a permanent Elders Voice to Treaty based on *'when Elders speak we listen'*.

Take care and stay safe everyone.

Wuuwook,

Donna Wright Kerrupjmara Clan
Chairperson

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

In respect of our traditional homelands, Ancestors, Elders and community members I honor their power and sacrifice that contribute to our identify and obligations as Gunditjmara people. I also pay our respects to the Gunditjmara that we have lost and the sorry business that our families continue to go through.

The 2020/2021 period focused on doing the best we can with the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. The biggest impact that the pandemic continues to have on our work is the ability of GMTOAC to support the Gunditjmara community, especially with our Elders and families to gather together regularly. While we have successfully consolidated our online engagements with technology, we still miss the mob being together.

While we had several gatherings postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19 lockdowns, we were fortunate enough to convene a four-day Gunditjmara gathering at the end of March 2021. The gathering engaged with the Gunditjmara to advance our native title, country, language and recent technology work.

Alongside Treaty for Victoria, the Victorian Government increased its responses to ongoing Traditional Owner advancement, concerns and priorities during the 2020/2021 period. Along with other Traditional Owner corporations in Victoria, GMTOAC grew our work, operations and staff to unpreceded levels across caring for country programs and deadly new opportunities for our economic development.

During the period, the Gunditjmara native title holders responded to new future act notifications under the Native Title Act 1993. It was deadly to see Gunditjmara native title holders come together and continue to build culturally responsible responses to proposed future acts that affect our hard-fought native title status. The work to grow our methodologies on how we do our cultural heritage assessments is very impressive. The work continues on gaining the confidence of government agencies and industry to better understand Gunditjmara methodologies.

GMTOAC continued to support the response to the Eastern Maar native title claim for the Shaw and Hopkins Rivers country.

The Federal Court mediation process continued online throughout the 2020/2021 period even with COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

In early 2021, the Commonwealth Government amended the Native Title Act 1993. The recent changes focus on increasing transparency and accountability for GMTOAC (and all other Prescribed Body Corporates - PBCs across Australia) as well as provided greater opportunities for native title groups to have their own decision-making processes recognized in the native title process.

The recent changes and opportunities will mean changes to the GMTOAC Rule Book that have to be confirmed by Gunditjmara native title holders and subsequently GMTOAC members. With COVID-19 restrictions continuing, requirements to change PBC Rule Books by the Office of the Register of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) have been extended to the end of 2022.

The repatriation of our cultural heritage objects from Museum Victoria to come home to our Keeping Place has progressed during the period. Along with GMTOAC staff, Gunditjmara people who hold the Certificate IV in Cultural Heritage Management have been working extensively with Museum Victoria staff to prepare our heritage, including the Lake Condah Possum Skin Cloak from 1887 and two large kooyang baskets from the turn of the 19th century to be packed and transported home to the Lake Condah Mission. Along with everything else, the final repatriation was delayed by COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

Treaty for Victoria continues its work with the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria and the new Yoorrook Justice Commission. With funding from the Victorian Government, GMTOAC amalgamated its Gunditjmara Nation Building, Economic Strategy and Treaty Readiness work to employ and train Gunditjmara people to engage directly with Gunditjmara families.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

GMTOAC continues its work with Parks Victoria and the Budj Bim Council to look after the Budj Bim National Park. With newly appointed members, the Budj Bim Council continues to oversee the bushfire recovery work as well as new infrastructure. The Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DELWP) and the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA) also have membership with the Budj Bim Council.

The Budj Bim World Heritage Landscape continues to grow its profile for its unique and universal values and the responsibilities which GMTOAC and Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation have in caring for Budj Bim Country.

With resources from the Victorian and Commonwealth Government and the on-ground partnerships with DELWP, Parks Victoria, Glenelg Shire Council and Moyne Shire Council, the obligations of caring for the Budj Bim World Heritage Landscape must be maintained in line with Gunditjmara heritage and community values while maintaining the required standards of the United Nations Education Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Office.

In partnership between GMTOAC, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Parks Victoria, Gariwerd Traditional Owners have continued work on the Greater Garwierd Landscape Management Plan with the final plan due for release in late 2021. Through the Strategic Partnership Group, the partnership worked on progressing the reimagining of the Brambuk Cultural Centre including upcoming work on a cultural governance model for the cultural and commercial business of Brambuk.

The Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara Southwest Plan 2015 – 2030 (NGNM) continues to provide GMTOAC the strategic engagement and management of public land management across the parks, reserves and waterways on Gunditjmara, Boanditj and Jadawadjali country.

NGNM covers our traditional Tungatt (Stone), Nyamat (Sea), Woorrowarook (Forests) and Bochara (Glenelg River) countries. The recent responses by the Victoria Government to Traditional Owner corporations has provided resources to engage with Traditional Owners on marine and coast, regional forest agreements, flora and fauna, climate change, bushfire planning and recovery and waterway management.

During the 2020/2021 period, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) responded to Traditional Owner corporations across Victoria with the provision of funding to continue or initiate new economic and business development opportunities.

Funds through Regional Development Victoria (RDV), is also supporting the implementation of the Budj Bim Master Plan, including tourism infrastructure such as the Traditional Aquaculture Centre at Tae Rak (Lake Condah).

Two other incredible opportunities were advanced during the 2020/2021 period with DELWP and RDV providing funds to seek the return of private property along the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

Through this unique arrangement, DELWP and RDV funds were provided to GMTOAC to seek out property that would contribute to the cultural and natural values of the Budj Bim landscape, including land to be considered by the Gunditjmara community as an Indigenous Protected Area for commercial tourism accommodation and cultural learning.

A rigorous process engaging with potential land vendors around the Budj Bim landscape to achieve the return of further country has started.

In June 2021, DJRP announced funding to resource 12 months of operation of the Budj Bim Tourism enterprise. Along with previous funding, GMTOAC continued its partnership with Cooee Traveler Pty Ltd to prepare and commence delivery of the tourism enterprise.

The enterprise will be based at the Traditional Aquaculture Centre at Tae Rak Lake Condah with cultural experiences and tours around the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. The funding will support new jobs and also a digital marketing campaign to bring visitors to the far southwest to learn of the Budj Bim story through the Gunditjmara narkeen (vision).

The 2020/2021 period for GMTOAC was remarkable. I thank the GMTOAC Board of Directors and Gunditjmara community for their continued contribution and culture to GMTOAC and our work. I also thank GMTOAC Staff for their work across our caring for country programs and corporate services especially with the frustrations and challenges that COVID-19 has caused all our families.

Wuuwook

Damein Bell
Chief Executive Officer

INFORMED CONSENT & GOVERNANCE

MIKE WEISE
Company Secretary

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.

The table below shows the GMTOAC members who participated as GMTOAC Directors for the 2020/2021 period and their attendance for each meeting.

ATTENDED		APOLOGY	X

	31 July 2020	28 Aug 2020	24 Sept 2020	30 Oct 2020	27 Nov 2020	4 Dec 2020	18 Dec 2020	29 Jan 2021	26 Feb 2021	26 Mar 2021	7 May 2021	28 May 2021	25 June 2021
Denise Lovett							LEFT BOARD AT 2020 AGM						
Eileen Alberts													
Marie Thornhill	X					X							
Tracey Onus Bamblett											X		
Laura Lovett-Murray					X								
Donna Wright		X											
Erin Rose				RESIGNED									
Narelle Carter													
Jason Kanoa	JOINED BOARD AT 2020 AGM						X		X	X	X		
Joseph Saunders							X			X	X		
Kahlia Rocco								X	X		X	X	
Angela North							X		X				X

HUMAN RESOURCES

TRUDY THORP
Human Resources
& Risk Management Officer

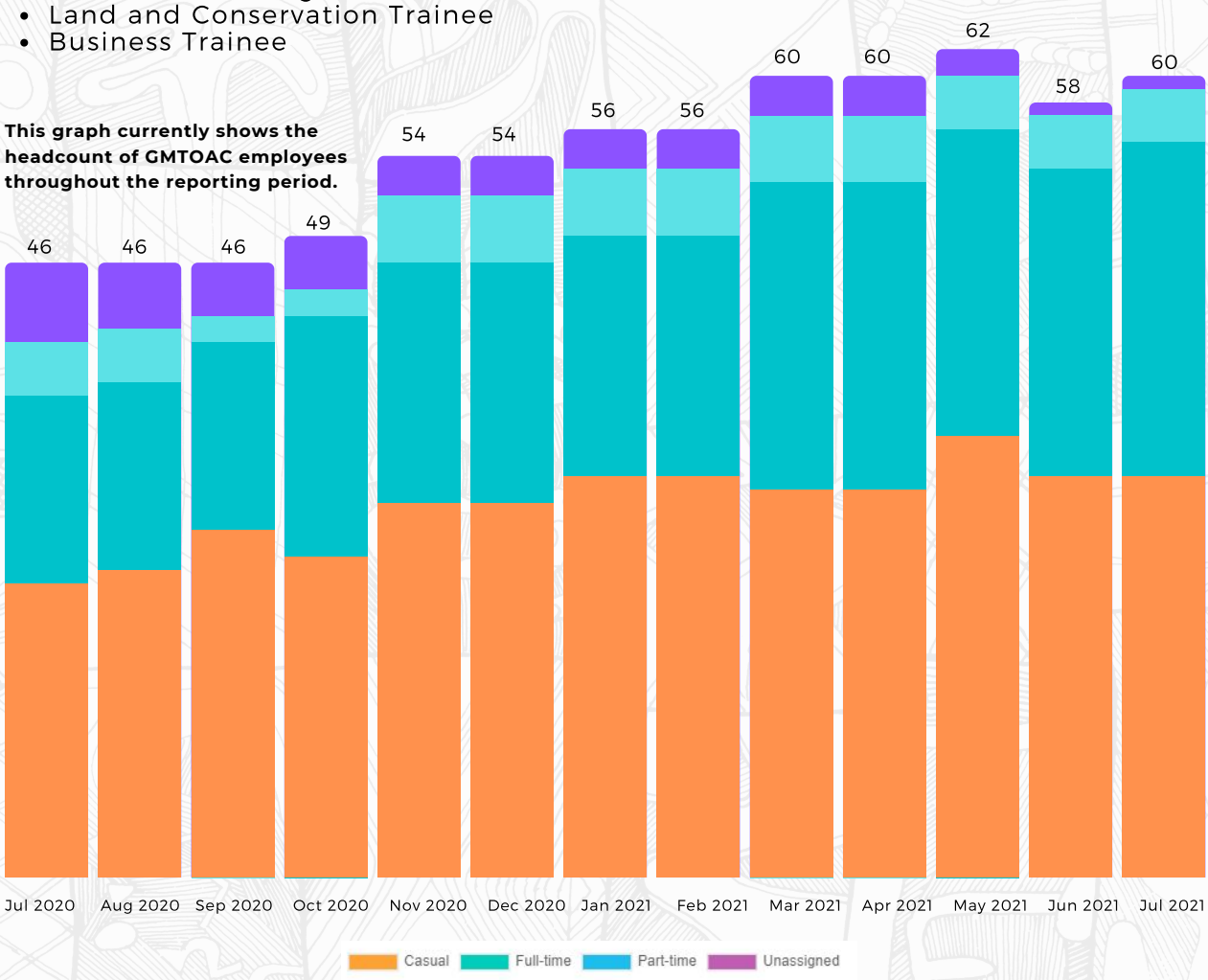
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation Human Resources department is responsible for the delivery of a wide range of people services including workforce planning, recruitment, pay and conditions, performance management, learning and development and workplace diversity.

During 2020-2021, the rapidly expanding organisation has required the recruitment of many new roles. With the changing environment due to COVID-19, biosecurity and bushfire awareness, many positions have evolved and have been funded to ensure the ongoing care of Country and community.

THE POSITIONS WE RECRUITED FOR DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD WERE:

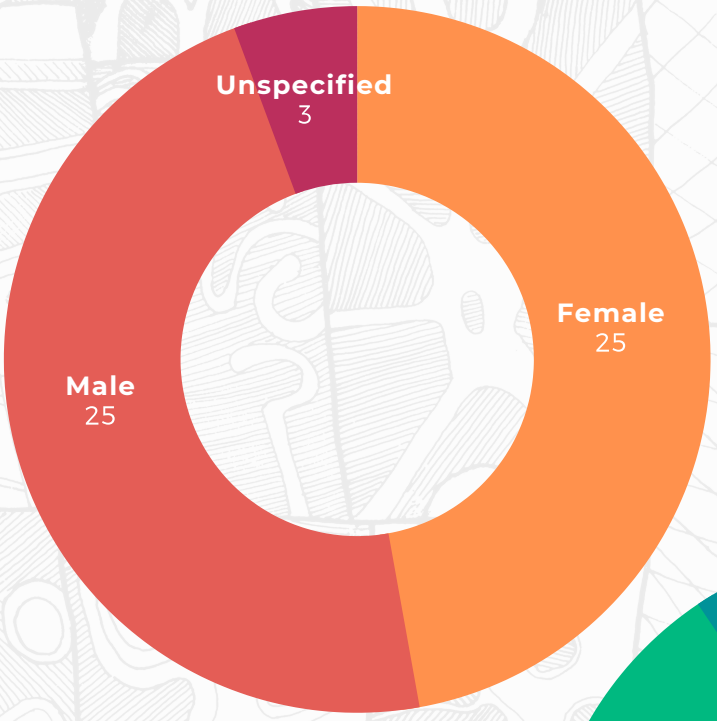
- Budj Bim World Heritage Executive Officer
- Budj Bim Visitor Ranger
- Media and Communications Officer
- Policy and Research Officer
- Accounting Clerk
- Land Management Coordinator
- Working for Victoria – Land Management Workers x 8
- DELWP Liaison Officer
- Country Planning Officer
- Treaty Traditional Owner Engagement Coordinator
- Treaty and Nation-building Workers x 5
- Aboriginal Water Officer
- Full-time Cleaning Officer
- Land and Conservation Trainee
- Business Trainee

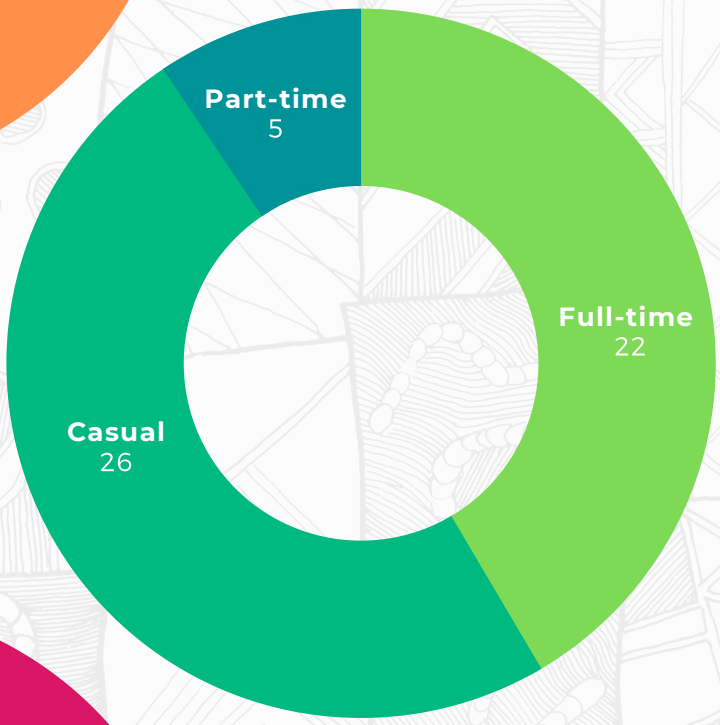
This graph currently shows the headcount of GMTOAC employees throughout the reporting period.

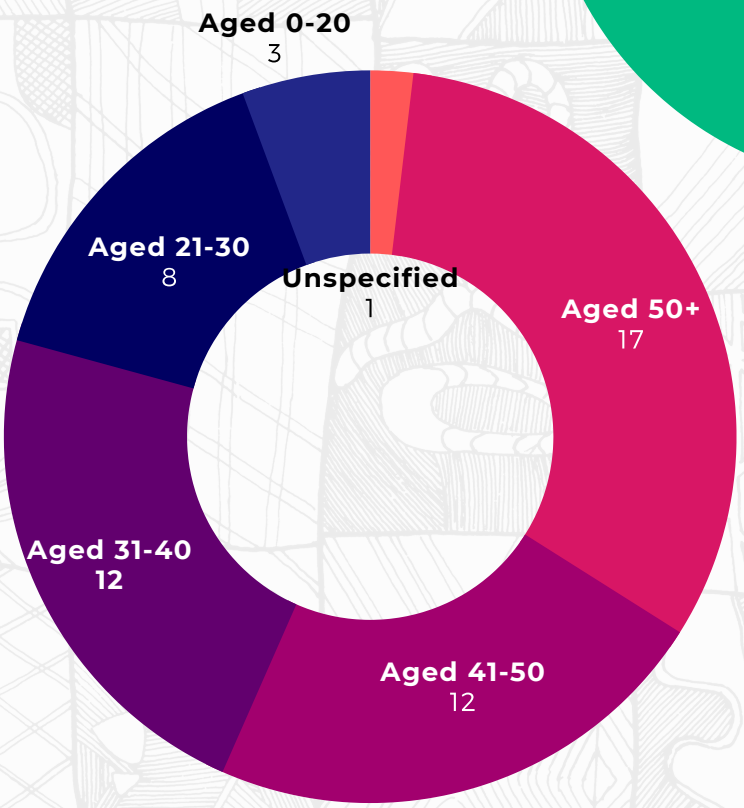


HUMAN RESOURCES

On this page are charts that outline GMTOAC's workplace diversity across age, gender and employment status.







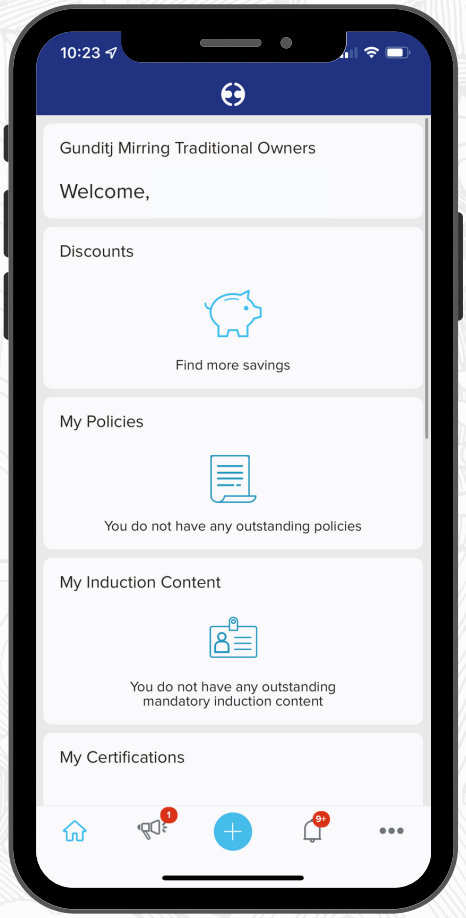
COVID-19

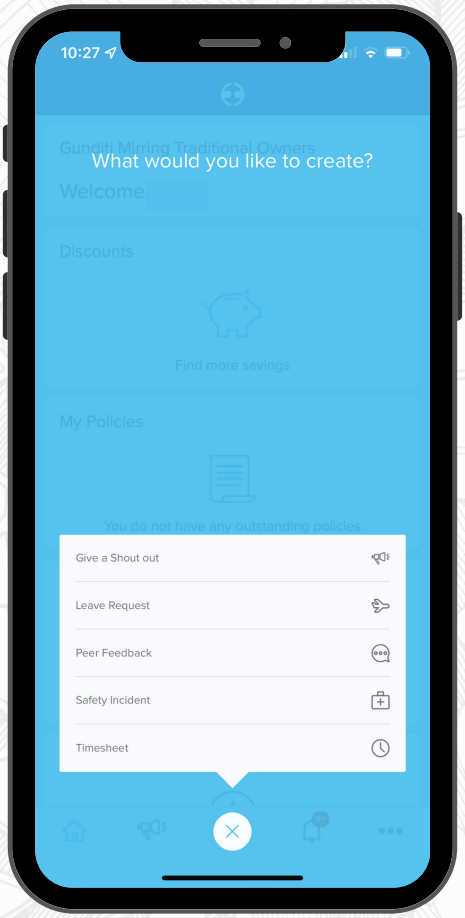
COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) pandemic has become one of the most challenging aspects of every organisation's day to day operations. "COVID COMPLIANCE" now must be considered as part of every program with GMTOAC, whether it be community engagement, seating arrangements, daily meetings, room size verses venue density limitations versus current restrictions, COVID cleaning, QR codes, health questionnaires, mask wearing, social distancing, equipment sharing and vehicle passenger limits. GMTOAC COVID Guidelines, COVID Safe Plan and COVID Health Questionnaire are consistently reviewed to meet all requirements from DHHS Vic and Department of Health regulations. Staff are kept up to date with any changes once the Workplace Directions and Restricted Activity Directions are reviewed and implemented.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Due to COVID-19, staff have had to work from home throughout most of the year, requiring an increased need for online collaboration across the organisation. This has led to an investment by GMTOAC in an online IT platform called Employment Hero. This new system assists staff with:

- Onboarding new employees, including online induction processes as part of recruitment
- Recording of documents including contracts, position descriptions and acknowledgement of mandatory policies required under the National Employment Standards and Fairwork Australia
- Timesheets, leave applications and incident reporting, and
- Monthly auditing to ensure staff have required licenses and certification.





HUMAN RESOURCES

RISK MANAGMENT

Both the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 seek to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees and other people at work.

They also aim to ensure that the health and safety of the public is not put at risk by work activities. This means that GMTOAC has a responsibility not only to staff, but members and community to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep people safe and well.

GMTOAC has improved many of its OH&S processes over the past 12 months. This has included the election of 6 new Health and Safety Representatives (HSR's) by staff across 2 designated working groups (Office, Administration and Programs and Land, Property and Maintenance).

OHS training is being undertaken by elected HSR's as part of this process. The introduction of Employment Hero has also supported incident reporting.

This has been highly beneficial so we can track, monitor, and address issues that arises through staff requests and reporting.

The Finance Audit Risk and Compliance Committee met three time during the 2019-2020 Financial Year:

- 7 August 2020
- 10 March 2020
- 7 May 2020.

This committee oversees the Risk Register. This involves evaluating ongoing risks for the organisation, and that the risk appetite and awareness of the organisation has been assessed and measures are implemented. Effective risk management is a key contributor to each program's success.

The following organisational policies, guidelines and procedures were reviewed and/or introduced, and implemented during 2020-2021:

- GMTOAC Covid Guidelines Version 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7
- Covid Safe Plan
- Conflict of Interest
- Finance Policy
- Motor Vehicle Policy
- Keeping Place Emergency Evacuation Procedure
- Recruitment Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Workplace Equal Opportunity
- Diversity and Gender Equity Policy

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

During 2020-2021 GMTOAC staff were very busy, participating in variety of training courses to ensure we were up to date with the latest information and skills to care for Gunditjmara Country safely and effectively.

Several GMTOAC staff participated in Infection Control training, including their COVID-19 Marshall training to ensure compliance for all future GMTOAC Events and meetings on Country.

Below is a table of all training GMTOAC staff completed during the reporting period.

Name	Department/Role	Training
David Coolwell	Land Management Crew	• 1080 & PAPP • DELWP Basic Wildfire Awareness
Mark Saunders		• 1080& PAPP • 4WD Training • Construction Induction Certificate
Brendon Slade		• Chainsaw • DELWP Basic Wildfire Awareness
Noah Knight		• DELWP Basic Wildfire Awareness • Chainsaw
Peter Rotumah		• Chainsaw • Construction Induction Certificate • DELWP Basic Wildfire Awareness
Jyndamarra Bannam		• Construction Induction Certificate • DELWP Basic Wildfire Awareness
Aaron Morgan	World Heritage Unit	• 4WD • Introduction into Drones
Greg Shelton		• 4WD • Introduction into Drones
Erin Rose		• Construction Induction Certificate
Braydon Saunders	Budj Bim Visitor Ranger	• 4WD • Infection Control • Introduction into Drones
Nicky Hudson	Aboriginal Water Officer	• 4WD • Introduction into Drones
Tahlia Warren Brand	Media & Communications Officer	• 4WD • Cert III Business • Infection Control • Introduction into Drones
Adam Black	Policy & Research Officer	• Infection Control • 4WD
Jane Walker	Executive Manager of Programs	• DELWP Basic Wildfire Awareness
Shantelle Walsh	Cleaner	• Infection Control
Mary Ann Agnew		• Infection Control
Simone Bamblett		• Infection Control

STAFF DRONE TRAINING

BUDJ BIM COUNCIL

The Budj Bim Council was established in 2009from the Gunditjmara Native Title Consent Determination in 2007.

The Budj Bim 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 Environment, Energy and Climate Change on the care and control of Budj Bim National Park.

Aten-member Council was appointed by the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on 17 August 2020 comprising six Gunditj Mirring representatives and four State representatives, including nominees from Parks Victoria(PV), Department of Environment (DELWP) and Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (CMA).

Delsie Lillyst was appointed as Convenor for the 2020-2021 year. Due to COVID restrictions, meetings this financial year have been held online.

Following the 2020 bushfire there was increased growth of pest plants, particularly thistles across the park. Council endorsed and funded treatment works to be carried out, focusing on primary visitor sites.

Follow-up treatment has been programmed into works scheduling for 21/22. Following the 2020 bushfire there was increased growth of pest plants, particularly thistles across the park. Council endorsed and funded treatment works to be carried out, focusing on primary visitor sites. Follow-up treatment has been programmed into works scheduling for 21/22.

Infrastructure damaged in the fire has mostly been replaced, including all road and track directional signage.

The only remaining item requiring replacement is the staircase and platform to access the Lava Tunnel cave. The staircase and platform are planned for re-opening during the latter half of 2021.

The implementation of the Masterplan for the visitor information centre and toilet area redevelopment, as well as the construction of the new lookout, have been a welcome advancement in the visitor experience.

PV have developed a funding application for the Victorian Great Outdoors Package to supplement the work being undertaken by the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape masterplan implementation. The proposed works will include improved facilities and all-abilities access.

The 2020 koala management program was implemented in Spring 2020 and again in Autumn 2021. The program will continue again in 2021-2022.

The table below outlines the current members of the Budj Bim Council.

	Primary Members	Alternate Members
GMTOAC Members	Delsie Lillyst – Convenor	Damein Bell
	Colleen Hamilton	Denise Lovett
	Dale McDonald	Shea Rotumah
	Eileen Alberts	
	Tahlia Warren-Brand	
	Walter Saunders	
Parks Victoria	Jamey Staples	Maria Pizzi
	Jason Borg	
Glenelg Hopkins CMA	Jane Walker	Michael Rees
DELWP	Ross Martin	Natasha Noss

BUDJ BIM COUNCIL

A seasonal Summer Ranger was appointed to Glenelg Area for the 2020-2021 summer period. Due to the closure and part closure of Budj Bim National Park, the ranger has been critical to provide up-to-date information to park visitors and undertake recovery activities to allow public access to appropriate areas. The focus of the Ranger's activities was providing information for visitors and facility maintenance and cleaning.

Restrictions in travel plans during the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted campground bookings.

Further camp number restrictions were in place during the toilet/shower block Master Plan upgrades between late January and May 2021. During the periods that the campground was open, campsites were booked for 1474 nights, an increase from 591 nights in 2019/20.

This represents an occupancy rate of 17.56% during 2020/21, an increase from 10.4% from the previous year. Park staff reported heightened public interest in the cultural values of the landscape since the announcement of the Budj Bim World Heritage inscription.

STATUTORY SERVICES

BILLY BELL
Cultural Heritage Officer

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

Being a RAP requires that we, as a corporation, respond to Notice of Intents so Cultural Heritage Management Plan's (CHMP's) can be produced.

Through the CHMP process GMTOAC attend meetings, organise field work for Gunditjmara site workers, and evaluate CHMP's.

At GMTOAC, we have two Appointed Aboriginal Heritage Officers (AHO's), Billy Bell and Micko Bell.

NOTICE OF INTENT GMTOAC RESPONDED TO

GMTOAC responded to three Notice of Intent's (NOI's).The Kentbruck Windfarm proposal this took up most of our time and accounted for majority of our field work this year.

The Portland Nelson Rd Telegraph Track Intersection and the Sawpit Campground Upgrade both had NOI's submitted but they did not start field work due to COVID-19 Lockdowns.

CHMP TITLE:
Kentbruck Windfarm
CHMP NUMBER 17882
RECIEVED 12TH MARCH 2021

Portland-Nelson Road Telegraph Track Upgrade
CHMP NUMBER 18058
RECIEVED 21ST JUNE 2021

Sawpit Campground, Whalers Lookout Walk and the Mt Clay Bike Track Revitalization
CHMP NUMBER 18006
RECIEVED 7TH JUNE 2021

CULTURAL MANAGEMENT PLANS GMTOAC APPROVED

During 2021 GMTOAC only approved 2 CHMP's.

Both had NOI's that were submitted in 2020.

There were two CHMP's that were not submitted to GMTOAC. This is mainly due to the backlog with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR).

This backlog has meant that VAHR numbers are not being issued in a timely manner.

CHMP TITLE:

WA 787 Limestone Quarry at 5213 Princes Highway, Codrington - CHMP NUMBER 16937 - APPROVED DATE 22ND DECEMBER 2020

Tyrendarra Quarry Expansion - CHMP NUMBER 17559 - APPROVED DATE 1ST APRIL 2021

CULTURAL HERITAGE NETWORK

In 2018 GMTOAC's Rule Book changed. This meant that Full Group meetings were no longer required, and the process has been replaced with Cultural Heritage Network.

The Network is comprised of GMTOAC Members who have registered themselves using our online form available on our website.

The aim of this group is to notify Gunditjmara of the CHMP's that are currently happening on Gunditjmara Country. It also allows for members to provide feedback on the CHMP's.

If you would like more information on the Cultural Heritage Network or the CHMP process, please contact Billy Bell.

CONTACT:
03 5527 1427
bill@gunditjmirring.com

STATUTORY SERVICES

GUNDITJMARA FUTURE ACTS NOTIFICATIONS

Section of Native Title Act	Issuer reference	Client	Date of notification	Issuer of notification	Other parties involved	Description of proposed works
s.25	EL007138	Gunditjmara	2/12/2020	DJPR	Basin Minerals Holdings Pty Ltd	Application for Exploration Licence
s.25	EL007637	Gunditjmara	17/05/2021	DJPR	Torrens Gold Exploration Pty Ltd	Application for Exploration Licence
s.25	EL007641	Gunditjmara	20/05/2021	DJPR	Mitre Hill Pty Ltd	Application for Exploration License

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICER

Micko and Billy were appointed AHO's under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. They were appointed by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in December 2019.

Their continued role as AHO's includes carrying out compliance checks for all approved CHMP's as well as completing checks for all Aboriginal Cultural Heritage they are aware of in our RAP area.

In March 2021, Authorised Officers (AO) from Aboriginal Victoria (AV) visited Country to check culturally sensitive site that was found by a GMTOAC member.

This site was located, and its condition was deteriorating rapidly, GMTOAC and the AO's decided it needed immediate attention.

During this site check staff from Parks Vic attended along side GMTOAC to complete erosion mitigation works. This was finalised immediately under supervision of AHO's and AO's.

The condition of this site is checked regularly due to its location, and the potential for its condition to deteriorate again.

Through the role Micko and Billy have monthly online meetings with AHO's from across the state.

AV provide training for those staff in these roles, however this has been difficult due to travel restrictions.

STATUTORY SERVICES

FIELD WORK

During the times we were out of lockdowns, our field work officers were regularly out on Country.

Most of the field work undertaken was for the Kentbruck Windfarm Project. Only the standard assessment (walk over) component has been completed for this project. Unfortunately, the sponsor of this CHMP only has access to about half the land required for this CHMP. Field work on this project has ceased for the time being.

GMTOAC attend all field work in Gariwerd for the Grampians Peaks Trail with representatives from Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. Most of the other work undertaken in the Grampians was for rock climbing and bouldering cultural values assessments.

Below is the number of days that GMTOAC participated in for field work:

Leon Walker -	37 days
Travis Bannam -	18 days
John King -	6 days
Walter Saunders -	3 days
Andrew Alberts -	3 days
Maleik Bannam -	2 days
Kellie Frankland -	8 days
Dean Lovett -	13 days

OVERALL TOTAL **90 DAYS**

*If you are interested in participating in any field work, please contact Billy Bell via the GMTOAC Main Office number **03 5527 1427** to express your interest.*

GUNDITJMARA/GMTOAC RESPONSE TO EASTERN MAAR NATIVE TITLE CLAIM

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, 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 the area between the Shaw and Hopkins rivers and up Mustons Creek, alongside the Eastern Maar apical ancestors.

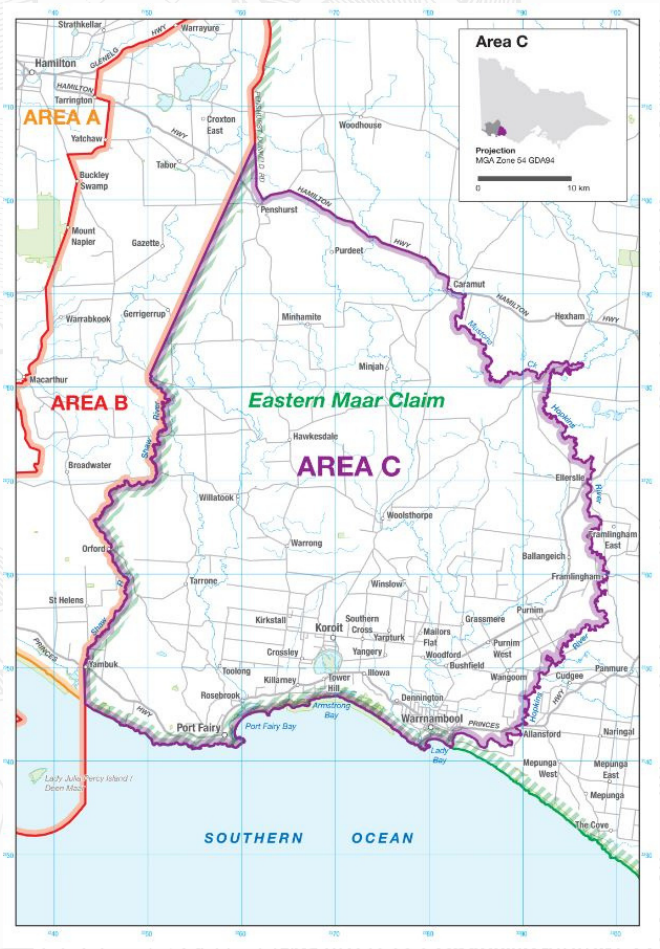
This recognition is equivalent to that acknowledged in shared country covered by the 'Part B' native title consent determination in 2011, where both sets of apical ancestors were respected. 'Part B' covers the area from Yambuk up to Lake Linlithgow just south of Dunkeld and Gariwerd.

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 interests e.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 video conferencing 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.



Above: A map of Area C of the Eastern Maar Native Title Claim.

Due to Coronavirus / COVID-19 restrictions this did not occur. On 18 December 2020 Justice Murphy ordered that the matter remain in mediation before Judicial Registrar Daniel.

Since then, statements have been filed by all the Indigenous Respondent groups to the claim (including Gunditjmara) confirming the area they assert interests over, who they assert the interest on behalf of (identifying relevant ancestors), and details of the basis of that interest, including how that interest is held.

Research has been completed by anthropologist Dr Ray Madden on behalf of Gunditjmara and provided to Judicial Register Daniels. Due to COVID-19 the mediation process remains unresolved, but still in motion.

REPATRIATION OF GUNDITJMARA CULTURAL HERITAGE

GMTOAC aims to protect, promote, and preserve Gunditjmara cultural heritage through the Cultural Heritage, Statutory Services, and Knowledge and Estate Units. This includes participating in the administration, documentation, database management and curation of Gunditjmara cultural objects and knowledge collections that reside in the newly established GMTOAC Keeping Place and associated storage facilities.

In July 2020 the GMTOAC Board of Directors resolved to formally request that Museum Victoria repatriate cultural heritage objects and material to the Keeping Place. GMTOAC and Museums Victoria identified NAIDOC Week in July 2021 as the date for transfer of ownership of selected cultural objects and materials to GMTOAC to continue to care and maintain the items.

Whilst this milestone was missed due to COVID restrictions, GMTOAC staff and other Gunditjmara who have completed the nationally accredited Certificate IV in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management will head to Melbourne for the deinstallation of 13 Gunditjmara cultural objects from permanent display at the Museum of Victorian the next reporting period.

Items on permanent display include Lake Condah possum skin cloak, spears, clubs, shields, eel baskets, boomerangs and message sticks. Other items that were viewed before being packed for repatriation to Gunditjmara Country included mineral samples, stone axes, spear throwers and a stone knife. In total the Museum's Board of Victoria approved the deaccession and repatriation of 54 Gunditjmara cultural objects.

GMTOAC staff are continuing to work with Museum Victoria staff on the repatriation process and the development of appropriate conservation and management policies with the view to return the culturalobjects to the Keeping Place late in 2021.

Top left: Ngarrapan [Basket], Ngarrapan, Gunditjmara, Lake Condah, Western District, Victoria, Australia, 1878
Bottom left: Kanggonayn [Shield], Gunditjmara, Condah, Western District, Victoria, Australia, 1950
Below: The historic Lake Condah cloak, collected in 1872, skin side up

TREATY

TARA FRY
Treaty Traditional Owner Engagement Coordinator

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria are making critical steps in shaping the Treaty Negotiation Framework, voting for the Assembly to adopt a negotiating position where everything is on the table.

This means future Treaties could include everything except for matters outside of Victoria's constitutional authority and those which would interfere with gains already secured by Traditional Owners in Victoria.

This decision gives the broadest possible scope and reach for future Treaties, while also protecting the hard work and rights that have already been achieved by community and Traditional Owners.

The Assembly has established an interim Elders' Voice to provide cultural advice, wisdom and oversight from Elders across Victoria to the work of the Assembly.

The Elders' Voice is a way to ensure our nation-leading work towards Treaty is grounded in respect for Elders and guided by their cultural wisdom. The interim Elders' Voice will work to establish the foundations for the permanent Elders' Voice through community consultations across the State.

Traditional Owners in this country have been calling for a truth-telling process for generations. Building on this activism, in June 2020, the Assembly agreed that truth-telling must be a fundamental part of Treaty-making and called on the government to establish a formal truth-telling process.

The Yoo-rrook Justice Commission was formally established in May 2021 in response to this call. The mandate and form of the Commission were designed by the Assembly and the government, based on consultations with Aboriginal communities across Victoria.

Uncle Michael "Mookeye" Bell was successfully elected as a Director on the Assembly's board, filling the position left vacant by Rueben Berg.

In November 2020, GMTOAC employed a Traditional Owner Treaty Engagement Coordinator, Tara Fry. As part of this role, an Elders' Treaty Information Session was held in February 2020. We asked Elders' what they'd like to see from a Treaty and some of the responses included:

- An Aboriginal Law Court (Koori Court is not Koori Law)
- Cultural governance
- Government to acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded
- Royalties (percentages on stamp duty, mining, port royalties etc)
- A staffed facility on Country for our Elders
- Truth-telling to be part of school curriculum and justice based on truth-telling

Concerns:

- Assimilation
- Mistrust of the Government
- The Government finding loopholes if we reach a Treaty
- No more Government jargon, we shouldn't require an interpreter
- Another ATSIC situation
- Change of Government
- If we had an Aboriginal Commissioner of the truth-telling process, who's to say they won't side with the Government. The Government will try to control them to.

What needs to be considered?

- Where do families start and finish?
- Defining what an Elder is
- How many groups will the Government negotiate with?

AS PER GUNDITJMARA COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS IN 2016, GMTOAC MEMBERS RESOLVED THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS:

1.

The Gunditj Mirring Full Group endorses the principle of a 'recognised clan group inclusive of the families with inherent cultural obligations and traditional ownership to a clan area' as the appropriate structure for the State of Victoria on behalf of the English Crown to engage with to determine the impact of invasion and colonisation on the clan and its families, to negotiate a Treaty as settlement.

2.

That Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC is not the appropriate entity to engage with discussions or negotiations for a Treaty with the State of Victoria on behalf of the English Crown. The First Peoples Assembly is still building the framework of what a Treaty will look like but have been made aware that it is the preference of Gunditjmara to negotiate individual family group Treaties.

A team of 5 Treaty & Nation-building casual workers has been established with the purpose of going out to Gunditjmara families to deliver information about Treaty,

They will also consult with families about their Treaty aspirations, including Nation-building and Economic Development.

COVID-19 has impacted the beginning of these consultations, but it is our aim to commence them in October2021.

FIRST PEOPLES ASSEMBLY

DONNA WRIGHT
GMTOAC Representative to the First Peoples Assembly

In my second year on the Assembly I am proud of the work being done to progress our journey towards a Treaty. Most proud of the work on the establishment of the Elders Voice undertaken by Charmaine Clarke Member South West, and Andrew Gardiner Member Metropolitan region, Face to face statewide consultations with Elders across Victoria are still underway as work to establish a permanent voice to Treaty.

STOLEN GENERATIONS REDRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

After years of lobbying by Elders and Stolen generations survivors, the Victorian Government's announcement at Parliament House, that members of the Stolen Generations can apply for a payment of $100,000, a personal apology from the Victorian Government, as well as gain access to healing and family reunion programs. The announcement came too late for Gunditjmara Elders and Survivors who passed away. Many families children were taken away from their Country, families never to return home.

SELF DETERMINATION FUND

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria has outlined its plan for a Self- Determination Fund to enable Traditional Owners to enter Treaty negotiations with the State Government on a more level playing field and empower Aboriginal communities to build capacity, wealth, and prosperity.

The Assembly's elected Members have developed a preliminary proposal for the Self-Determination Fund – outlined in a discussion paper published yesterday – and are seeking further feedback and ideas before putting a more detailed plan to the Government in coming months.

The Self-Determination Fund will be a shared resource for Aboriginal communities to build their capacity and generate wealth. A call from the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria to ensure new institutions created as part of the Treaty process sit outside of the usual government architecture, has been agreed to in-principle by the Victorian Government.

After months of community consultation, the Assembly's Members officially adopted a proposal at a Chamber meeting last month. That proposal was to create a Treaty Authority, to facilitate negotiations between Traditional Owners and the State Government.

This week, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gabrielle Williams, wrote to the Assembly's Co-Chairs confirming that the Government was willing to proceed on that basis.

TREATY AUTHORITY
The agreement includes ensuring the Treaty Authority is led by First Nations peoples; features a robust and transparent process for selecting its leadership; has adequate funding to ensure it can act independently and free from any destabilising effects of funding cycles; and is created "by agreement between two equal parties" rather than the usual process of creating another statutory body that ultimately reports to a Government Minister.

Feedback from Community consultations;

- It is important to embed Aboriginal Lore, Law and cultural authority, and Aboriginal ways of doing, into the design of the Treaty Authority and its procedures. The Treaty Authority's processes should uphold cultural knowledge and authority, and incorporate, respect, and listen to Elders.
- It is important for the Treaty Authority and its procedures to ensure fairness and equality, and transparency to community in treaty-making processes.
- It is important for the Treaty Authority to be independent, accountable to First Peoples, and to perform its functions in a way that is fair and impartial.

The feedback supported incorporating Elders' guidance and participation in the selection process.

KEY OUTCOME
Negotiations will now continue to develop the details of the Treaty Authority's structure and establishment. Both parties are hopeful a complete agreement can be reached by June.

MODEL FOR THE ADDITIONAL PATHWAYS TO ASSEMBLY
For further information and reports on the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria, visit this website:

www.firstpeoplesvic.org/committees/cultural-governance/proposed-model-for-additional-pathways-to-assembly-reserved-seating/

WORLD HERITAGE UNIT

ERIN ROSE
World Heritage Executive Officer

In October 2020, Erin Rose commenced as the Budj Bim World Heritage Executive Officer. She joined Aaron Morgan and Greg Shelton in the World Heritage Unit (WHU).

It was a busy 12-months for the WHU. They have assisted with the management and protection of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site and its cultural values.

During this period the Budj Bim World Heritage Steering Committee was established.

This was a major milestone for GMTOAC since the inscription of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. The Steering Committee met for the first time in February 2021.

They are focused on the development of a Strategic Management Framework, communications plan, and workplan for the Cultural Landscape.

Here's a snapshot of some of the work our unit achieved throughout the 2020/2021 year.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

GMTOAC staff work closely with various stakeholders to provide support to coordinate tasks for the management and protection of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. This includes:

This includes:

- Supporting the new Infrastructure landscaping
- Assist ranger programs with on country works
- Setting up photo monitoring points
- Weekend patrolling
- Seed collection and planting works
- Weed control works
- Tyrendarra Sandbagging project
- Water monitoring and testing (and other water projects)
- Record management and new technology (using CIMS, Fulcrum and LiDAR)
- Tree health assessments

CLIMATE CHANGE

We have been working with CSIRO to assess potential impacts of Climate Change on the Landscape and will be completing a Vulnerability Assessment. This will help inform future management actions to preserve our outstanding universal values. This process commenced in May 2021 with a stakeholder workshop.

Erin, Greg and Aaron attended the National First Peoples Gathering on Climate Change forum in Cairns for a few days in March 2021. This Gathering focused on sharing cultural knowledge and practices for the management of Country in the face of Climate Change.

BUDJ BIM IPA PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

The Budj Bim IPA Plan of Management is in the process of being updated. This is the first time since World Heritage inscription.

It includes actions supporting the protection of the Budj Bim Cultural landscape as a World Heritage site addressing our World Heritage key indicators.

The Tyrendarra IPA plan of management is also being updated by Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, which we are assisting with.

POLICY UPDATES

We have also developed a Wandering Stock Policy to establish guidelines for managing livestock that have strayed onto GMTOAC properties and remain uncollected by their owner.

PEST MANAGEMENT CONTROL

GMTOAC continues to work closely with DELWP on the Budj Bim Pest Control Program to protect cultural heritage values.

The following projects have been undertaken:

- Pig trapping in plantation land adjacent to east and southeast boundary of Budj Bim National Park area
- Feral pig trapping within Kurtonitj IPA occurs, this work has been undertaken by GMTOAC Rangers and Budj Bim Rangers, with numerous pigs removed and another many more observed on camera through this program over the past year
- 60 nights of Ground shooting within the Budj Bim Landscape has been completed by a skilled contractor – total number of Fallow deer controlled 142 and 17 foxes
- A 10-day aerial shooting program was undertaken. The following feral animals were treated during the program:

  - 1066 Fallow Deer
  - 2 x Red Deer
  - 38 x Pigs
  - 60 x Goats
  - 10 x Foxes

There is also a Judas Pig collaring program underway that will be using 6 collars with satellite data tracking software.

We hope this will be implemented in the following financial year.

PHOTOS: Images of feral pigs found across the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, through the pig trapping program.

WEEYN (FIRE) UPDATE:

During 2020/2021 some of our staff were part of the standby team over the summer fire period with DELWP. We continue to deliver our Weeyn Yarkeen fire strategy and are currently developing the process to assist with surveying and monitoring before and after fire on the landscape.

In partnership with DELWP, GMTOAC completed $600,000 worth of reduced Bushfire Risk funded works to upgraded roads in across the Budj Bim Landscape.

All roads were upgraded with 20mm crushed rock from Hanson Quarry. Roads in the National Park and Budj Bim IPAs that were that were upgraded include:

- Foote track (6.4km)
- Long Paddock track (1.6km) Addinsall track (1.4km) Lake Track (6.5km)
- Brians Road (1km)

Visitors, staff and emergency responders are now able to travel from the Information Centre to the southern, eastern or western boundary of the park on decent quality roads. They can also exit the park at multiple points, including Brian's Road in the north-western corner of the park on the new roads.

BUDJ BIM IPA

DENIS ROSE
Knowledge & Estate Manager

FISH MONITORIING & KOOYANG SATELLITE TAGS

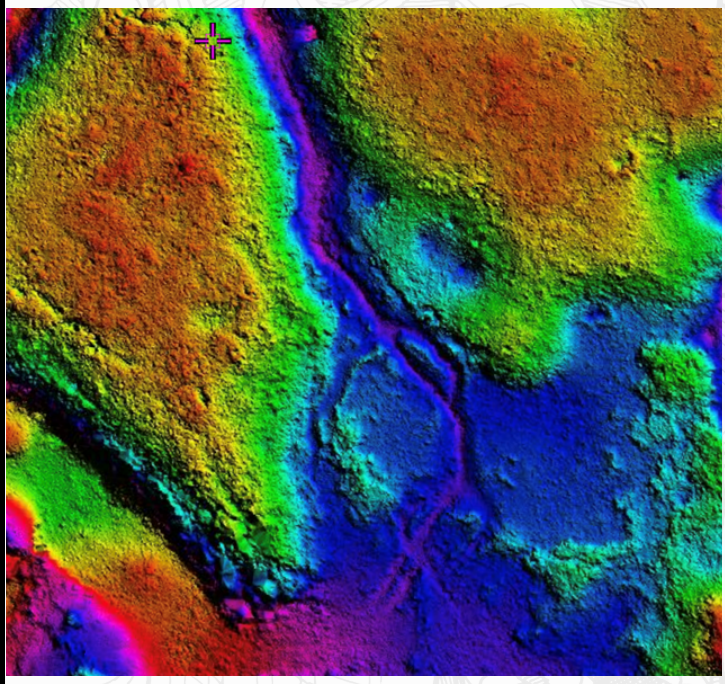
During the year GMTOAC staff worked with Austral Research to survey fish species within Tae Rak (Lake Condah) and Killara (Darlots Creek) and to establish a regular surveying program with our Land Management team.

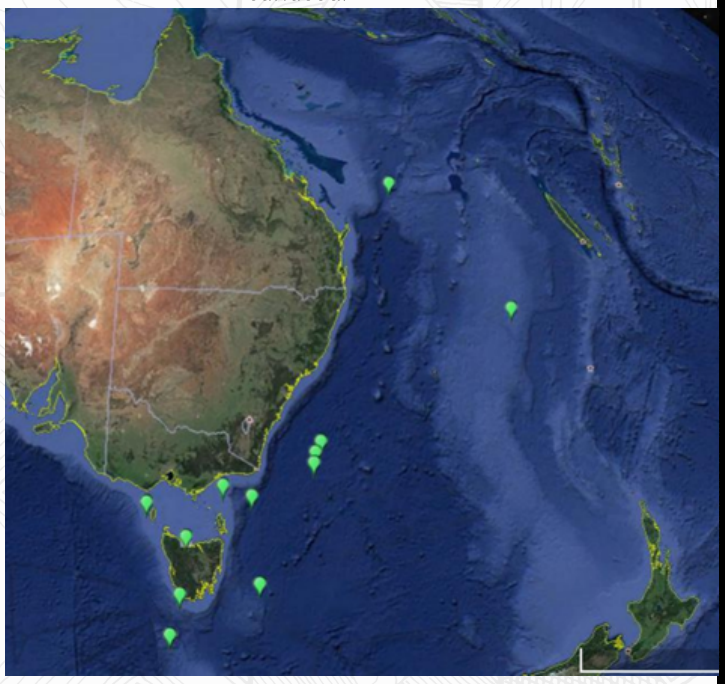
We also worked with Arthur Rylan Institute (ARI) staff to do acoustic tagging of Kooyang (short finned eels) within the system.

Throughout the year we also received data from satellite tags set into 16 Kooyang. At least two eels made it to the Coral Sea, a few others were taken by sharks, and possibly one swallowed by a whale.

Work is continuing and hopefully this will give us a better understanding of the life cycle of the Kooyang.

Below: Map showing the locations of the first 11 (of 16) tags that surfaced.





Above: This image from the LiDAR data shows the continuation of the Muldoon's aquaculture system

LiDAR

CULTURAL HERITAGE IDENTIFICATION

Tyson Lovett-Murray (GMTOAC) and Leigh Malseed (DELWP Heritage Specialist) have accessed the DELWP LiDAR imagery and used it to identify potential unknown and unrecorded cultural sites.

They both studied the LiDAR images around the Muldoons aquaculture system, identified potential sites and then went out on country to verify their findings.

IDENTIFICATION OF A POSSIBLE HOUSE SITE USING LIDAR.

After reviewing the LiDAR imagery, a possible house site was identified. In January 2021 the World Heritage Unit and Leigh Malseed from DELWP did some ground truthing and found what looks like a stone house site.

The application of the LiDAR data so far has been very successful and should prove an invaluable management tool into the future for Gunditjmara and our partners.

GUNDITJMARA WATER

NICKY HUDSON
Aboriginal Water Officer

During this reporting period we had unfortunately been hit with COVID lockdowns that has made it difficult in getting out on Country, as well as hosting community events on Country. The activities we have been able to coordinate are outlined below.

The team completed a series of fish surveys in Killara (Darlots Creek), to see what effects the Budj Bim fires had on the system and species living within it. These surveys showed that there was a good number of native fish, eels and freshwater crays, but also showed that there were non-native species such as Redfin that would impact native species.

These surveys started after a large rainfall event in October 2020, when debris and silt were stirred up from the bottom of the waterway. This prompted the team to undertake tests to check the health of the water system with the assistance of Glenelg Hopkins CMA. The results showed very low oxygen levels which was a cause for concern for the species living within the system.

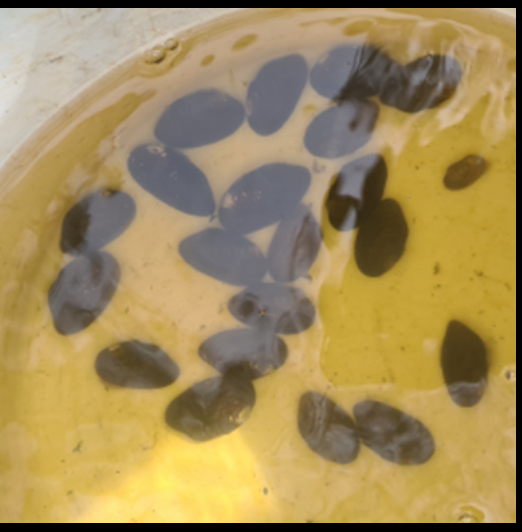
Monitoring of the systems water quality has continued.

Throughout 2020-21, GMTOAC repatriated the endangered Fresh Water Mussels to the Crawford River. These mussels were originally removed from the system due to the harm bushfires in the region were having on their ecosystem.

Part of the role of the Aboriginal Water Officer is to develop and foster partnerships with relevant stakeholders across our Country. One major project that has continued since 2016 is working collaboratively with the Traditional Owners of the Glenelg River (Burrundies Aboriginal Corporation and Barengi Gadjin Aboriginal Corporation), as well as the Glenelg Hopkins CMA.

This partnership has been working on the development of a website that allows for virtual visits on and around the Glenelg River. This website will share stories, knowledge and the history of the river system, and will be launched towards the end of 2021.

GUNDITJMARA WATER



BUDJ BIM CULTURAL LANDSCAPE TOURISM

BRAYDON SAUNDERS
Budj Bim Visitor Ranger

GMTOAC commercial tourism aspirations were supported through funding for the Budj Bim Tourism Commercialisation Project from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) in June 2020. This funding covers several projects including the appointment of a Gunditjmara Visitor Ranger to welcome visitors to the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

In early 2021, several tours were conducted with special interest groups which included PhD students from Melbourne University and local primary and high school student groups, and cultural awareness training with the Glenelg Hopkins CMA field crews. The team also hosted Gabriel Williams, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Mary-Ann Thomas, Minister for Regional Development during the year.

Around the same time, La Trobe University combined a 5-day Cultural Heritage training course with the important job of surveying the Allambie Stone Huts. Using LIDAR technology, they were able to reveal significant trapping infrastructure used by Gunditjmara ancestors that had previously been unrecorded.

With the Covid restrictions continuing to impact intra-state travel, it wasn't until March 2021 that tourism partner Cooee Traveller were able to finally be on country.

'Cooee' worked closely with the Visitor Ranger to identify significant points of interest in the Budj Bim Landscape and map potential tour itineraries. This is all part of establishing a commercial tourism enterprise across the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

Several community forums were also held with mob which provided an opportunity for Cooee and the Visitor Ranger to share updates on the tourism project and advise of upcoming employment opportunities via the 'Mob Jobs' portal on the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape Tourism page.

By end of the 2020/21 financial year, works were well underway on the Budj Bim Cultural Aquaculture Centre at Lake Condah (Tae Rak), and infrastructure upgrades to welcome visitors to the Budj Bim World Heritage Landscape commenced at Tyrendarra Township and IPA, Kurtonitj IPA and Budj Bim National Park.

In late 2020/21, Gunditj Mirring were invited by DJPR to apply for unallocated tourism funding and were subsequently awarded a grant to further support GMTOAC commercialised tourism interests.

Thanks to this grant, Budj Bim Cultural Landscape Tourism has now become a reality

MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS VISIT ON MIRRING

DELWP PARTNERSHIP

MICHEAL BELL
DELWP Liaison Officer

READING AND HEALING COUNTRY (BUSHFIRE RECOVERY)
After the 2019/20 Budj Bim bushfire, GMTOAC received funding from DELWP to assist with bushfire recovery on the fire affected properties. Some of the work carried out included track maintenance, fence removal, pig trapping and weed control.

PLACE NAMES
GMTOAC have been working with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, Moyne Shire Council, and the Geographic Place Name at DELWP to change the offensive name of Lubra Creek to Yuumkuurtakk, which is near Caramut. The name Yuumkuurtakk is a traditional name and has been taken from the South West Victoria Placenames resource.

LiDAR
LiDAR stands for light detection and ranging. This technology was used during 2020 on the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape to look for possible new cultural heritage sites.

GMTOAC and DELWP have also been looking at ways to use LiDAR for virtual storytelling by using augmented reality or virtual reality.

The DELWP team presented to the community gathering in March 2021 in Portland. Some of the ideas raised during this meeting includes a virtual tour of Country for Elders who can't get out on Country, and for tourism interests into the future.

DELWP PARTNERSHIP

SAWPIT AND LOWER GLENELG CAMPGROUND UPGRADE

Funding through the Victorian Great Outdoors Project has supported upgrades to camping sites and facilities at both the Sawpit Campground and Lower Glenelg National Park.

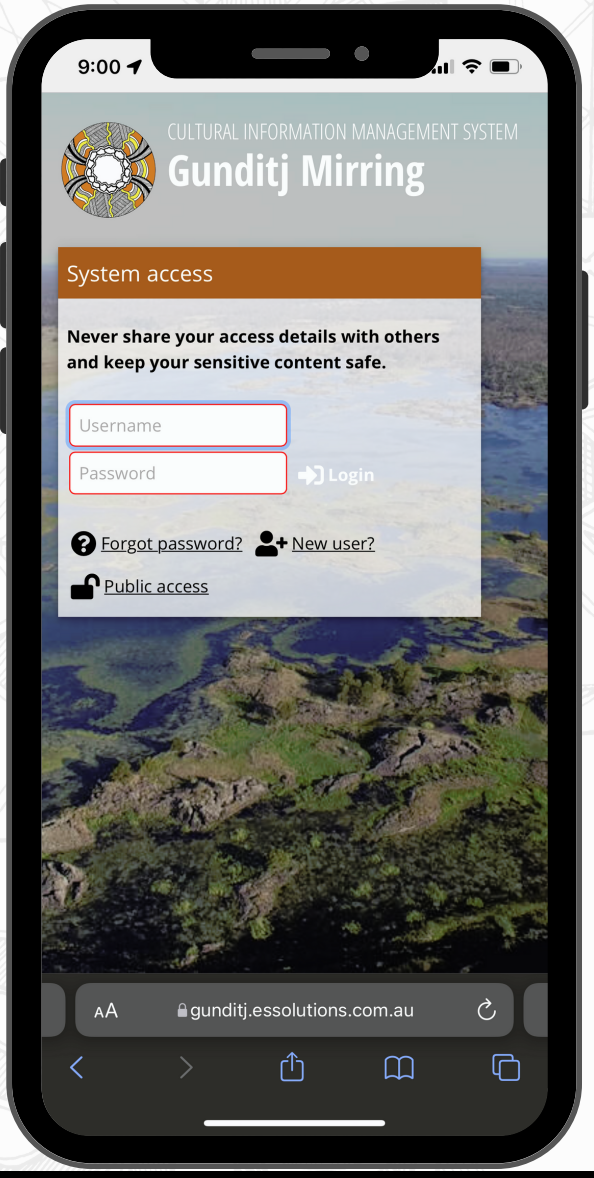
At the Sawpit campground near Narrawong, GMTOAC staff have worked with DELWP to include an area for the Gunditjmara Dance group and community to gather. At the Lower Glenelg National near Nelson, GMTOAC met with Parks Victoria to include camp sites for Gunditjmara Traditional Owners only.

CULTURAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CIMS)

During this year GMTOAC continued to upload documents, reports, photos and other relevant information and resources onto CIMS. The Land Management Team use the Fulcrum app to record the work they do on Country, then upload the data onto CIMS. Information about our cultural objects being returned from the Melbourne Museum will also be added to CIMS in the future.

If members would like to create a CIMS account please head over to: **www.gunditj.essolutions.com.au**

If you need help or more information, contact **Micko Bell** via email: **micko@gunditjmirring.com**



PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are central to the work that GMTOAC undertake for community and Country. Although our partnerships were affected by COVID-19, work continued as best it could through online meetings and COVID safe conditions.

GLENELG ABORIGINAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Glenelg Aboriginal Partnership consists of the executives from Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, Dhauwurd Wurrung Elderly and Community Health Service and Glenelg Shire Council.

Since 1994, Gunditjmara have been involved in some sort of committee with the Glenelg Shire Council.

During that time we have had several Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) and Action Plans that have sat underneath the Partnership, outlining its strategic direction.

The 2019-2020 Action Plan stated that there was a shared vision 'to work in close partnership with each other to improve the lives, outcomes and opportunities of Aboriginal people in our municipality'.

This plan encourages and supports leadership, change and empowerment of our current and future leaders.
During this reporting period, the Partnership underwent a review process which helped strengthen the Partnership through co-design and equality. This review was conducted by Gunditjmara woman, Aunty Judy (Ahmat) McDonald. Through the findings of the review, a new governance model was developed with a number of guiding principles which include cultural safety, healthy relationships between partners, and accountability.

In addition to this, a new partnership structure for the strategic group (CEO's or Senior Executive Team) was established as well as the formation of an Action Working Group comprised of 2 representatives from each of the Partner Organisation's.

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE: SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

The ten-year partnership agreement between GMTOAC and the University of Melbourne, School of Engineering entered its fourth year.

The partnerships intent is to share traditional engineering knowledge of the aquaculture systems with Indigenous and non-Indigenous engineering students.

In return students enrolled in Indigenous Engineering and Design also workshop the engineering needs for smaller infrastructure works on GMTOAC properties.

Some of these projects have included weed control, water aeration, lighting and accessibility, mobile kitchens and revegetation planting strategies.

Due to the global pandemic, students were unable to include any field trips on Gunditjmara Country this year. Engagement has been online.

PARTNERSHIPS

GLENELG HOPKINS CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

The partnership between GMTOAC and Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (CMA), formalised through a six-year agreement in 2016, has a focus on restoring, protecting, and enhancing the natural and cultural landscape of our region and the well-being of our community.

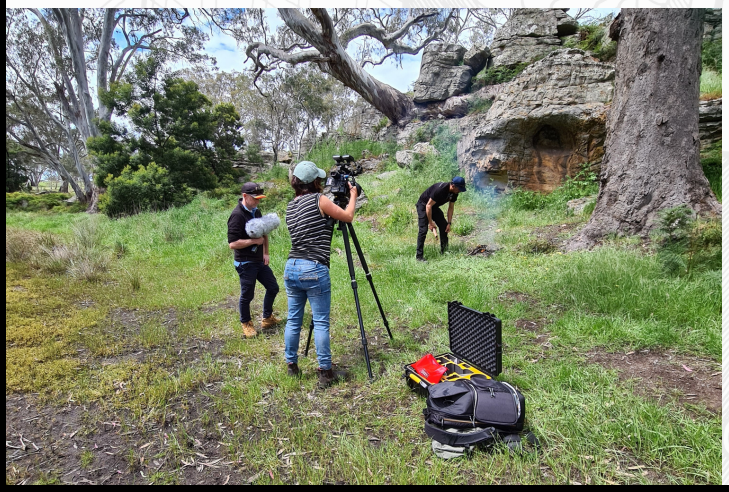
This year we have progressed Aboriginal water issues relating to the improved health of the Glenelg River and the waterways across the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. We have been successful in securing another three years of funding for the Glenelg River Cultural Flows Project, which is a partnership between GMTOAC, Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Burrandies Aboriginal Corporation.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA have also secured additional funding for the on-going implementation of the Budj Bim Connections Flagship Waterway project. This project helps implement on-ground works to improve waterway and wetland management across the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

While on-ground activities have been difficult to implement this year, some of the activities we have been able to work on as part of the partnership agreement include:

- Cultural burning activities across state-forest and Gunditjmara owned lands
- Input into the Glenelg River seasonal watering proposal
- Workshops to contribute to the development of the Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy.

Talks between GMTOAC and Glenelg Hopkins CMA will commence in 2021/22 to review and identify the need for a new relationship between the organisations.

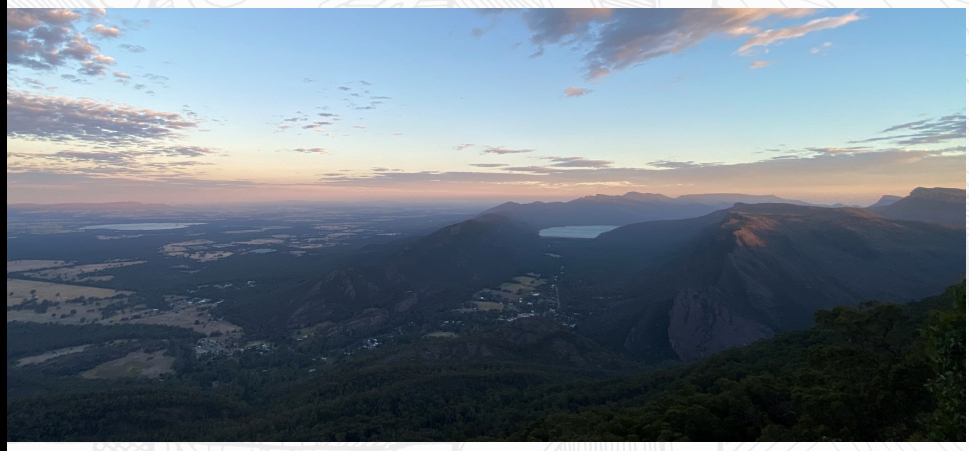


GARIWERD

The Greater Gariwerd Landscape, including the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd), continues to be a high priority for Traditional Owners and GMTOAC, Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) during the 2020/21 period.

The three Traditional Owner Corporations continued to work with Parks Victoria on the following:

- The continued development of the draft Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan
- Involvement in cultural heritage protection for the development of the Grampians Peaks Trail
- Gariwerd rock art forums
- The development and operations of the Brambuk Living Cultural Centre
- Impacts on cultural heritage places by recreation users, including rock climbing
- Truth-telling and healing forums
- The ongoing Gariwerd Strategic Partnership Committee
- Traditional Owner governance structures for Gariwerd.



POLICY & RESEARCH

ADAM BLACK
Senior Policy and Research Officer

In November 2020 the Adam Black was engaged as the Policy and Research Officer for GMTOAC. A primary focus of the role has been the development of Gunditjmara Research Principles and Guidelines for review and endorsement by the GMTOAC board. These guidelines aim to assist researchers to adopt Gunditjmara research methodologies, including:

- Gunditjmara involvement in the design and conduct of research
- Appropriate distribution of research findings and project outcomes that promote a Gunditjmara research agenda, and
- Creation of benefits back to community and Country through Gunditjmara involvement in research.

A draft *Gunditjmara Continuing Connection to Country: principles and guidelines for Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation cultural objects and knowledge collection* has been prepared. This is a new document for GMTOAC's commitment to promote, protect and manage Aboriginal Cultural Heritage objects and knowledge on behalf of Gunditjmara.

The document is informed by several sources and initiatives, including:

- Native title laws and processes, where museums and galleries as custodians and caretakers of some forms of Indigenous cultural heritage must now acknowledge and facilitate Indigenous cultural maintenance requirements, through access to or return of items of cultural significance to the relevant Traditional Owners.
- Return of Indigenous Cultural Property Programs, such as the national Return of Indigenous Cultural Property Program and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' Return of Cultural Heritage Project, which helps to facilitate the appropriate repatriation of cultural property to the appropriate Traditional Owners.
- *Our Culture our Future: Report on Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights*, first published in 1998 is now a significant guide for matters relating to recognition of cultural and intellectual property rights of Indigenous Australians. This report expressed clearly Indigenous people's desires and expectations with regards to their right to control their cultural and intellectual property in all areas including within museums and galleries.
- Council of Australian Museum Association's (previously Museums Australia) Previous Possessions, New Obligations: policies for museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Council of Australian Museum Association, 2000).

Further to this, Intellectual Property and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property guidelines prepared by Terri Janke and Company have been reviewed and are being considered by the GMTOAC Board for endorsement.

LAND MANAGEMENT

MARK SAUNDERS
Land Management Team Leader

The GMTOAC land management works crew was established to respond to government and industry contract for environmental works and support additional activities across GMTOAC owner and managed lands.

Additional funding through the Working for Victoria Program has supported the consolidation of the Works Crew this year.

The land crew have worked on the following activities throughout 2020/21:

- Contracted pine wildling control
- Weed control, native seed collection and revegetation works across the Budj Bim World Heritage Cultural Landscape
- Feral pig management at Kurtonitj
- Training in the areas of shorebird ID, chemical use and handling and chainsaw use.

STAFF 4WD TRAINING

EVENTS

The Pandemic changed the way we engaged and communicated on the ground projects with our members. When discussing Country its always best practice to be on Country, however due to the ongoing stay at home orders and restrictions this wasn't possible.

During the beginning of the reporting period GMTOAC held a number of online sessions with the Gunditjmara Community and our GMTOAC members, these sessions included;

- Economic Development
- Solar Array Discussions for Tae Rak Aquaculture Centre
- Dhauwurd Wurrung Language Workshops.

In December 2020 we held our first online GMTOAC Annual General Meeting. We had almost 60 Gunditjmara online during this meeting, with Gunditjmara zooming in from across the Country.

We hope to move to all hybrid meetings in the future to allow for Gunditjmara to participate no matter where they are situated. In February and March 2021, we had our first Gunditjmara Community Engagement Meetings scheduled in Portland, due to a snap lockdown the February meeting was postponed.

Thankfully we were able to gather with our community in March and celebrate our Native Title Anniversary on March 30 together at the Convincing Ground. It was so special to have so many Gunditjmara on Country. Unfortunately due to the consistent and never ending lockdowns we weren't able to meet with our members again during this reporting period.

We have monthly meetings planned for the next reporting period which will include Native Title Meetings, Budj Bim Master Plan Updates and regular program updates from our staff.

GUNDITJMARA NATIVE TITLE CELEBRATION