



**GUNDITJ MIRRORING**  
Traditional Owners  
Aboriginal Corporation  
RNTBC



# Annual Report

## 2014 / 2015

## Chairperson's Report 2014/2015

I pay my respect to our Gunditjmarra Elders, past and present, and to the coming generations that will be our successors who will look after and care for country as we do.

The Executive Board welcome you and appreciate that you have made time in your busy life to attend the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

We are planning for a future after declining the TOSA and funding offered by the Department of Justice, State of Victoria. We are expecting to again talk with the relevant department/s early in 2016, to allow the State to redress the offer.

The financial year 2015/2016 heralded some significant changes for the organisation in that GMTOAC had to change accountants to Allwood and Ryan Accountants who have been approachable and efficient with our financial accounts.

The GMTOAC have also had a structural change during this period and since that time, considerable efforts have been devoted by management and staff towards implementing a transition to becoming an organisation that is:

- More strategically focussed than operational
- About influencing, advocacy & regional representation
- Bringing about more direct and active participation by the development of the organisation.

The restructure has now been in place for some time but will continue to be transitional as commitments and

contractual obligations are worked through.

I would personally like to thank the CEO, Damein Bell and his staff for persevering with the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation Full Group Members throughout this very trying year. I know it is hard to try and educate people about the "Native Title Act" while trying to gain outcomes that are best for our country.

So a big thank you to Denis Rose, Tyson Lovett-Murray, Billy Bell, Danny Lovett, Keicha Day, Jason Walker, Amy Walker, Laura Redgrave, Michael Bell, Natasha Moore, and Shelley Bourke.

Just a reminder to the Full Group participants and all members Of GMTOAC, that we have a duty of care, as employer, to the Staff who have stood strong during this period of time. We, as members need to support them.



Eileen Alberts

## CEO Report 2014 / 2015

The 2014 / 2015 period has proved very challenging and as equally rewarding on many levels.

On the downside, the introduction of the new Commonwealth Indigenous Advancement Strategy was very underwhelming given that Gunditj Mirring was unsuccessfully in gaining funding for our tourism, forestry and cultural heritage initiatives and program. Funding was even denied for our ongoing implementation of the Aboriginal Land (Lake Condah and Framlingham Forest)

Act 1987 CTH. With the advocacy of the Federal Member for Wannon, the Hon. Dan Tehan, the funding issue was rectified quickly and our program was back on track looking after the mission and cemetery.

The ongoing issues with Indigenous Land Corporation will hopefully settle down soon and more importantly, the ILC will be able to reopen the Land Acquisition Program to provide the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to acquire land.

The impact of social media was negatively felt by the Gunditjmarra community and Gunditj Mirring during the 2014/2015 period. As always, the Full Group addressed the negativity by operating the way it has since the early 2000s by providing the cultural and community space for Gunditjmarra voices to be heard, the issues raised and decisions made. The requirement of 75% of members in attendance at a Full Group meeting to make decisions is a strong consensus to continue our progress.

The Rally to Support Remote Aboriginal Communities in Western Australia that we held in May 2015 was a true highlight. It was very deadly to see all our mobs come together to demonstrate and voice our collective opposition to the forced closure of remote communities and the attack on Aboriginal heritage sites in Western Australia. It was important to hear at the rally from the WA families living on Gunditjmarra country of the impact on their communities back in Western Australia.

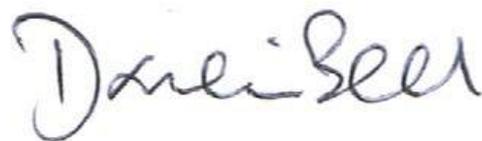
On the upside, compiling this report on the activities that have been progressed and achieved by the Gunditjmarra community and Gunditj Mirring is very positive. Having

maintained a level of achievement alongside the intensive renegotiation program with the State of Victoria adds meaning to our work. The Full Group decision to decline the State of Victoria's Settlement Offer was an informed and well-considered outcome determined by Gunditjmarra people.

The work that we have to do now following the Full Group decision regarding the Settlement Offer has already commenced with Gunditj Mirring tightening our resources and reviewing our corporate structure and operations. The benefit of having a strong track record since Gunditj Mirring was established in 2006 is having a solid base to take on a new challenge.

It is important to acknowledge the Gunditj Mirring staff and Office Bearers for all that has eventuated during the 2014/2015 and that comes with the ups and downs. It is especially important to acknowledge the support our staff and community have provided each other during the past 12 months as Sorry Business has hit a little closer to home and to work during the past 12 months.

As always, having a job where I can work with my people and on behalf of Gunditjmarra community is the best job I have ever had.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Damein Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Damein Bell.

## Informed Consent & Governance

### Renegotiation Program under the Traditional Owners Settlement Act 2010 VIC.

Commencing in 2013, the renegotiation program with the State of Victoria extended into the 2014/2015 period. The program saw Gunditjmara people and the State review the 2007 native title agreements and then discuss the potential of a new negotiated agreement under the Traditional Owners Settlement Act 2010 VIC.

Following an initial offer by the State under the Settlement Act, the Gunditjmara considered each section of the initial offer and provided feedback to the State who adjusted parts of the settlement package in response.

While parts of the offer appealed to the Gunditjmara, the Full Group ultimately declined the offer by the State in June 2015.

While supporting the importance and implementation of the Traditional Owners Settlement Act 2010 VIC as an alternative process to the Native Title Act 1993 in Victoria for other Traditional Owner groups, the Full Group decided to retain the native title rights and interests that Gunditjmara people were recognised with under the 2007 and 2011 Federal Court consent determinations.

The innovation and increased understanding by the State of Victoria across its responses to Aboriginal Affairs has improved outcomes in cultural heritage management, mental health, water and environmental health and family violence. The Traditional Owners

Settlement Act 2010 VIC is as deadly however, the State still needs to extend their creative in its relationship with Gunditjmara people and how both parties work with Native Title Act 1993 as well as the broader benefits and engagement that the Full Group continues to provide.

While the road ahead with the relationship between Gunditjmara people, Gunditj Mirring and the State of Victoria could be considered uncertain the single most certain fact is that Gunditjmara people will continue our connection to Gunditjmara country and our ongoing assertion of our inherent rights and obligations in care for country is our job and our belief.



### Budj Bim Council

The Budj Bim Council was established in 2009 under the Cooperative Management Agreement for the Mount Eccles National Park 2007. The Council has representation from Parks Victoria, the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning, the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and Gunditjmara representatives nominated by the Gunditj Mirring Full Group.

Council members for the period included:

- Levi Lovett – Convenor.
- Eileen Alberts.
- Dr Laura Bell – Deputy Convenor.
- Damein Bell.
- Shane Bell.
- Michael Rees.
- Andrew Govanstone.
- Graham Parkes.
- Don Tumney.

Alternate members included:

- Denise Lovett.
- Denis Rose.
- Ken Saunders.
- Kellie Nilsson.
- Jeremy Maloney.
- Gary Bellesini.

All members of the Council are appointed by the Victorian Minister for the Environment.

Key objectives for the Council during the 2014/2015 were as follows:

- Oversee the development of the management plan including holding special meetings to expediate the management planning process ensuring a focus on the Stone Country Implementation Plan.
- Ensure the sufficient allocation of resources to complete the Implementation Plan
- Ensure the implementation of the NGNM SW Management Plan and the Budj Bim Masterplan are integrated.
- Complete the development of the interpretive precinct at Mt Eccles National Park that incorporates information regarding the Budj Bim Trail and updated Gunditjmara information.
- Develop a focus on the importance of the manna gum forest as the vegetation icon and building block of

the national park ecosystem – consider provision of information, strategies in the management plan and incorporation in communications strategy.

- Approve and commence implementation of the Communications Strategy.
- Improve the integration of website information and linkages.
- Develop a protocol to ensure Budj Bim Council is informed of local government planning issues relevant to Council and Council provides appropriate comments to local governments.
- Plan and undertake a field trip to gain further insight into topical issues.
- Develop more integrated management between Mt Eccles National Park and the Indigenous Protected Areas.

The Budj Bim Council Annual Report 2014 / 2015 is available from the Gunditj Mirring office.

### **Aboriginal Land (Lake Condah and Framlingham Forest) Act 1987**

The Aboriginal Land (Lake Condah and Framlingham Forest) Act 1987 was established as part of the Onus vs. Alcoa out of court settlement and looks after the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission and Cemetery.

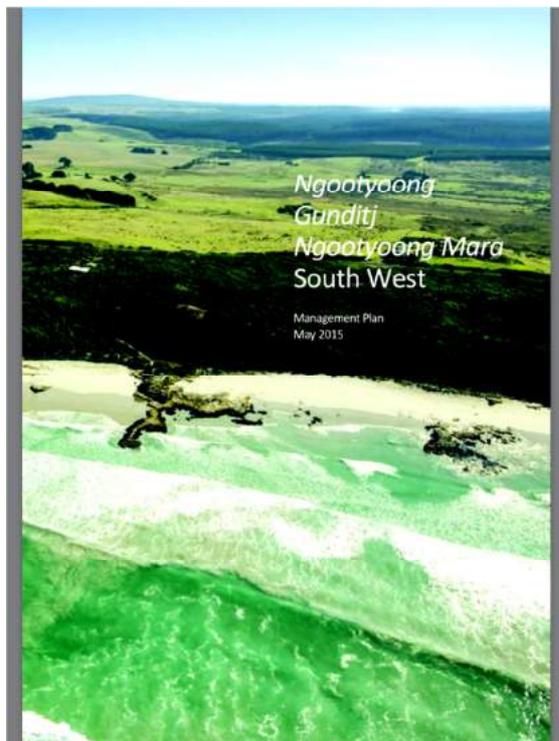
During the period, the Commonwealth Minister for Indigenous Affairs wrote to Gunditj Mirring during the period to seek the views of Gunditjmara people on the Commonwealth Government proposal to alter legislative processes associated with the Aboriginal Land (Lake Condah and Framlingham Forest) Act 1987. Gunditj Mirring responded by requesting a long

overdue review of the Act by the communities scheduled to look after the mission and cemetery and the Framlingham Forest. The Commonwealth Government is yet to respond to our request.

### **Privacy of Gunditj Mirring members**

Gunditj Mirring followed the action of the GunaiKurnai Traditional Lands and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and forwarded a request to the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporation to remove the private addresses of members from the [www.oric.gov.au](http://www.oric.gov.au) website.

### **Building for the Future**



After five years of development and three changes of Victorian Governments, the *Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara – Healthy Country Healthy People – South West Plan* was launched in May 2005 by the Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for

the Environment, the Hon. Jonathon Carbines at the Mount Clay State Park.

The plan is a 15 year strategic approach to 140 national parks, state parks and managed reserves within the Gunditj Mirring Cultural Heritage RAP area. The plan describes the following types of country including:

- Woorrowarook Mirring – Forest Country around Dergholm.
- Bocara Woorowarook Mirring – River Forest Country around the Lower Glenelg and Cobobbonnee.
- Koonang Mirring – Sea Country along Discovery Bay to Cape Nelson.
- Tungatt Murrung – Stone Country along the Budj Bim landscape.

The plan incorporates Gunditjmara traditional ecological knowledge and practices into contemporary park management and be the primary document to inform work plans for national and state parks in the area. For the first time, Indigenous Protected Areas are integrated alongside national and state parks to ensure landscape scale planning and management rather than each park and property being isolated from each other.

*Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara – Healthy Country Healthy People – South West Plan* is an incredible achievement and important outcome to continue our connection to country and the implementation of traditional knowledge in park management. The plan is available from the Gunditj Mirring and Parks Victoria websites.

## **Indigenous Nation Building**

The Indigenous Nation Building project between Gunditj Mirring and the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority is supported by the following institutions:

- Jumbunna House – University of Technology Sydney.
- University of Melbourne.
- Flinders University.
- Native Nations Institute – Arizona.
- Harvard University.
- RMIT.

The initial three years of the project provided space for Gunditj Mirring to review and document of the experience of Gunditjmara people establishing the corporation and continuing the Full Group process in decision-making. The project also linked resources to enable young Gunditjmara people to travel to the USA to study with First Nations institutions.

The project was successful in gaining further funding from the Australian Research Council for three years. Alongside the Gunditjmara and the Ngarrindjeri, parts of the Wiradjuri community have joined the Indigenous Nation Building program.

As part of the new program, Gunditj Mirring will concentrate of consolidated our Full Group decision-making process to ensure the principles from the past 40 years of community-based decision-making is continued.

Gunditj Mirring will be hosting the Indigenous Nation Building Project: Inter-Nation Summit at the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission in October 2015.

## **Keeping Place & Business Centre**

The Keeping Place & Business Centre is funded through the 2007 native title agreements. Following the Full Group decision in 2008 to construct the new facility at the Lake Condah Mission, work commenced on preparing a new master plan and rezoning for the location. The project experience several delays during this period. In 2012, members discussed the appropriateness of the facility being built at the mission over the next few years.

The Full Group commissioned independent legal advice to review the Full Group decision-making process dealing with the Keeping Place / Business Centre and at the Annual General Meeting held in December 2014, members decided to convene a Special General Meeting in February 2015 decide whether to rescind the original Full Group decision in 2008 to build at the mission. The Special General Meeting decided to not rescind the 2008 decision.

In June 2015, the design consultants Phillips / Pilkington and the project manager GHD presented design concepts for the Keeping Place / Business Centre to the Full Group meeting where the design concepts were endorsed. The new facility is costed at \$3.1m.

### **Gunditj Mirring Commercial Tourism Program**

The Gunditj Mirring Commercial Tourism Program was endorsed by the Full Group during the 2014/2015 period. The new program will provide access to Gunditj Mirring properties along the Budj Bim landscape to established tourism operators who successfully engage Gunditjmara interpretative tour guides.

A cultural interpretation for tourism program to enhance the narrative and storytelling skills of Gunditjmara people is scheduled for development and delivery before the end of 2015. A tender application process for tour operators to deliver tours on Gunditj Mirring properties will be offered in early 2016.

### **Dhauwurd Wurrung Traditional Language**

Programs continue to revitalise the Dhauwurd Wurrung traditional language and related dialects through the Heywood and District Secondary College, the Monash Country Lines Project and the Q-Books project with the Victorian Corporation for Aboriginal Languages. Joel Wright from the South West Aboriginal Languages Program is involved in all projects. With language recordings now completed, the animations required for the Country Lines and Q-Books will now be produced with both projects scheduled for completion in 2016.

### **Budj Bim Master Plan: Stage One Design Works Project**

With funding from the Advancing Country Towns Project for Heywood, Lake Condah and surrounding towns along with a contribution from Gunditj Mirring, the Budj

Bim Master Plan: Stage One Design Works project commenced in 2015. New visitor infrastructure and interpretive devices are being designed to expand visitor experiences to the Budj Bim landscape. As identified in the Budj Bim Master Plan 2013, the stage one priority projects include the following:

- Traditional aquaculture centre and bridge at Lake Condah.
- Upgrade of the visitor centre and facilities at the Mt Eccles National Park.
- New visitor facilities and signage at the entrance of Lake Condah Mission.
- New walkways and interpretation devices at Kurtonitj.
- New walkways and creek crossing at the Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area.
- New visitors place at the Tyrendarra Recreation Reserve.
- New roadside directional signage along the Princes Highway on the roads at Tyrendarra, Ettrick and Condah.

Upon completion of the project, the design and interpretative plan will inform the development of an application to the Victorian Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund.

### **Scholarship**

With funds from a native title agreement, a fixed term account has been established at the Heywood Community Bank – Bendigo Bank to build up the funds to provide an education scholarship to provide financial assistance to Gunditjmara students. While the Full Group works on the scholarship criteria during 2015, the first round of scholarships will be available in late 2016 for application.

## People

### Gunditj Mirring Full Group

Gunditjmarra people are the traditional owners of Gunditjmarra country. Gunditjmarra people were recognised by the Federal Court of Australia in 2007 and 2011 as holding native title rights and interests. Gunditj Mirring membership is currently around 380 Gunditjmarra people.

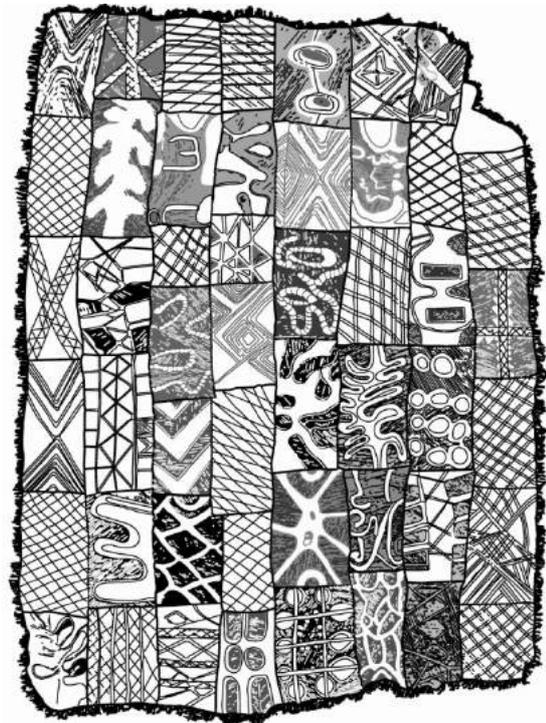
The effort and contribution of Gunditjmarra people in supporting the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is voluntary and greatly appreciated. Gunditjmarra people participate in the monthly Full Group meetings, Special General Meetings and Annual General Meetings.

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>CEO</b>	
Damein Bell	Full year.
<b>Statutory Service PM</b>	July/Nov 14
Keicha Day	May/Jun 15
<b>Knowledge &amp; Learning PM</b>	
Denis Rose	Full year.
<b>Corporate Services PM</b>	
Laura Redgrave	Full year.
<b>ARLS Coordinator</b>	Commenced
Bill Bell	Sept 14
<b>Receptionist</b>	
Amy Walker	Full year.
<b>Cleaner</b>	
Leslie Day	Casual.
<b>Info Systems Coordinator</b>	
Micko Bell	Full year.
<b>Human Resources</b>	
Shelley Bourke	Full year.
<b>Condah Mission Caretaker</b>	
Danny Lovett	Full year.
<b>Senior Projects Officer</b>	Commenced
Tyson Lovett-Murray	Sept 14.
<b>Backfill &amp; Projects Worker</b>	Commenced
Jason Walker	Nov 14

### Backfill Caretakers

Roger Morris  
Leigh Malseed.

<b>Cultural Heritage Site Workers</b>	<b>Work days</b>
Jody Agnew	10
Shannon Agnew	4.5
Yasmin Agnew	7.5
Jenna Bamblett	2
Nunkerri Bamblett	2
Kelvin Bell	1
William Bell	12
Jeremy Boyer	3.5
Joel Carter	4
Kellie Frankland	3
Michelle Gunton	16
Nicole Hudson	16.5
Candina Kanoa	0.5
Becky Kanoa	1
John King	7.5
Nora King	5.5
Dean Lovett	17



## **Corporate Services Program**

The Corporate Services program provides operational support to GMTOAC through the delivery of core services such as administration, reception, business services, finance, information technology, communication and human resource management including occupational health and safety.

During the 2014/15 financial year the team (3.7 EFT) included the following members: Micko Bell - Information Systems Coordinator; Shelley Bourke – HR Officer; Lesley Day – Cleaner; Laura Redgrave – Corporate Services Manager and Amy Walker – Corporate Services Receptionist. Natasha Moore joined the team on 15 July 2015 in the newly created role of Finance Officer (.4 EFT).

The team is functioning well and has provided significant value to our internal customers across the corporation. The processes, procedures and policies are well developed to support the organisation through a future period of growth. Ongoing organisational sustainability is a key focus for all streams of work which fall within the responsibility of the corporate services program.

### **Support to Informed Consent and Governance**

Throughout the year the Corporate Services team has supported the CEO through preparation, printing and delivery of meeting papers, catering and recording of the minutes at Full Group Meetings. Members have been assisted directly with the processing of travel assistance and meal reimbursement

together with accommodation bookings. Membership details are updated on a monthly basis by the Corporate Services Receptionist.

### **Financial Management – Accountants**

In April 2015 the Full Group appointed Allwood and Ryan as GMTOAC accountants. The account is managed by GMTOAC Corporate Services Manager and Partner, Annette Ryan with payroll services provided by Partner Rob Allwood. The process of transition was detailed and pro-longed in order to appropriately bring our accounts to the required standard for the purposes of annual auditing. The change has been well worth the effort to resource and has resulted in optimal audit results for the organisation.

### **Auditing**

In December 2014 the Full Group appointed Galpins as GMTOAC auditors for the 2014/15 year. Since the appointment the following audits have been undertaken:

- Program Audits - completed 18 March 2015:
  - Lake Gorrie.
  - Budj Bim.
  - Allambie.
- Interim Audit – completed 22 June 2015.
- Program Audits – completed 22 June 2015.
  - Lake Condah IPA.
  - Kurtonitj IPA.
- Annual Audit – completed 6 October 2015.

### **Finance & Payroll**

Weekly payroll is prepared and forwarded to the accountants for processing, our internal practices have tightened with a

focus on audit scrutiny keeping accurate records of leave taken, accrual and valuation. More detailed reports are now produced by Allwood and Ryan which enable management to confirm the treatment of hours which can be cross referenced against the timesheet.

From September 2014 through to June 2015, all invoices were entered into the accounting package at GMTOAC by the Corporate Services Receptionist and then coded and balanced externally by the accountants. With the recent appointment of a part time Finance Officer, all accounts can now be processed internally with verification handled by the Accountants on a monthly basis.

### **Information Systems**

During the year the Information Systems Officer focused on keeping the website up to date whilst continuing to add data to the Cultural Information Management System.

### **Contract Management**

During the year we created a contract management system, entering all contracts into the register with an electronic record of all contracts now retained in soft and hard files.

### **Assets**

A new Kia Carnival was purchased in addition to small office equipment and laptop computers.

All GMTOAC properties were valued by Patrick Mackarness, principal of Farm and Forest Valuations Pty Ltd. Title searches were undertaken on all property and those held on Title by the corporation were

valued, this included Lake Condah Mission & Cemetery, Lake Condah, Kurtonitj, Bryants, Lake Gorrie and Peters. At a total value of close to \$4 million, this was the first time that GMTOAC properties have been valued since title transfer occurred.

### **Cleaning Services**

Throughout the year cleaning services were provided on a weekly basis to maintain an appropriate hygienic standard. Several larger cleaning projects were undertaken at Kurtonitj and the Mission prior to and after peak holiday periods.

### **Human Resources Report**

In the year 2014-2015 the following has been achieved:

#### **Policy & Procedure**

The following changes to the GMTOAC Human Resource Policy Manual have been made:

Exit Interview )Policy updated  
Parental Leave Policy updated  
Parental Leave Application form updated  
Pregnancy at Work (policy obsolete)

#### **Occupational Health & Safety**

The OHS Committee met on a monthly basis, with the exception of January to discuss and manage OHS requirements of the organisation and manage any Incident reports received.

Snapshot of OHS issues:

- OHS Inspections – Lake Condah, Mission, Kurtonitj and GMTOAC office.
- Defibrillators.
- First Aid Kits.
- OHS checklist for visitors to GMTOAC country.
- Stress and employee wellbeing.
- Vehicle maintenance.

### **Dispute Resolution**

One detailed investigation was undertaken to address allegations of misconduct during a Full Group meeting. Findings were reached and communicated to the Full Group and other parties involved.

### **Performance Appraisals**

Performance appraisals of tenured employees were undertaken between September 2014 - February 2015.

### **Training**

GMTOAC Employees and Office Bearers attended in-service training at Cape Bridgewater Sea View Lodge on 11 December. The training session was led by the CEO and focused on strategic direction of the organization as well as working collectively to set objectives for each department for the purposes of building organizational capacity.

Note: Team Building training scheduled for 12 December was cancelled by the training provider VECCI at short notice. The training was rescheduled for the 2015/2016 year and held recently on 10 September 2015 together with equal opportunity training provided by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. All GMTOAC members were invited to participate if desired.

### **Statutory Services Program**

This report is reflective of the 2014/2015 financial year. The Statutory Services Program employs the Statutory Services Program Manager position on a full time basis with casual employment opportunities through our RAP status under the Aboriginal Heritage Act. This financial

year saw us casually employ 17 Gunditjmara people.

We again hosted the Certificate 4 Cultural Heritage Management students from La Trobe in March 2015 for a week and upon successfully submitting our RAP interim Performance Report, gained our yearly funding from Office of Aboriginal Affairs. This year also saw us finishing off our obligations for the Portland Wind Energy Project Stage 4 while starting new projects on Country-particularly infrastructure at Lake Condah and Kurtonitj as well as being a part of the first shared values project where sites are registered on both ACHRIS and the Heritage register (Convincing Ground and Tower Hill).

In the next financial year, we are looking forward to seeing our submission for the Draft Exposure of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 come to fruition. We also look forward to completing our planned repatriation of 34 lots of Ancestral Remains in October 2015.

### **List of CHMP Notice of Intentions received**

1. Construction of access track-Lake Condah
2. Cape Bridgewater Wastewater Management System
3. Gunditj Mirring Keeping Place/Business Centre
4. Condah-Hotspur Upper Road Upgrade

### **List of CHMPS evaluated**

1. Lake Condah Access Track
2. Tyrendarra Aquaculture Project

### **List of site work completed**

1. Portland Wind Energy Project Stage 4
2. Kurtonitj works (proposed toilet blocks)
3. Lake Condah Access Track
4. Heywood Terminal Station Extension
5. Tyrendarra Quarry

6. CFA Fire Station
7. VicRoads (inductions x 2)

### **Exposure Draft Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Bill 2014.**

GMTOAC provided comment to the Exposure Draft Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Bill 2014 – following the Exposure Draft Release in August 2014. The Minister is planning to have the proposed amendments up and running by mid-2016 following targeted feedback from relevant stakeholders including RAPs.

### **Moyjil Aboriginal Place (Point Ritchie Project).**

At the end of 2014, GMTOAC had completed recording information to become a part of an interactive online tool targeted at school groups and the general public alike. The aim of this tool is to inform interested people of the significance of Moyjil and prevent unnecessary physical impacts to the site. This online tool was successfully launched in June 2015. You can find the tool at: <http://www.moyjil.com.au/> which includes the story, language and science.

### **Repatriation of Ancestral Remains.**

GMTOAC attended Ancestral Remains Joint Steering Group Meeting in Warrnambool in June 2014. The aim of the meeting was to discuss AR, repatriation, provenance and our statutory obligations as a RAP under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

### **Part B/RAP application area.**

Projects we have worked on in shared Country and RAP application area are as follows:

- Rodgers Road, Warrnambool (RAP application area)
- Midfield Meats Render plant (RAP application area)
- VicRoads upgrade (Woolsthorpe Rd) (Shared Country)

### **RAP Forum.**

GMTOAC hosted the 2014 RAP Forum at Cape Bridgewater in November. This forum was well attended and we completed the site visit at the Blowholes and Petrified Forest discussing the Summer School Program at Cape Duquesne and Cape Bridgewater. We also handed each RAP a copy of our Budj Bim book.



## Knowledge & Learning Program

The Knowledge and Learning Program has a staff of two, Tyson Lovett-Murray is the Senior Project Officer and Denis Rose is the Manager. During 2014-15, we managed the following projects;

### Indigenous Protected Areas - IPAs

GMTOAC has a 5 year agreement with the Commonwealth Department of Environment for management of our IPAs and we received \$187,900 plus GST for 2014-15. The major achievements for 2014-15 included;

- The inclusion of the Lake Gorrie, Bryants and Peters properties into the Budj Bim IPA
- The development of the Budj Bim IPA Plan of Management, which incorporated all properties (except for the Lake Condah Mission) into the Budj Bim IPA.
- Revegetation on a number of the properties – 15,000 trees were planted

The Budj Bim Rangers also carried out other general activities on the IPAs including weed and feral animal control, revegetation programs, fencing and maintenance of visitor facilities.



Revegetation at Lake Condah.

### Budj Bim Rangers & International Student Volunteers.

Our Budj Bim IPA workplan for 2015-15 includes the following projects

- Construct a walking track and boardwalk to Racecourse Swamp on the Bryant's property
- Construct a new fence on the southern (highway) edge of Bryants
- Prepare a Strategic Plan for the re-identification of registered cultural heritage sites on all properties and the identification of new sites.
- To increase use and access by Gunditjmara of the Cultural Information Management System (CIMS).
- Identify and develop a Women's place on the IPA (possibly at the north east corner of Kurtonitj).
- Carry out at least 8 small scale Cultural/environmental burns
- Build a small floating pontoon on the western side of Lake Condah for boat tours

### Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority

This year we received \$25,000 from the CMA to complete three projects.

#### *Yarns on Farms*

The highly successful Yarns on Farms project continued throughout the year and we conducted 7 Yarns on Farms visits to properties in the region. We also hosted a reciprocal visit to Gunditjmara country for all farmers, landholders and interest groups who had been hosted the project team over the last year. This took place on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June, with 13 guests involved in the visit.

The reciprocal visit was a great success with many visitors indicating that they had increased their knowledge and understanding of Gunditjmara history and culture, and were very pleased to have been able to see and experience the

mission, Lake Condah and the stone channel and fish trap system.



Yarns on Farms visit to Balmoral with Ron Eliot, Ryans Jones and Tyson Lovett-Murray.

### *Cultural Burning*

The CMA and Gunditj Mirring arranged for Rod Mason and Brendon Kennedy to come down to Heywood for two days to talk about the traditional fire knowledge project they have worked on with North East CMA.



Rod Mason with Budj Bim Rangers burning on country.

Rod and Brendon talked with Traditional Owners and the Budj Bim Rangers about incorporating traditional knowledge back into cultural burning and management of country. They also travelled around IPA's and demonstrated different methods of burning. The program has instilled

confidence in the Budj Bim Rangers to begin small scale burning of native vegetation to encourage regrowth.

### *Junior Ranger Program*

In collaboration with Baimbridge College (Hamilton), Gunditj Mirring and the Glenelg Hopkins CMA developed a ten-week 'Learning about Gunditj Country' program to run with all year 8 students (70 students in total) at the College.



Junior Rangers Program at Baimbridge College, Hamilton.

The students then had an excursion to the Budj Bim lava flow for the geography program and included:

- A 'Welcome' by Gunditjmara elders at the Budj Bim Orientation Centre in Heywood
- Guided talk by Budj Bim Rangers at the Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area, and
- Guided talk with Project Officers from Gunditj Mirring at Lake Condah (looking at traditional stone fish traps and houses) and the Lake Condah Mission.

### **Construction of new vehicle track at Lake Condah**

We commenced construction of the new track from the Lake Condah jetty towards the weir. Unfortunately we did not have enough funding to complete the track to the weir and are still actively seeking funding to complete the project.



Looking south down the new track on the western side of Lake Condah.

### **Koalas**

Koala management continues to be an increasing problem on our properties and it is expected that the Koala numbers and problems will increase substantially over the next few years. There are large numbers of Koalas thriving in the bluegum plantations in the region and now that the bluegums are being harvested the Koalas are moving into other properties, including many of ours. We are still developing our Koala Management Plan in line with the State government (DELWP and Parks Victoria) and the Victorian Association of Forest Industries strategies.

### **Australian Society for Fish Biology conference**

Denis Rose and Adam Walker gave a presentation at the Australian Society for Fish Biology conference held in Darwin in July 2014. There were over 340 scientists in attendance and we gave a presentation based on the fish surveying work that occurred during 2008-09 along the Darlots Creek and the Fitzroy River and how this research assisted in the planning for the construction of the weir at Lake Condah.

## **Estate Management Program**

During the 2014/2015 period the mission had 347 visitors staying at the mission. Other activities during this time have been the monthly Full Group Meeting, day time holiday program activities. The mission has also been used as a meeting room for other organisations such as Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Portland District Health.

### **Lake Condah Cemetery/Corrections Team**

Last year Gunditj Mirring purchased pine sleepers to go around the unmarked graves that were discovered in the ground penetrating radar testing that was conducted in July 2013. We went out and marked out the graves on the ground. The South West Justice Worker at Winda Mara wanted some work on country for a corrections team to complete some of their CBO hours. Working together we were able to get the working team to come and complete the sleepers around the unmarked graves. This happened over 3 Fridays every second week the corrections team also went out to Kurtonitj where they cleared our new camping site.

### **Mission Kurtonitj Upgrades**

Before the end of the financial year we purchased new mattresses and blind for both the mission and Kurtonitj. The blinds for the mission cabins have been installed, all the doors at this mission got new security screen doors. The blinds for Kurtonitj were cut to the wrong size this was a mistake by the supplier which were happy to fix, we have only just received that will be installed as soon as possible. Kurtonitj was fitted with new fire extinguishers as one was missing and the other was out of date. A generator was also purchased for the mission

### **OAAV Properties**

Gunditj Mirring continues to speak with the State of Victoria regarding the vesting of the Allambie, Vaughans and Muldoons properties across the corporation. The State has worked on an appropriate vesting process that will reduce any land title fees to a minimum.

### **Solar Panels**

From the 2014/2015 we set aside a budget of \$43,950 to purchase and install solar panels for the Mission Recreation Room and also the Caretakers house. The solar panels were installed, signed off and generating power by the end of December 2014



## **Working on Country Program: WMAC Budj Bim Rangers Program**

### **Overview**

The WMAC Land Management Unit in consultation with the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Corporation is responsible for the on ground works on eight properties consisting of 3000 ha of land located on the Budj Bim Lava Flow.

### **Staffing**

The following staff worked in the Land Management Unit this year:

- Trainee Rangers: Sean Bell, Josiah Hazelton, Aaron Morgan.
- Admin /Ranger: Steven Lovett
- Rangers: Michael Day, Josh Ferguson
- Senior Ranger: Deb Malseed, Greg Shelton
- Mentors: Auntie Eileen Alberts, Uncle Ken Saunders
- Land Management Coordinator: Matthew Butt
- Casual Workers: Talara Harrison, Shannon Agnew, Lenny Cooper

### **Major Achievements this Year:**

#### **Continuing Facilities Maintenance**

Rangers have worked on all properties this year with ongoing maintenance .This has included cleaning buildings, maintaining walking and vehicle tracks, maintaining fences and carrying out weed and pest control.

#### **Revegetation**

Revegetation continued on four properties this year with seed collection ,seed storage and the plant out of seedlings occurring during the winter and spring months.

15,000 trees and grasses were planted on the properties of Allambie, Tyrendarra and Lake Condah Lake Gorrie and Lake Condah Mission.

In July 2015 a group of students from Heywood Primary school assisted rangers with planting at Allambie.

A group of 10 International Student Volunteers from the USA spent two weeks helping us with revegetation works during June 2015.



Cultural Burning at Kurtonitj

#### **Construction of Facilities**

Fencing was the main construction activity this year. The final section of the Lake Gorrie road fence (350m) was completed in May.

Repairs to the Lake Gorrie cattle yards were undertaken including replacing gates.

A further 100m of ballast rock was spread across the river track at Tyrendarra in February to improve access.

#### **Training**

Training this year included Drivers Licence, Chainsaw, First Aid, Public Speaking, Chemical user permit, Tractor, Backhoe, Small Tools training, Cultural Heritage Management, Conservation and Land Management Certificate, Boat training

Bird Identification, Public Speaking ,Indigenous burning training and OH & S Training. Six Rangers received DWELP accredited fire fighter training this year.

### **Livestock**

It has been a profitable year for livestock operations. Very good prices have been received for livestock sold.

308 steers were sold this year. 152 young steers were purchased. 195 steers were on the properties on June 30 2015.

### **New Depot**

Rangers moved into the new depot in March 2015 following the official opening attended by community members, WMAC staff and invited guests. The new facility includes the Budj Bim Orientation Centre, Ranger meeting room and offices, workshop and machinery depot. The new building has made for a great improvement in working conditions for the Land Management Unit.

### **Trip to Lake Mungo**

The Ranger Group visited Lake Mungo National Park in NSW in May. It was a chance for the Rangers to experience how a World Heritage Site is managed. We were hosted by the discovery Rangers and were involved with site visits and many discussions with the park rangers on how they manage the park and the large number of visiting tourists.

### **Community Involvement**

At the caves at Cape Bridgewater Rangers assisted Parks Victoria staff to remove graffiti in the caves. Rangers assisted Parks Victoria staff in weed control at Yellow Rock. Construction of revegetation plots was undertaken by the Ranger group at Thomas's Block at Mt Eccles National Park in July 2014.





*Guiding visitors at Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area*

### **Visitor management**

Rangers and Mentors guided a large number of visitors again this year. This included community groups, primary, secondary and university students. Local government, state government groups and domestic and international tourists also visited during the year. Some of the groups visiting this year included: Heywood Primary School, Warrnambool College, LA Trobe University, Melbourne University and ALCOA Australia. Tourists

arriving by cruise ship in February were also given tours of the Tyrendarra IPA. Several basket weaving sessions were held at Tyrendarra

### **Training**

Training this year included Drivers Licence, Chainsaw, First Aid, Public Speaking, Chemical user permit, Tractor, Backhoe, Small Tools training, Cultural Heritage Management, Conservation and Land Management Certificate, Boat training, Bird Identification, Public Speaking, Indigenous burning training and OH & S

Training. Six Rangers received DWELP accredited fire fighter training this year.

Drip torch training at DWELP Heywood

### **Review of Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management**

With the help of Mentors, RMIT University staff and community input the Ranger team in January 2015 began a review of the Tyrendarra POM. This was a major undertaking by the Ranger group and has developed new skills as a result of the process. Two community meetings have been held to discuss the plan. GMTOAC have been provided with the draft plan for comment. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet have also provided feedback. The Winda Mara Board approved the plan in August. It has been forwarded to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for approval.



## Partnerships



### **BUDJ BIM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP**

The Budj Bim Sustainable Development Partnership with the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and Leadership Group participants continues its positive work in promoting sustainable development along the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

The current priorities of the Partnership is to gain a World Heritage nomination and listing for the landscape and to become tourism industry ready for an increased number of visitors to the Great Ocean Road region to experience the Budj Bim Landscape with Gunditjmara people.

During 2014-15 we held two meetings of the Budj Bim Sustainable Development Partnership Leadership Group.

### **THE BUDJ BIM CULTURAL LANDSCAPE WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION**

The major objective for the BBSDP has been further developing our World Heritage nomination for the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

On Friday 11 July 2014 at Lake Condah the Premier, Dr Denis Naphine announced that he has forwarded a letter to the Commonwealth Minister for Environment, Greg Hunt, requesting that the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape be nominated onto the Commonwealth government's World Heritage Tentative List.

On Friday 21 August 2015, Premier Daniel Andrews visited Lake Condah along the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape to reaffirm the support of his new Victorian Government for world heritage listing and announced Budj Bim as Victoria's number one priority for world heritage listing.



The Commonwealth then requested that we have three independent peer reviews of both our Tentative List nomination and Comparative Analysis. The peer reviews were completed and the Executive Summary findings were that;

1. The Budj Bim Comparative Analysis under review is exemplary.
2. The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape is a site of international significance.
3. The site is suitable for World Heritage nomination as a continuing landscape in the evolved cultural landscape category.
4. The three criteria identified in the Comparative Analysis and Tentative List Submission Form are strongly justified.
5. Subject to review and minor revisions, the Tentative List Submission Form for Budj Bim Cultural Landscape should be submitted by the Australian Government to The UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

In May 2015 the new Premier, Daniel Andrews, re-submitted a revised World Heritage Tentative List nomination to the Commonwealth and we are still waiting for a decision on whether it will be accepted or not.

### **Glenelg Aboriginal Partnership 2011 - 2020**

In partnership with the Glenelg Shire Council, Dhauwurd Wurrung Elders Community Health Service and Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, the Glenelg Aboriginal Partnership 2011 – 2020 continues its positive work in the 2014 – 2016 period.

The themes addressed by the partnership include:

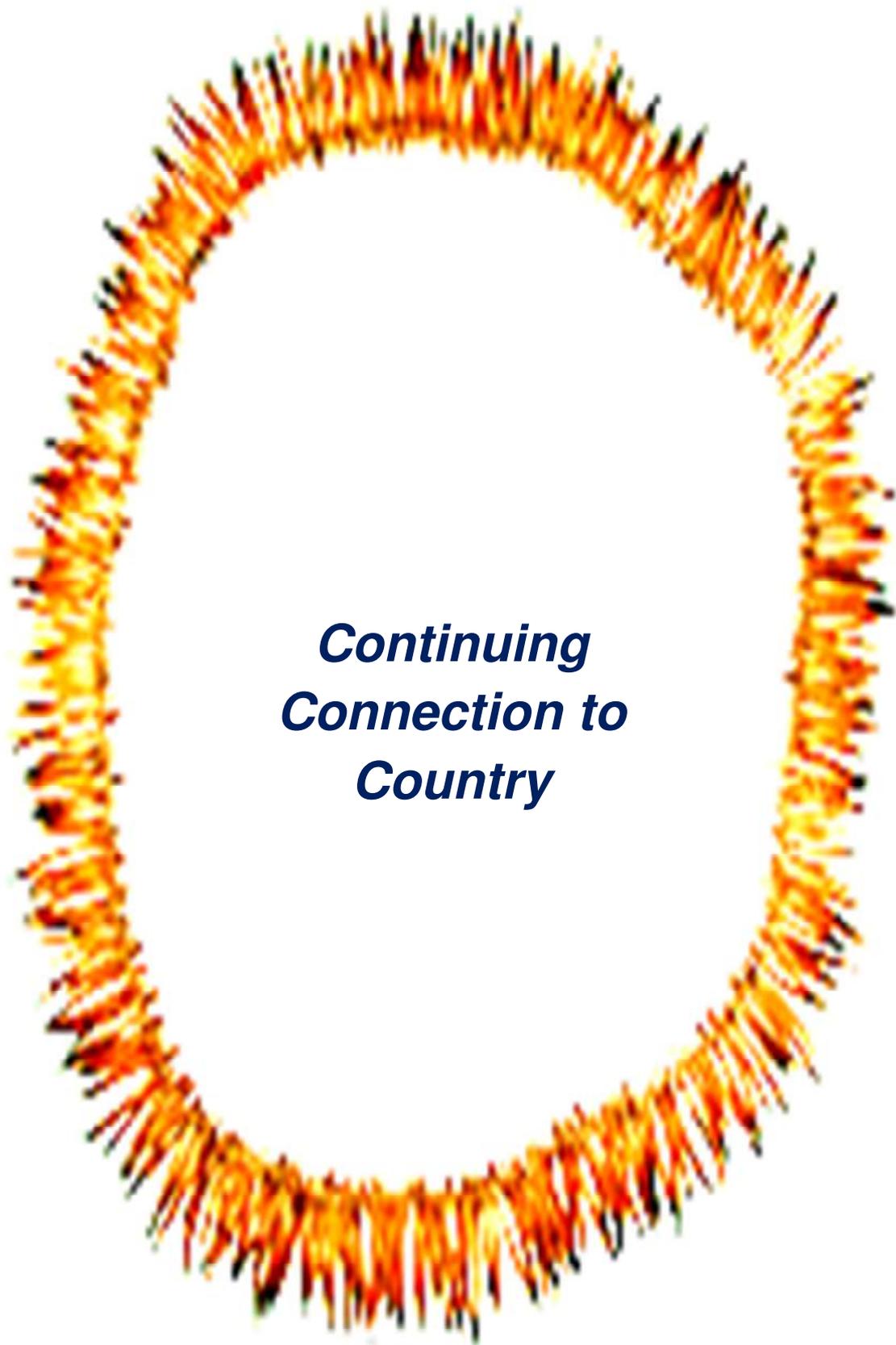
Early Childhood.  
 Schooling.  
 Economic Participation.  
 Engaged, Safe and Healthy Communities.  
 Governance and Leadership.  
 Country and Culture.

The partnership also awarded two scholarship to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during the 2014/2015 period to assist the students with their studies.

### *Reconciliation Week*

As part of the Glenelg Shire Council's Reconciliation week program Gunditj Mirring and the Budj Bim Rangers hosted tours of the Kurtonitj IPA and the Lake Condah Mission.





***Continuing  
Connection to  
Country***

[www.gunditjmirring.com](http://www.gunditjmirring.com)