

Artwork by Thomas Day

# Gunditj Mirring Partnership Project

## Cultural Features of the Budj Bim Landscape Stone Houses

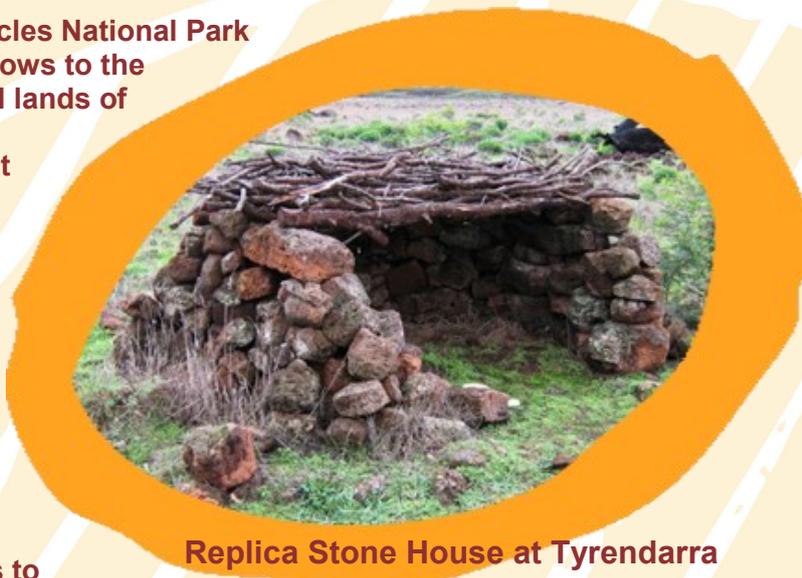
The Budj Bim Landscape extends from Mount Eccles National Park East of Heywood and along the associated lava flows to the coast. This is Gunditjmara country, the traditional lands of the Gunditjmara Nation. Cultural heritage and traditional ecological knowledge is very important throughout the region.

The Gunditjmara people have maintained their connection to country since European settlement. A native title claim was granted in 2007. Gunditjmara people manage ten properties in the Budj Bim area and have an integral role in managing the landscape.

The Gunditj Mirring Partnership Project has compiled examples of cultural heritage and indigenous ecological knowledge into fact sheets to share with the Gunditjmara community and the broader community. A Field Guide to Cultural Features of the Budj Bim Landscape is also available from Gunditj Mirring offices in Heywood and Glenelg Hopkins CMA offices in Hamilton.



Remnants of a stone house



Replica Stone House at Tyrendarra

Stone houses were built by the Gunditjmara people for shelter from the elements. Houses were clustered in permanent villages scattered across the Budj Bim landscape.

Interconnected houses provided living quarters for families, storage for spears, eel baskets and other hunting implements. Reports from early European settlers indicate that some Houses were quite large and villages were comprised of numerous dwellings.

The houses were constructed from uniformly sized basalt blocks which were plentiful in the landscape. The blocks were laid in a circular to oval arrangement with entrances facing northeast, away from the bitter winter winds. The entrance was covered with animal skin and fires were lit near the entrance for warmth. Roofing material varied with woven grasses, timber branches and bark. The floor was lined with animal fur and the walls of the houses were packed with mud for added insulation.

These circular stone structures have mostly disappeared from the landscape since European settlement. They were located around the stony rises, usually near wetlands, waterways and fish traps which were managed by the Gunditjmara. The remnants of stone houses can still be seen in the landscape. Blocks arranged in a semi-circle up to 5m across indicates a House. Stone houses are replicated for display at Tyrendarra.



Remnant of a stone house

The cultural heritage of the Gunditjmara people is very important on the stony rises and throughout the region. Stone Houses are a significant feature as they demonstrate the permanency of Aboriginal people in this landscape. The remnants of villages, large and small Houses and water management features show that the Gunditjmara were thriving. The stony rises are a very productive landscape and the people had no need to be nomadic and follow the seasons.

The Gunditjmara have maintained their connection to country since European settlement. A native title claim was granted in 2007. Gunditjmara people manage ten properties as part of the Budj Bim area and are an integral part of the landscape.

**Contact for more Information**

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The remnants of stone Houses can still be seen in the landscape. Regular shaped blocks arranged in a semi-circle up to 5m across indicates a House. Stone Houses have been replicated for display at Tyrendarra.

Discoveries of the remnants of stone Houses should be reported to Gunditj Mirring and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. It is vitally important that cultural heritage is protected for future generations.

