



ANNUAL REPORT

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1 AUGUST 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL
HERITAGE COUNCIL

WARNING: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THIS DOCUMENT MAY CONTAIN IMAGES OR NAMES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE SINCE PASSED AWAY.

**Artwork designed by Johnathon Smith,
a proud Barapa man.**

“From a young age I would roam the bushland and wetlands across the road from my family’s home looking for adventure. On my adventures I would usually come across my father’s Old People’s sacred sites like scar trees, oven mounds and ceremonial grounds which both my parents taught me all about as a young fella. I would also see animals like kangaroos, bearded dragons, blue tongue lizards, turtles, frogs, kookaburras, emus and wedge tail eagles and I would sometimes sit and watch them from afar and draw them. Later, I would overlay my drawings with Barapa and sometimes Barkindji traditional art patterns and symbols that I still use to this day in my own unique style of traditional art.”

Published by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council

3 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002

November 2019

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We acknowledge the Traditional Aboriginal Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their cultures and their Elders past, present and future.



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CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

This year Council has faced challenges and celebrated successes. We take this time to review the year and talk to you, our stakeholders, about how we can work together to achieve Traditional Owner led management, protection, education and enjoyment of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage for the benefit of all Victorians.

As a group of Traditional Owners, we have lived our culture and supported others to do the same. People may think we are too relaxed when we say we are cultural but, at the end of the day, we drive modern cars, eat modern food, live in a modern context and we apply our understandings of cultural identity to a modern world.

As members of the Council, we help all Traditional Owners navigate their way culturally through the world of legislation and government.

As First Peoples, we know who we are in our identity and in how we choose to live our customs and traditions. If we are true to this idea of being leaders and showing good leadership, we must prioritise the example we set for the young people who follow us.

Since 2006, we have been a united Council and spoken with one voice. This year we have seen great change on Council with members retiring, resigning and being appointed.

- **Member retirement:** Eleanor A Bourke, Mick Harding, Jim Berg and Tim Chatfield
- **Member resignation:** Nellie Flagg and Ron Jones
- **Member appointment:** Racquel Buis-Kerr, Bonnie Chew and Kenny Stewart
- **Chairperson:** Eleanor A Bourke and Rodney Carter
- **Deputy Chairperson:** Tim Chatfield and Sissy Pettit-Havea

On behalf of Council and the community, I want to thank Aunty Eleanor, Uncle Jim, Aunty Nellie, Mick, Tim and Ron for the enormous contributions they have made. I also extend a warm welcome to Racquel and Kenny and welcome back Bonnie after four years away from Council.

As members of the first Council, Aunty Eleanor, Mick, Uncle Jim, Tim and I met as a group for the first time before proclamation of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Act)*. We had an intensive work schedule to undertake prior to its commencement and that important work has never stopped. Since the Act came into effect on 28 May 2007, 23 people have been Council members, and together we have:

- appointed Registered Aboriginal Parties (**RAPs**) to 68% of the state
- twice had our decisions and processes upheld by the Supreme Court
- had our functions and powers enhanced and expanded following a Parliamentary enquiry
- actively contributed to two reviews of the Act
- accepted responsibility for Ancestral Remains in Victoria.

There is still much work to do and it is with you, our stakeholders and supporters, that we will accomplish it.

The Office of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (**OVAHC**) has also been through change this year as we build a dynamic and strong staff to support our work. During the reporting period we thank Stephen Nowicki, Jon Kanoa, Janine Major and Kathy Markotis for their contribution to the position of Director whilst, after the end of the reporting period, we are pleased to welcome Matthew Storey as Director moving forward.

This Report details much of the work that Council has undertaken from 1 August 2018 – 30 June 2019.

In this International Year of Indigenous Languages, we reflect on the strength of our cultures and the many ways Victorian Traditional Owners express and promote their cultural values. The health and wellbeing of our communities is underpinned by strong culture and a strong sense of connection with it. Council have celebrated this connection to culture through language with the *Language as Ownership* event at the Melbourne Museum and *Our Languages Matter* Place Naming Workshops.

Victoria's Registered Aboriginal Parties (**RAPs**) are at the core of Traditional Owners' control of their Cultural Heritage, so Council was pleased to register First Peoples of Millewa-Mallee (**FPMM**) as a Registered Aboriginal Party (**RAP**) in December 2018. Darren Perry, FPMM Chairperson, said:

"Although we've been recognised as the RAP, it's just the start for us. We're under resourced and have been swamped but it's our responsibility and we'll see it through. We've been on a long journey, with three previous Native Title claims. We have lost a lot of Old People along the way, who started this journey with us, and we'd like to honour these Old People who started this journey for us.

I hope all Traditional Owners across the state can form a closer relationship with the Council, as the Council are the link between the legislative world and the Traditional Owners on the ground."

Council's work in acknowledging strong Traditional Owner groups through registration, was supported by the February 2019 Supreme Court decision. Justice Bell upheld Council's registration of the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (**BLCAC**) and, in doing so, validated our strong, independent Registered Aboriginal Parties and their role under the Act to protect Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in Victoria.

Although the inclusion of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage List happened after the close of the reporting period, its significance requires acknowledgement here. The Gunditjmara Peoples' Country, their relationship to Country, their innovation and their custodianship was recognised at a global level with the inclusion of Budj Bim on the List on Saturday 6 July 2019. The strongest protection of our cultural sites is achieved when others learn to care, and the world has said they care. As a Council of Traditional Owners, we understand the work and commitment made by the Gunditjmara Peoples to have their ancient lineal connection to Country recognised. We applaud their strength and resilience in succeeding.

We encourage all Traditional Owners to follow in the footsteps of the Gunditjmara Peoples and let the world look with awe on our culture, the oldest living culture on earth.



RODNEY CARTER

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HERITAGE COUNCIL



GERALDINE ATKINSON

Current term:
7 November 2016 –
6 November 2019



JENNIFER BEER

Current term:
14 August 2017 –
13 August 2020



JIM BERG

(Retired) Term:
28 May 2007 –
30 June 2019



ELEANOR A BOURKE

(Retired) Term:
28 May 2007 –
12 August 2018



RACQUEL BUIS-KERR

Current term:
1 September 2018 –
31 August 2021



RODNEY CARTER

(Chairperson)
Current term:
1 September 2018 –
31 August 2021



TIM CHATFIELD

(Retired) Term:
28 May 2007 –
30 June 2019



BONNIE CHEW

Current term:
1 September 2018
– 31 August 2021



NELLIE FLAGG

(Resigned) Term:
8 July 2013 –
22 March 2019



MICK HARDING

(Retired) Term:
28 May 2007 –
30 August 2018



RON JONES

(Resigned) Term:
7 November 2016 –
27 March 2019



SISSY PETTIT HAVEA
(Deputy Chairperson)

Current term:
7 November 2016 –
6 November 2019



KENNY STEWART

Current term:
1 September 2018 –
31 August 2021



Our spirit cannot rest when our Old People's remains are not in place. By repatriating their remains to rest, we reset time and space to allow their spirit to continue its journey.

Without resting, their spirit is unable to be free. It is captured in darkness and cannot continue to its dreaming. There is a cycle for everyone and everything, including the human spirit, and when the cycle is incomplete or interfered with there are consequences.

For Aboriginal people there is a deep spiritual connection to the universe through our religious beliefs. All is connected. Nothing stands alone and nothing can succeed alone.

SISSY PETTIT HAVEA



STRENGTHENED PRIDE IN AND KNOWLEDGE OF ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

We acknowledge strong Aboriginal communities and will support them to share knowledge and pride in their Culture, more widely across country and generations.

When people are proud of their culture, they protect it. Pride grows through cultural connectedness, allowing Aboriginal People to understand their culture and identity more deeply. Council recognises that supporting current and future generations of Aboriginal People to strengthen their pride in our culture is the best way to protect our heritage.

“Council contributes to the cultural conversation for the protection of significant Aboriginal sites within the state. It is important that as members we work collectively to ensure all Aboriginal groups’ cultural rights are respected and recognised.”

— Geraldine Atkinson

OUR LANGUAGES MATTER - PLACE NAMING WORKSHOPS

The purpose of the workshops, developed with ThinkPlace and presented with Geographic Names Victoria, is to provide opportunities for Traditional Owners to promote the importance of local Aboriginal languages in the naming of roads, geographic features and localities. Importantly, participants from Local and State Government are supported to explore ways to establish strong professional relationships with Traditional Owners and enable future collaborative naming activities.

“Our Cultural Heritage is best understood through demonstrating respect for Traditional Owners – our knowledge, our skills, our appreciation of our heritage. The practicing of our culture and traditions makes us stronger and this strength offers all Victorians opportunities to value, understand and celebrate the unique Cultural Heritage we care for on behalf of all of us.”

— Rodney Carter, Chairperson

Council strives for Aboriginal People to speak for, and with, their Cultural Heritage. Using language in place naming is an important contribution to reclamation and use of Aboriginal languages by Aboriginal Victorians. Traditional Owner managed language and Country are fundamental to Council’s purpose and to these workshops.

As well as running the workshops to acclaim in Victoria, Council’s place naming workshops were presented at the United Nations in New York. Project partner, the Office of Geographic Names, addressed the United Nations recently as part of the Australian delegation at the biennial UN meeting on geographic place names. Delegates from more than 100 nations attended and praised the project’s engagement with Victoria’s Traditional Owners and the promotion of the use of Indigenous languages.

LANGUAGE AS OWNERSHIP

To celebrate the International Year of Indigenous Languages, Council presented *Language as Ownership*, on 30 April at Melbourne Museum. The panel discussion was co-presented with Museums Victoria and the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Held at the Museum Theatre, the event was attended by over 100 people who applauded its value to both the Aboriginal and broader communities.

Introduced by Aunty Geraldine Atkinson and moderated by Maddison Miller, the discussion was between Harley Dunnolly-Lee, Darren Griffin, Isobel Morphy-Walsh, Dr Lyndon Ormond-Parker and Elly Patira. The panellists discussed how colonisers have used language to create ownership and how Aboriginal People are using those systems to reclaim it. They explored what part language plays in Aboriginal self-determination and how it functions within the context of imposed and subverted power dynamics.

The event was booked out, with audience members loving the “thought provoking and engaging event”. The panel of guest speakers were praised as “wonderfully knowledgeable and expressive, to the point where several members of the audience had tears in their eyes from the passionate words of Isobel Morphy-Walsh.”

Council meets with the Hon. Gavin Jennings,
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

A significant statutory function and cultural responsibility of Council is to promote public awareness and understanding of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in Victoria. Complementing this function is Council's role to promote and facilitate research into Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

Council strategically engages with communities, organisations, government departments and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to build mutual respect in the broader community.

Council supports RAPs and other Traditional Owners to improve Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal People's understanding and enjoyment of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

"Everybody in this state needs to learn and understand Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. We will all be better for the experience."

— Mick Harding

REFERENCE/STEERING GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

- Aboriginal Treaty Working Group
- Joint Working Group with the Heritage Council of Victoria
- Marine and Coastal Policy Stakeholder Reference Group
- Right People for Country Steering Committee
- The University of Melbourne Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Oversight Committee
- Victorian Aboriginal Local Government Action Plan Implementation Partnership Group
- Victorian Climate Change Advisory Panel

"Some people, but not all, have an awareness of Aboriginal issues. Maybe they haven't met an Aboriginal person before. I think when you tell them where you're from, eyebrows can raise a little but it also becomes a point of interest."

— Tim Chatfield

PROJECTS

- Donald Thomson Collection Review
- Marine and Spatial Summit and Co-Design Lab
- Victorian Collections/Culture Victoria redevelopment project

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Certificate IV
- Native Title Conference 2019
- RAP Forum November 2018 in Nagambie and May 2019 in Ballarat
- NSW Office of Environment & Heritage Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee

"Council's participation in the Certificate IV is an important step in building self-esteem within the community. In teaching our young people we see them grow in stature."

— Kenny Stewart

DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

POLICY, STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
 - State Environment Protection Policy (Waters)
- Infrastructure Victoria
 - Mallee Regional Profile
 - Ovens Murray Regional Profile
 - Loddon Campaspe Regional Profile
 - Great South Coast Regional Profile
 - Gippsland Regional Profile
 - Goulburn Regional Profile
 - Central Highlands Regional Profile
 - Barwon Regional Profile
 - Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Profile
- Office of the Commissioner for Environment and Sustainability
 - State of the Environment
 - State of the Yarra
 - State of the Forest

APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORISED AND ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICERS

Council's responsibility to advise the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the training and appointment of Authorised Officers and Aboriginal Heritage Officers, supports its work in effective management of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. The Officers enforce the Act and have responsibility for Cultural Heritage Audits and assess compliance with Cultural Heritage Management Plans (**CHMPs**) and Permits. During this reporting period, Council was pleased to advise the Minister on the appointment of seven Aboriginal Heritage Officers, four Authorised Officers and the reappointment of an Authorised Officer.

"Each year approximately 600 Cultural Heritage Management Plans are undertaken to manage the protection of our Cultural Heritage. Stronger enforcement measures came into effect with the 2016 amendments to the Act. But our heritage is still being destroyed and it breaks my heart."

— Ron Jones





COUNCIL CONTROL OVER ITS OPERATIONS

It is Council's desire to adopt an autonomous organisational and financial structure. More defined independence was recommended in the *2015 Review of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria*, contemplated in many of the 2016 amendments to the Act and is supported by the Victorian Government's commitment to self-determination for Victorian Aboriginal Peoples. We believe this to be Council's next significant step in protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage through vibrant and engaged communities.

This change will allow Council to be in full control of its operations, including appointing and managing staff in the OVAHC, managing its own resources, attracting funding and partnerships, and building capacity to take on the functions of Aboriginal Victoria's Heritage Services in the future.

We look forward to the support of Government in realising this aspiration, enabling us to more appropriately engage with our responsibilities. Providing true independence for Council is the only way it can undertake its statutory responsibilities, on behalf of Traditional Owners and the Minister, with self-determination at its core.

As we progress towards this, a Council managed and respectful space for the safekeeping of Ancestors and secret or sacred objects is essential. A fully resourced OVAHC, with increased partnerships and projects, will work together with RAPs to achieve protection of our Cultural Heritage and secure our most ancient culture.



OVAHC staff tour on Gunditmara Country

© Cape Schanck, BLCAC Country, Szcupcake

INCREASING REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY COVERAGE, CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Council is supported by the Act in affirming the primacy of Traditional Owners in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage management.

Under the Act, Council determines RAP applications to give Traditional Owner groups formal recognition and authority to exercise Cultural Heritage management over a given area. Council strives for 100% RAP coverage of Victoria, ensuring Traditional Owners are recognised as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal heritage.

At the forefront of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage protection and celebration in Victoria, RAPs provide employment for Traditional Owners on Country, development of cultural resources for Traditional Owners, partnerships for non-Traditional Owners and contribute to the state-wide protection of Cultural Heritage through the exercise of their statutory responsibilities.

“The protection of Victoria’s Aboriginal Cultural Heritage is of paramount importance to the Victorian community. But protection needs to be adequately resourced. Council and RAPs need to be resourced.”

— Nellie Flagg

One of the challenges faced by RAPs is that their positive influence on planning and development necessarily affects a decrease in CHMPs that would otherwise be lodged. This is because the people that develop on Country are doing so respectfully and without destroying culture.

Through the Act, RAPs are given the means to be heard on much development in the landscape and to keep our Culture on Country. Every time Aboriginal Cultural Heritage becomes artefacts – they’re removed from Country, categorised and catalogued - it is not what they were intended for. These Cultural Objects are the remnants of our Old People, show the way they lived within the landscape and contribute to our identity and understanding of Country. They are the physical manifestation of our ongoing connection to Country. Removal of them then can be seen as an ongoing manifestation of our Peoples’ dispossession from Country. The Council supports RAPs to stop this damaging process, protect and share our vast cultural legacy.

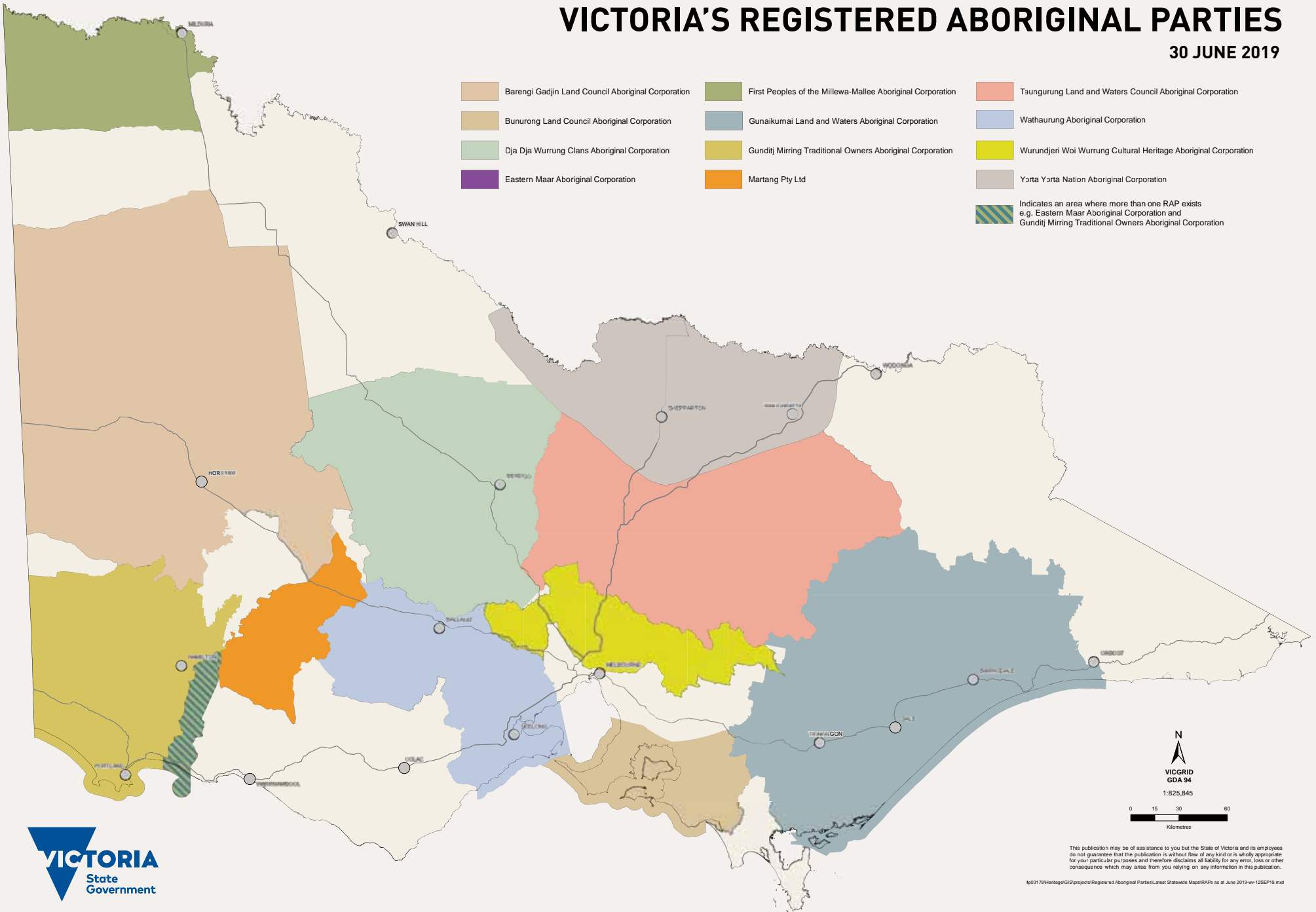
A fundamental responsibility of Council is to determine applications for the registration of RAPs. In this reporting period, Council received one RAP application, declined eleven application zones, appointed one RAP for part of its application area and varied the boundaries of one RAP.

At 30 June 2019, Council had appointed twelve RAPs which collectively cover 68.28% of the state:

- Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (**BGLCAC**)
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (**DDWCAC**)
- Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (**EMAC**)
- First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (**GLWCAC**)
- Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (**GMTAC**)
- Martang Pty. Ltd. (**Martang**)
(Note: on 1 August 2019 the registration of Martang Pty. Ltd. was revoked under S.156(2a) of the Act)
- Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation (**TLWCAC**)
- Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (**WAC**)
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (**WWCHAC**)
- Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (**YYNAC**).

VICTORIA'S REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTIES

30 JUNE 2019



COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council's decision-making processes are strong and robust. In instances where applications for new RAPs have been declined, the reason is often that the applicant lacked inclusivity and representativeness of other Traditional Owners with rights to the application area. Council's Reason for Decision documents are available on its website.

"Since its inception, a guiding principle of Council has been that we stand united in our decision making. We have worked hard, we have embraced challenges as opportunities, and we have done so for the collective protection of our irreplaceable heritage."

— Eleanor A Bourke

Council encourages all Traditional Owner organisations to be proactive and to explore negotiation and conciliation options available for the resolution of boundary and membership disputes. We understand the complexities and challenges faced by Traditional Owner groups needing to resolve competing claims, and strongly encourage them to meet and find solutions.

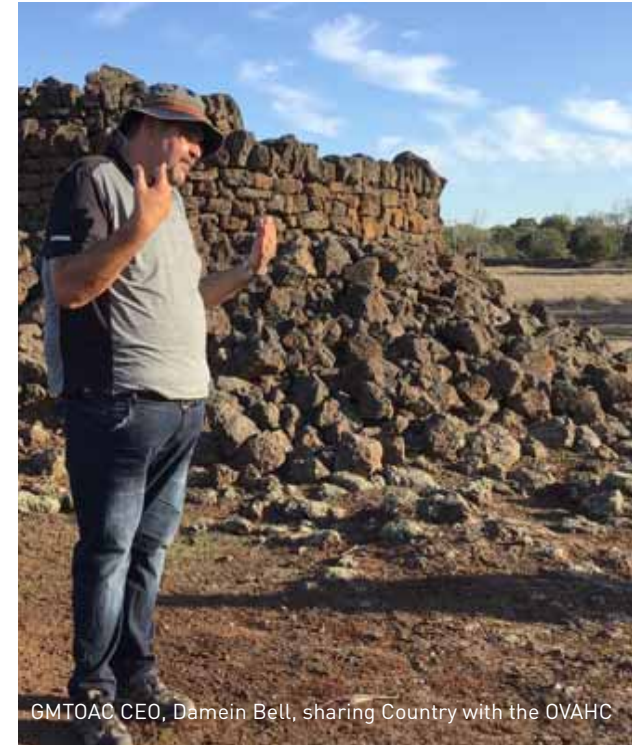
Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

At its meeting on 7 February 2019, Council declined the RAP application from BGLCAC in relation to an area to the south west of its existing RAP area which included the Grampians National Park/Gariwerd.

In a separate decision on 7 February 2019, Council also declined BGLC's RAP application in relation to an area to the south west of its existing RAP area, which commenced at the South Australian border and extended easterly to Harrow.

Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council Aboriginal Corporation formerly known as Yaluk-ut Weelam Elders Council Aboriginal Corporation

At its meeting on 4 April 2019, Council declined the application in relation to an area which extended from the mouth of the Werribee River to, and included, Wilsons Promontory National Park.



GMTOAC CEO, Damein Bell, sharing Country with the OVAHC



INCREASING REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY COVERAGE, CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation

At its meeting on 11 October 2018, Council declined the application in relation to the area of overlap with GMTOAC between the Shaw and Hopkins Rivers in the south-west of Victoria.

At its meeting on 7 February 2019, Council declined the application in relation to the area which encompassed the Martang RAP area, the Grampians National Park/Gariwerd, and an area east of Gariwerd to the Wimmera River in the north and the Ararat-St Arnaud Rd in the east.

In a separate decision on 7 February 2019, Council also declined the application in relation to two areas: an area west of Ballarat with Skipton at its centre, Beaufort to the north and Cressy to the south; and a separate area in Victoria's surf coast district which incorporated Airey's Inlet, Point Addis Marine National Park, Anglesea and surrounding areas.

At its meeting on 4 April 2019, Council declined the application in relation to two areas: an area east of Gariwerd bordered by the RAP areas of DDWCAC, BGLCAC, Martang and WAC; and a separate area from Warrnambool to Winchelsea which incorporated the great Otway National Park, Apollo Bay and Lorne.

First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation

At its meeting on 5 December 2018, Council approved, in part, the application to be registered as a RAP under the Act. The area of appointment is bound by the Murray River to the north, the Calder Highway to the east, a line which extends horizontally from Hattah to the South Australian and Victorian border to the south, and the South Australian and Victorian border to the west.

At its meeting on 4 April 2019, Council acknowledged correspondence from FPMAC notifying Council of the withdrawal of its application in relation to the area south of its existing RAP area.



Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

At its meeting on 11 October 2018, Council declined the application in relation to the area of overlap with EMAC between the Shaw and Hopkins Rivers in the south-west of Victoria.

At its meeting on 7 February 2019, Council declined the application in relation to an area to the north west of its existing RAP area, which commenced at the South Australian border and extended easterly to Harrow.

Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation

At its meeting on 8 February 2019, Council appointed TLWCAC as a RAP for the part of its RAP application area that aligned with the area of its Recognition and Settlement Agreement (**RSA**) (entered into with the State in October 2018). This decision was made pursuant to section 151(2A) of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, which requires Council to appoint a RAP applicant as a RAP over that part of its RAP application area that lies within the boundaries of its RSA area.



© Mount Buffalo Plateau, TLWCAC Country, CC proper dave

COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR RAPS

Council is not only responsible for appointing RAPS but also managing, overseeing and supervising their operations. Council will continue to support RAPS to be financially sustainable, well-governed and valuable to their communities. Advocating for their concerns is central to this role of working with RAPS to better protect and manage Aboriginal Cultural Heritage across the state. Council's vision for the next reporting period is of a deeper relationship with all RAPS, supporting them to more effectively undertake their statutory and cultural responsibilities across the state.

SUPREME COURT DECISION

In its decision-making role, the Council is required to adhere to the provisions of the Act and the requirements of administrative law. Its decisions are subject to review in the Supreme Court, ensuring accountability in affording due process to RAP applicants and other parties.

On 12 February 2019, Justice Bell of the Supreme Court of Victoria upheld Council's registration of BLCAC.

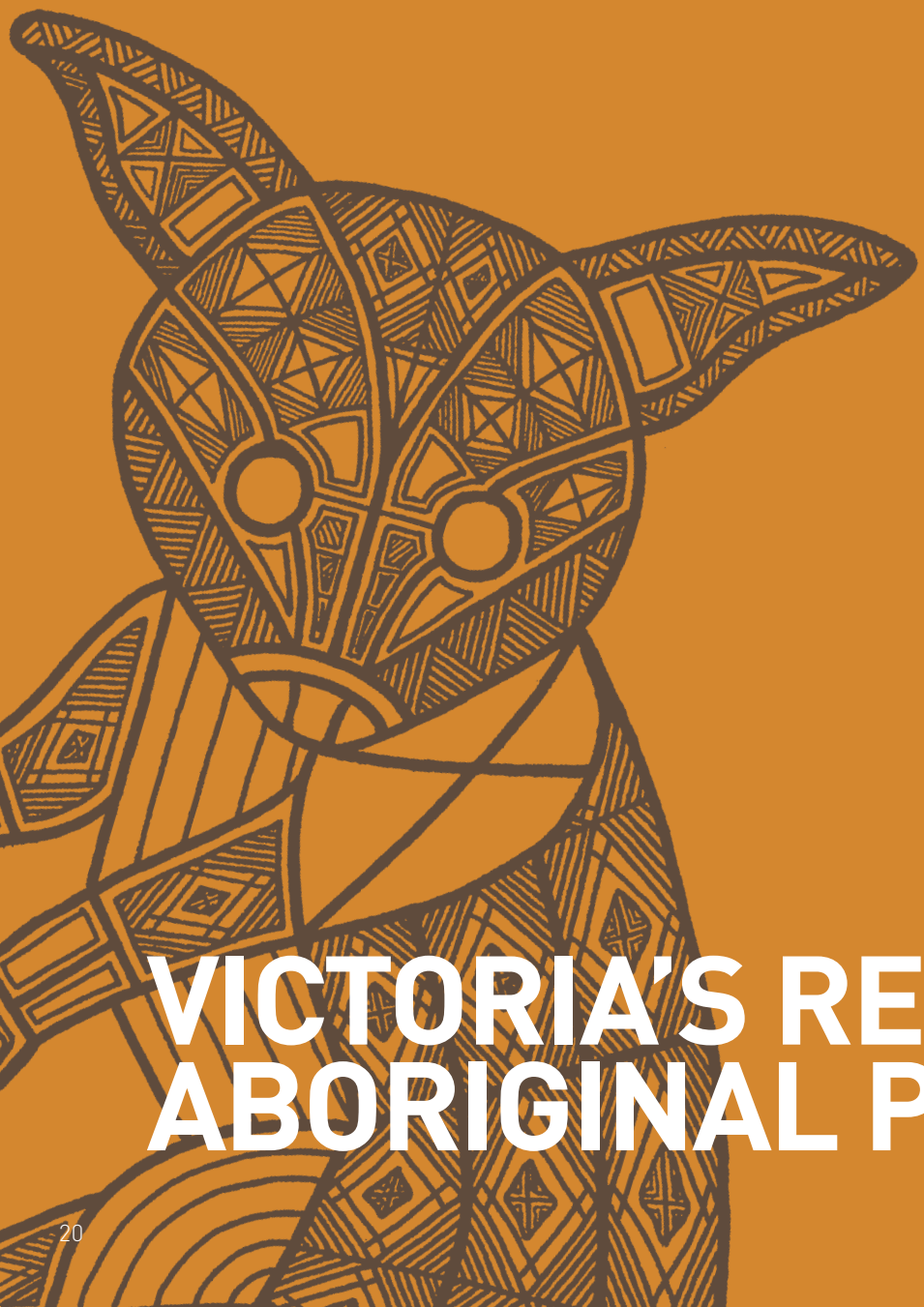
On 19 July 2017 Council appointed BLCAC as a RAP over an area of Victoria to the south-east of metropolitan Melbourne. BLCAC's RAP appointment

area is bordered by Port Phillip Bay to the west, Leongatha to the east, Warragul to the north, and Victoria's coastline to the south. Carolyn Briggs and the Boon Wurrung Foundation Ltd (**BWFL**) sought a review by the Supreme Court of the Council decision to appoint BLCAC as a RAP in October 2017.

The matter, heard by Justice Bell on 27 September 2018, is only the second review of a decision of the Council. A key issue in the proceeding was whether the Council was correct in finding that BLCAC was a body representing the Traditional Owners of the area it was appointed for.

Justice Bell noted that, throughout its consideration of the applications of BWFL and BLCAC, Council had "emphasised the importance of recognising as a RAP a single organisation capable of representing, and effectively representing in fact, all Bunurong people and Traditional Owners." In its decision making, Justice Bell considered that Council's approach to "resolve the many complex and highly sensitive issues raised" had been "cautious and gradual".

The decision validated Council's application of an inclusionary policy framework and consideration of issues relating to traditional knowledge and responsibility as well as Apical Ancestry, amongst other factors.



VICTORIA'S REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTIES



© Wimmera River, BGLCAC Country, Ed Dunens



© Mount Arapiles, BGLCAC Country, Ed Dunens

BARENGI GADJIN LAND COUNCIL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

16a Darlot Street
Horsham VIC 3400
Phone: (03) 5381 0977
Email: admin@bglc.com.au
www.bglc.com.au



The Corporation represents Traditional Owners from the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples, who were recognised in a 2005 Native Title Consent Determination, the first in south-eastern Australia. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 37,126km² in the north west of the state, the corporation covers 15.64% of Victoria.

We have been pleased this year to continue work on the Ranch at Dimboola. Undertaking land management works on the billabong and surrounding area at this important location is the start of our plan to maintain water to the site and start conservation works on the Ranch buildings themselves.

Urgently required works are being undertaken at Ebenezer Mission to help conserve this hugely significant cultural place for the Wotjobaluk Peoples and all Victorians. These works are priority conservation works, including the rectification of moisture penetration, roof works, repair of drainage and storm-water disposal system and structural and render repair to the church, dormitory, kitchen and toilet block buildings.

We have been working with other RAPs to help develop both the North Central Catchment Management Authority and Central Highlands Water's first Reconciliation Action Plans. Both these authorities have developed plans to work together on Country with Traditional Owners and build positive and respectful relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Wimmera Catchment Management Authority have been working with us on the Lower Wimmera River Cultural Heritage Survey. The project's long-term aim is to protect assets such as scar trees, shell middens and artefacts.

"We're mapping these sites for our next generation to learn what is out there. A lot of trees were recorded in the 80s and 90s and we're finding scar trees that weren't recorded then in retracing their steps."

— Ben Muir



© BLCAC Country, BLCAC



© BLCAC Country, mattyv.au

BUNURONG LAND COUNCIL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

16/395 Nepean Highway
Frankston VIC 3199
Phone: (03) 9770 1273
Email: admin@bunuronglc.org.au
www.bunuronglc.org



The Corporation represents the Bunurong People of the South-Eastern Kulin Nation. We aim to preserve and protect the sacred lands and waterways of our Ancestors, their places, traditional cultural practices, and stories. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 5,439km² in the south of the state, the corporation covers 2.29% of Victoria.

Our work and our staffing has grown exponentially since we were appointed as a RAP in 2017. We now have an office of nine staff (with more to come) and 28 in the field. As an organisation we decided that agreement making under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act was a process that would provide better outcomes for our mob. To that end we've been undertaking a series of Country Planning Workshops where we bring together members

from all over Australia together on Bunurong Country. We're focused on collecting the hopes and aspirations of our members which will allow us to identify priorities for our Country and our people.

Whilst the majority of our work is focussed on undertaking our statutory functions, we've used this as an opportunity to upskill our field workers. We have had a lot of engagement with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (**DELWP**), providing consultation on a range of projects has ensured we have an increased understanding of happenings on Country. We have been working in partnership with DELWP to develop positions within forestry and engagement which will assist our capacity to engage more broadly.

Working with partners this year we have been able to salvage and record many of our Old Peoples' artefacts. The Victorian Level Crossing Removal Project worked with us on an archaeological dig at Seaford this year as part of their state-wide project. More than 100 Aboriginal Cultural Artefacts were found at the site between the railway line and beach. After the artefacts have been catalogued, they will be returned to our custodianship.

We also worked on another artefact scatter, of more than 1,300 artefacts, as part of pre-construction works for a new roundabout at the Woolamai/Phillip Island Tourist Park. Estimates on the age of the artefacts, including stone axes and other tools, date them from at least 1-300 years.

"This is the biggest stone artefact site ever found on Phillip Island. Now there is dateable material that will show how old the site was. This dating will give us a picture of the timelines and what people were doing."

— Robert Ogden

Looking to the future, we are investigating development of a Cultural Centre at Point Nepean. The Cultural Centre is planned for 2021 and will provide a place to tell the multi-layered Aboriginal history of our Country and provide the community with an educational resource.



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DJA DJA WURRUNG CLANS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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The Corporation represents the Dja Dja Wurrung People. Our aspiration is that every Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 17,369km² in the north and centre of the state, the corporation covers 7.32% of Victoria.

We are pleased to have commenced formal discussions with Buloke Shire Council to develop a local level Treaty. This important commitment to acknowledgment of Traditional Ownership and connection to Country would strengthen relationships to deliver partnerships around the Recognition Settlement Agreement (RSA), formalise recognition of Traditional Owners and deliver tangible outcomes.

Maintaining strong relationships with local government is important to undertaking our work. We've been strengthening our engagement by running workshops with the City of Greater Bendigo to educate planners about responsibilities and how their work intersects with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

A major new strategic direction by the City of Greater Bendigo was launched this year when Councillors unanimously voted to work with us to dual name the municipality's key sites. Recognition of Country and Traditional Owners' relationship to it, is supported by broader community understanding through place naming.

"We can't change the past, but we can certainly change the future."

— Mayor Margaret O'Rourke

Collaborating with organisations on Country has also been a key focus. Delivering cultural awareness workshops to the Fosterville Goldmine has gone a long way to establishing strong consultative involvement in their exploration programs. Further to this, we have worked closely with Campaspe Shire Council and other Traditional Owners to develop new Council Policy, 'Recognising Traditional Owners'. The Policy will promote community awareness of Traditional Owner responsibilities and broad cultural awareness.

Our RSA, notwithstanding the many challenges we face, is being successfully implemented. In October 2018, the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, launched our joint management plan with Parks Victoria for six regional parks that are now subject to Aboriginal Title.

A ground-breaking agreement with the Anglican Church has seen recognition of Traditional Owner's dispossession from Country. The Church has made a commitment to work with our Community Support Program on capacity building projects in the future.

We partner every year with the Bendigo Football Netball League to support our own annual Indigenous round, the Wirama Shield. All 10 clubs participated and a feature match provides an opportunity to recognise the Traditional Owners and their culture. 2019 was the first time, all senior netball and football teams were wearing jumpers designed by Dja Dja Wurrung artists.

"This is an exciting time for Dja Dja Wurrung people as events like this place us back in the landscape that we were removed from. It also provides a relaxed place for the whole community to get together and support local sport."

— Trent Nelson



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EASTERN MAAR ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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The Corporation represents the Traditional Owners of south-western Victoria who identify as Maar, Eastern Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung, Peek Whurrong, Kirrae Whurrung, Kuurn Kopan Noot and/or Yarro waetch (Tooram Tribe) amongst others, who are Aboriginal People and who have an association with the former Framlingham Aboriginal Mission Station. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 1,297km² in the south west of the state, the corporation covers 0.55% of Victoria.

A landmark report by the Royal Society of Victoria, collaboratively undertaken with us and other Traditional Owners, has found it is likely that the Moyjil (Point Ritchie) site shows habitation as early as 120,000 years ago. This ground-breaking research calls for further study that Traditional Owners hope will cement that figure.



FIRST PEOPLES OF THE MILLEWA-MALLEE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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The Corporation represents the Latji Latji, Ngintait, Nyeri Nyeri and Wergaia Traditional Owners of the Millewa Mallee. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 7,870km² in the north of the state, the corporation covers 3.31% of Victoria.

After a long journey, we have welcomed a significant decision by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council to recognise us as a Registered Aboriginal Party.

"We've been on a long journey, with three previous Native Title claims. We have lost a lot of Old People along the way, who started this journey with us. I'd like to honour these Old People who started this journey for us."

— *Darren Perry*

Our work has only just started but already we have worked with the Mildura Council Aboriginal Action Committee to welcome the community to a corroboree on Mildura's river front during NAIDOC Week. Developing strong relationships with local council's is fundamental to our work on Country and with the community.



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GUNAIKURNAI LAND AND WATERS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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The Corporation represents the Traditional Owners of Gippsland, the clans of Gunaikurnai being Brabalung, Brabraulung, Brayakaulung, Krauatungalung and Tatungalung. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 25,770km² in the south east of the state, the corporation covers 10.85% of Victoria.

Our work with the Victorian Government this year has been significant. We have realised the state's first plan to give the Gunaikurnai Peoples joint management rights to care for ten parks and reserves in the North East, including Buchan Caves

Reserve, Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park, Mitchell River National Park, Tarra-Bulga National Park and the Knob Reserve in Stratford.

“Working out in the field and in our parks is one of the best things you could possibly do, you realise where our Ancestors walked and what they did for us thousands of years ago.”

— Grattan Mullett Jnr.

We are pleased to have developed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (**CMA**). This is the third MoU between the organisations, who have been working together for over ten years. The partnership has increased understanding of Cultural Heritage and protection of Cultural Heritage sites across the region.

Additionally, a partnership with the West Gippsland CMA, funded through the National Landcare Program, saw our Natural Resource Management (**NRM**) crew work on a significant saltmarsh site. Part of the Corner Inlet Connections Project, the works were undertaken on a private 550-acre property and it is hoped that other landowners will see the benefit of working with a RAP.

“Many landowners aren't aware that they have Aboriginal artefacts such as scar trees, shell middens or even burial sites on their properties, and by working with us they can help us record, protect and manage our Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.”

— Russell Mullett

We've signed MoU's with West and East Gippsland CMAs and are working with the East Gippsland CMA along the banks of the Tambo River. Our NRM crew are pleased to have improved access and revegetation projects on Country.

To promote greater cultural awareness through the community, we are working in partnership Monash University to support the development of scientific studies that will guide and inform cultural interpretation of past climate and environmental change. We were also excited to work with the Cubby Care Early Learning Centre in Bairnsdale to rename its rooms in language. The new rooms were voted on by the children and staff have new shirts with designs by Aboriginal artists.



GUNDITJ MIRRORING TRADITIONAL OWNERS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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The Corporation represents the Gunditjmarra People of south western Victoria and holds culturally significant properties across Gunditjmarra Country on behalf of the Gunditjmarra community. It promotes and realises the continuing connection to Country by Gunditjmarra People through its caring for Country programs and projects across its properties and all of Gunditjmarra Country. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 12,627km² in the south west of the state, the corporation covers 5.32% of Victoria.

2019 has been a year of achievements. After a campaign stretching back more than a decade, our Budj Bim Cultural Landscape was added to the World Heritage List at a UNESCO meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan. The first Australian World

Heritage site to be listed exclusively for its cultural values, the listing recognises the importance of the aquaculture systems for the Gunditjmarra People and the world.

“Our Ancestors who led the way for us, they are still here with us; their ingenuity still shows in the aquaculture systems that are still operational to this day,”

— Uncle Denis Rose

Pivotal research by the Royal Society of Victoria has found it is likely that the Moyjil (Point Ritchie) site shows habitation as early as 120,000 years ago. The landmark report, collaboratively undertaken with us and other Traditional Owners, will now encourage further study at the site.

We were invited to Canada by the Canadian government to discuss our management of Indigenous Protected Areas and how they can learn from our experiences. Sharing research and practical management with Traditional Owners internationally is also central to the work we are doing at Budj Bim.

Research we commissioned from Flinders University, using underground imaging technology,

has helped locate 14 unmarked graves at Lake Condah Mission Station. The results, published in the Journal of the Archaeological and Anthropological Society of Victoria, will contribute to the ongoing use of the site as a cemetery and memorial.

Our participation in the Glenelg Aboriginal Partnership Group, has realised events across the Shire to celebrate the community’s shared history, culture and achievements. The Group also supported the development of a documentary film, ‘Demystifying History – Indigenous History in the Glenelg Shire’ that won the Local Government category 2019 Hart Award.

“This award highlights why reconciliation is an important part of the community moving forward together as one, as told from the perspective of the Gunditjmarra People.”

— Mayor Anita Rank



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© Martang Country, mzeast

MARTANG PTY. LTD.



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Recognised as the RAP for an area of 4,477km² in the west of the state, the company covers 1.89% of Victoria.

Martang have been working with other RAPs to help develop Central Highlands Water's first Reconciliation Action Plan. This plan will help the authority realise their vision to enhance their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and build positive and respectful relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to support healthy living.

"The identification, preservation and protection (management) of Aboriginal Culture is fundamental to the rights and responsibilities of Traditional Owners, which are enshrined in state, national and international legislation, policies and conventions on the protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage."

— Tim Chatfield



© Martang Country, Royston Rascals



© Mount Buller, TLWACAC Country, Tim Connors

TAUNGURUNG LAND AND WATERS COUNCIL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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The Corporation represents the interests of the clans of the Taungurung — Benbendore-balluk, Buthera-balluk, Gunung-Yellam, Leuk-willam, Moomoomgoonbeet, Nattarak-balluk, Ngurai-illam-balluk, Nira-balluk, Tenbringnellams, Walledriggers, Waring-illam-balluk, Warrinillum, Yaran-illam, Yirun-illam-balluk, and Yowung-

illam-balluk. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 20,215km² in the north and centre of the state, the corporation covers 8.51% of Victoria.

This year we have been working to increase our local government authorities' knowledge and understanding of responsibilities and processes in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and corresponding regulations. A large piece of work has been investigating planning permit approvals which have been deemed not to require a CHMP based on alleged significant ground disturbance in areas of Cultural Heritage sensitivity. This work aims to assist local government authorities in mitigating their risk of causing harm to Cultural Heritages, provides more accountability for Heritage Advisors, and ensures Traditional Owners are appropriately consulted regarding works on Country.

We have been working in close collaboration with our key stakeholders running a series of forums local government authorities, catchment management authorities and land managers. Ultimately, these quarterly collective forums are educational; but they also allow us to streamline our engagement and create better joint processes.

We've been undertaking capacity and community building work running cultural camps and broadening our community engagement in State government policy through a series of community consultations. Campaspe Shire Council have also worked closely with us and other Traditional Owners to develop new Council Policy, 'Recognising Traditional Owners'. The Policy will promote community awareness of Traditional Owner responsibilities and broad cultural awareness.

We're also broadening our investment horizons with the signing of our first renewable energy partnership with DELWP Hume Region and Indigo Power. This flagship project saw the installation of 50 solar panels on the DELWP Broadford office.

"Working in collaboration is so important in maintaining strong relationships."

— Matthew Burns



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WATHAURUNG ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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The Corporation represents the Wadawurrung Peoples and aims to restore Traditional knowledge and authority over the management of Wadawurrung Country for the betterment of those living on, prospering from and/or simply enjoying its land, waterways and coastal areas. Operating out of Geelong and Ballarat we are now involved in education, water, language, and provision of anthropological services and moving towards expanding and developing our skills and capacity to provide our own self-sufficient consultancy service.

Recognised as the RAP for an area of 10,615km² in the south west of the state, the corporation covers 4.47% of Victoria.

We are pleased to be moving into more proactive protection of Cultural Heritage on Country by working with DELWP to identify cultural values and distinctive landscapes on Country which provides added level of protection at the planning level. We are also working in partnership with RMIT, Deakin University and the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) to develop our Indigenous Agriculture Mapping Project whereby we will look at the landscape of our Country. Adopting a wholistic approach to understanding the landscape allows us to identify cultural relationships to Country, to better understand how places and ecological systems inter-relate; and to understand how this knowledge was used by our People for agricultural purposes.

Climate change presents a challenge for us protecting Cultural Heritage on Country. We're looking for ways to increase recording of our coastal sites and increase our involvement in management of the coastal land and waters.

2019 has been significant for us with progressing our first intangible heritage registration on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. Registration provides opportunity for us to determine how our intangible heritage is used, developed or managed. We're looking to build on this registration and are investigating opportunities for future registrations and protections.



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WURUNDJERI WOI WURRUNG CULTURAL HERITAGE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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The Corporation comprises 150 members, direct descendants of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People and was established in 1985 for the benefit of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Community. The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung have lived for thousands of years on their traditional homelands. As Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung community have significant responsibilities to maintain Cultural Practice and to care for Country. The Corporation have a range of income generating services to ensure the preservation of Culture and Country. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 6,107km² in the east and centre of the state, the corporation covers 2.57% of Victoria.

We provide comprehensive Cultural Heritage services including discharging our RAP responsibilities, due diligence assessments, assessment of CHMPs, Cultural Heritage & interpretation, Cultural Values recordings and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung heritage projects.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people and Corporation are named in the *Wilip gin Birrarung murrong Act 2017* [Yarra River Protection Act] as the Traditional Custodians of Birrarung (Yarra River). The Corporation is actively working with DELWP and Responsible Public Entities who make decisions about waterways on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung homelands. The current foci include Birrarung, Werribee and Maribyrong rivers and catchments.

Our land management area, the Narrap Team, focuses on the protection, management and enhancement of environmentally and culturally significant places on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country.

The Corporation offers a range of Cultural Practices that can be experienced by the wider community including welcomes, smoking ceremonies, dance and music performances, as well as gifts for exchange and commissioned art works. Additionally we provide a language and naming services in Woi wurrung, the traditional language of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people.

Cultural awareness is key to building partnerships and mutual understanding. The Corporation delivers cross-cultural education to the following sectors: Education (early learning – VCE & tertiary), Government, Corporate, Not-for-Profit, and Community groups. It is considered respectful cultural protocol to discuss upcoming projects or initiatives on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country. We encourage the community to meet with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elders for meaningful dialogue and ensure that your project or initiative is culturally respectful.



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© Barmah, YYNAC Country, Michael Rawle

YORTA YORTA NATION ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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The Corporation represents peoples with undeniable bloodlines to the Original Ancestors of the Land of the Yorta Yorta Nation. These bloodlines link Yorta Yorta Peoples' past, present and future to one another, with traditional laws, customs, beliefs and sovereignty intact. Recognised as the RAP for an area of 13,199km² in the north west of the state, the corporation covers 5.56% of Victoria.

We have been working with other RAPs to help develop the North Central CMA's first Reconciliation Action Plan. This plan will help the CMA realise their vision to walk and work together on Country with Traditional Owner custodians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations as equals to care for Country.

Campaspe Shire Council have worked closely with us and other Traditional Owners to develop new Council Policy, 'Recognising Traditional Owners'. The Policy will promote community awareness of Traditional Owner responsibilities and broad cultural awareness.

This year we co-hosted the National Indigenous Fire Workshop. A celebration of cultural fire knowledge and practice, the workshop was held along the Dhungala (Murray River) at Barmah National Park, Barmah and showcased our commitment to managing Country with fire.

Proudly celebrating Yorta Yorta culture, we again hosted the Three Rivers Festival this year.

"The Three Rivers Festival is very excited to make it to our fifth year running. It gives our people an opportunity to get together, come back to Country, and to connect, express, heal and inspire. I feel as though this is not just a job but a responsibility to be able to provide our kids an experience to get up under the stars and dance in the footsteps of their Ancestors!"

— Clayton Murray Mitchell



TRANSITION AND CAPACITY OF COUNCIL

TRANSITION AND CAPACITY OF COUNCIL

Council's expanded functions include a statutory commitment to care for Ancestors and the secret or sacred objects that are fundamental to cultural integrity and wellbeing. Increased resourcing and capacity is essential to ensure Ancestors are returned home in a respectful manner and burial places are properly cared for. Currently, the OVAHC are working towards securing a safe keeping place for caring for our Ancestors whilst they are being repatriated to Country and the custodianship of their Traditional Owners.

"We all have a part to play so that true reconciliation can be achieved and our Ancestors returned back to their Country for reburial, where they find peace with our Spiritual Mother the land, before drifting off into the Dreamtime."

— Jim Berg

COUNCIL'S CUSTODIANSHIP OF ANCESTORS AND CULTURAL OBJECTS

The responsibility Council feels for the safekeeping of Ancestors not on Country is enormous. Both on a cultural and statutory level, the custodianship of Aboriginal Ancestral Remains and secret or sacred objects is a profound care that underpins much of Council's work.

When Council takes custodianship of Ancestral Remains, a case file is opened and all information is confidentially filed there. Currently, Council has approximately 2,000 cases and each of these cases may include more than one individual. Many of these were transferred to Council's custody by Museums Victoria on the commencement of the Amendments to the Act.

So that each case can be appropriately investigated and returned to its correct Traditional Owners, the time required to provenance and repatriate an Ancestor is between six months and two years. However, there are currently 700 unprovenanced cases. We are hopeful that with our research methods and systems, we will be able to provenance 500 of these cases and return them to Country.

Council's custodianship of secret or sacred objects is another significant cultural responsibility. During the reporting period, Council has received 9 reports of potential secret or sacred objects. As part of their work to repatriate them to Traditional Owners, who are their lawful owners, Council is currently investigating 241 objects. This process includes consulting with Traditional Owners to determine if they require transfer to the Council with a view to repatriation.

Council currently has two confirmed secret or sacred objects in its custody which are in the process of being repatriated. Unfortunately, even if confirmed as secret or sacred, it may not always be possible to repatriate all objects owing to poor provenance information often associated with these objects.

"Secret or sacred objects are a big part of who we are. They carry the stories that shape us, and we, and future generations, in turn shape them. They need to be with their rightful custodians so they can keep carrying our stories and our connections with them."

— Jennifer Beer



TRANSITION AND CAPACITY OF COUNCIL

PUBLIC ENTITY TRANSFERS

Universities and public entities were required to report any Ancestral Remains in their collections to the Council by 31 July 2018. Both Museums Victoria and the University of Melbourne reported Ancestors in their care to Council whilst another six universities confirmed that they had no Ancestral Remains. Of public entities, who also had an obligation to report any Ancestral Remains in their possession, none confirmed that they did.

The museums and public entities have subsequently transferred over 2,000 Ancestral Remains to Council, the majority of which have come from Museums Victoria. Council is now in the process of researching and confirming the provenance of these Ancestral Remains before talking to Traditional Owners and returning them home to their Country. So that Council can have confidence that the right people are returned to the right place, a complete investigation is undertaken for each individual. Given the number of Ancestors that have been placed in Council's custody, we ask that the community understand the time required to do this in a thorough and respectful manner.

Financial assistance for repatriations had previously been provided by Museums Victoria however this was federal funding available to museums only. As Council are not eligible to receive this funding, it is seeking alternative funding sources to assist Traditional Owners with the repatriation of Ancestors.



MUSEUM REPATRIATIONS

Council was pleased to have been able to develop and strengthen their relationship with both the University of Melbourne and the Pintupi Peoples this year, to aid future repatriation work. On 9 May 2019, the University of Melbourne formally returned secret or sacred objects to the Pintupi Peoples of Central Australia. These significant cultural items had been held by the University as part of the extensive Donald Thomson collection.

The objects were repatriated under section 23(a) of the Act. Under this section of the Act, a Traditional Owner of a secret or sacred object held or controlled by a university, museum or other institution may negotiate directly with that institution for the repatriation of objects.

As with all repatriations, the handover was the culmination of years of discussions and hard work. When Traditional Owners work directly with institutions, Council's role in the repatriation of the secret or sacred objects is one of support, recognition and providing advice.

Central to all processes of repatriation is the development of strong and enduring relationships between the Traditional Owners and the temporary custodians of their Cultural Heritage.

ANCESTRAL REMAINS DISCOVERED

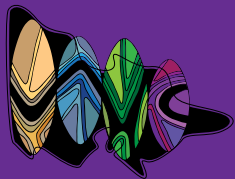
During this reporting period, there have been frequent reports of Ancestral Remains being discovered in the community. Several reports were made as construction was undertaken on the Barongarook Creek Bridge in Colac. In March 2019, works being undertaken as part of an approved CHMP, were stopped immediately upon discovery of human remains. The Coroner, Victoria Police and the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council were notified, and the Coroner determined that the remains were Aboriginal Ancestral Remains and transferred their legal custody to the Council.

The Council convened an Aboriginal Ancestral Remains Advisory Committee who determined the appropriate Traditional Owner group with whom to consult. Legal custodianship of the Ancestral Remains was then transferred from Council to the Traditional Owners.

"It is very important to Aboriginal people that their Ancestors are left on or returned to Country so that they can rest peacefully. The Council is humbled to have the responsibility to ensure this happens."

— Rodney Carter

In Victoria, anyone who discovers what they believe to be human remains must, in the first instance, notify the Coroner or Victoria Police. If the person believes the remains are likely to be Aboriginal, they must notify Council's Ancestral Remains Unit in addition to the Coroner's office. It is an offence not to do so.



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL
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www.aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au