

# ANNUAL REPORT

1 AUGUST 2016 - 31 JULY 2017



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.**

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September 2017

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We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture and their Elders past, present and future.



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## CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to report on the important work the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council has undertaken this year. Comprised exclusively of Victorian Aboriginal Traditional Owners, the Council is particularly significant as the only Victorian statutory authority embodying Aboriginal self-determination.

Established under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (the Act) (effective on 28 May 2007), Council celebrated its 10 year anniversary at the end this reporting period. Since its inception, Council has worked to move the Victorian community towards a place of understanding and respect for Aboriginal cultural heritage and the cultural responsibilities of Traditional Owners. This year we have continued to work hard on this undertaking and embraced challenges as opportunities for the collective protection of our irreplaceable heritage.

Council's work this year has been substantially influenced by amendments to the Act, that came into effect on 1 August 2016. The Council has new responsibilities under the revised Act including

overseeing Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP) operations, overseeing and monitoring the system of reporting and returning Ancestral Remains and secret or sacred objects in Victoria, management of the Victorian Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Fund and production of a *State of Victoria's Aboriginal Cultural Heritage* report every five years.

Council's work towards a Council and Secretariat operating more autonomously from government has gained momentum this year, with considerable work undertaken to develop a six-phase Roadmap to Autonomy. Workshopped by Council and Aboriginal Victoria, the Roadmap creates a robust and dynamic vision for Council's achievement of independence that we look forward to implementing in the year ahead.

Our expertise has been increasingly sought to progress understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage. This year Council has sat on eight reference/steering groups and committees, undertaken both targeted and broad consultation with stakeholders, presented its work at conferences and workshops, made submissions to influence policy, strategy and legislative reviews, and worked with national and international groups on the protection of First Peoples' cultural heritage and Ancestors.

One of Council's primary functions continues to be the appointment of RAPs to manage their cultural heritage over appointed areas. As organisations that represent Traditional Owners and hold decision-making responsibilities under the Act for the protection, management and preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage; the Council was pleased this year to appoint a new RAP. Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation now has cultural heritage responsibilities under the Act for an area south of Patterson Lakes, Koo-wee-rup and Drouin; west of Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation's RAP area and the Tarwin River; through to the Mornington Peninsula.

Council remains determined to fulfil our legislative responsibilities and realise our vision of a community that understands and respects diverse Aboriginal identity and cultures, with Traditional Owners as the primary custodians for heritage of the past, present and future.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work that our staff, stakeholders and government have undertaken this year to help us achieve our vision and look forward to both the opportunities and challenges of the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eleanor A Bourke'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Eleanor A Bourke**  
Chairperson

# VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HERITAGE COUNCIL



**ELEANOR A BOURKE**  
CHAIRPERSON



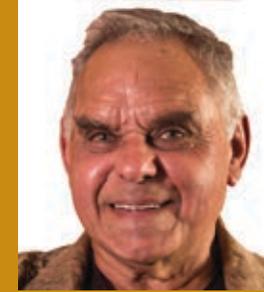
**TIM CHATFIELD**  
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON  
(reappointed 1 July 2016)



**GERALDINE ATKINSON**  
MEMBER  
(from 27 February 2017)



**JENNIFER BEER**  
MEMBER  
(until 6 June 2017)



**JIM BERG**  
MEMBER  
(reappointed 1 July 2016)



**RODNEY CARTER**  
MEMBER



**NELLIE FLAGG**  
MEMBER  
(reappointed 8 August 2016)



**JILL GALLAGHER AO**  
MEMBER



**MICK HARDING**  
MEMBER



**MARIE (SISSY) HAVEA**  
MEMBER  
(from 23 February 2017)



**RON JONES**  
MEMBER  
(from 15 February 2017)

# WORKING WITH COMMUNITY



# REFERENCE/STEERING GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

In promoting public awareness and understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria, Council works with stakeholders and the community across a range of committees and projects.

As the only independent statutory body of Traditional Owners in Victoria, Council's expertise is increasingly sought to progress understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Council has sat on eight external reference/steering groups and committees during the annual reporting period.

## **ABORIGINAL VICTORIA TREATY INTERIM WORKING GROUP**

The Working Group consults with Aboriginal communities to develop options for a representative body and provide advice to community and government on the next steps in a treaty making process.

## **ABORIGINAL VICTORIA CERTIFICATE IV IN ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GROUP**

The Reference Group guides and reviews the content and delivery of the nationally accredited Certificate IV in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management.

## **ABORIGINAL VICTORIA GOVERNANCE AND SECTOR SUPPORT REFERENCE GROUP**

The Reference Group guides and reviews mechanisms that support Aboriginal organisations around governance.

## **RIGHT PEOPLE FOR COUNTRY STEERING COMMITTEE**

The Steering Committee brings together key Traditional Owner and Government stakeholders to provide strategic advice and leadership to the Right People for Country Program.

## **VICTORIAN CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY PANEL**

The Panel provides strategic advice to the Victorian Government on how to position Victoria as a leader in climate change action.

## **VICTORIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT COUNCIL'S (VEAC) COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP FOR THE INVESTIGATION INTO STATE-WIDE ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC LAND**

The Reference Group reviews and assesses the current system of public land use categories and provides information and recommendations to assist management effectiveness.

## **VEAC'S COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP FOR THE INVESTIGATION INTO HISTORIC PLACES**

The Group reviews and assesses current information and information sources describing historic assets, assesses management arrangements of these assets and makes recommendations regarding the sustainable use and adaptive re-use of historic assets.

## **SHARED VALUES PROJECT JOINT WORKING GROUP WITH THE HERITAGE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA**

A joint initiative, the Working Group aims to enhance recognition of sites with both Aboriginal and historical (i.e. 'shared') cultural heritage values. Currently, the Group is working to highlight sites with shared values that are registered under the *Heritage Act 1995* on the Victorian Heritage Register.

# WORKING WITH COMMUNITY

## TARGETED CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

We had more targeted engagement with stakeholders, meeting with:

- Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation as part of Council's regional meeting in September 2016
- Representatives from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources regarding their Aboriginal knowledge discussion paper
- The Koorie Outcomes Division within the Department of Education and Training about *Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026*
- The Attorney General and the Special Minister of State regarding Council's new functions and alignment of the Act and the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*
- The Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations around RAP reporting and the impacts of Special Administration on RAPs
- The Australian Heritage Council about shared interests and concerns
- Parks Victoria around the protection of Ancestral Remains and burial places.

## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

We made presentations about our unique role and work at conferences and workshops with local, state and national audiences including:

- The 2016 national *Coast to Coast* conference in Melbourne. Council member Jim Berg highlighted Traditional Owners' continuing connections to Victoria's coasts and the importance of protecting heritage, both tangible and intangible
- ICOMOS *Shared Ground* conference in October 2016 where Council members Eleanor Bourke and Nellie Flagg co-presented with Heritage Council of Victoria representatives about the work of the Shared Values Joint Working Group
- November 2016 and May 2017 RAP forums
- Aboriginal Victoria *Past and Present* workshops
- The network meeting of Catchment Management Authorities' Indigenous Facilitators.

## POLICY, STRATEGY AND LEGISLATIVE REVIEWS

In providing advice regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage, we have also influenced the development of policy and strategy as well as legislative reviews. In the reporting period, Council made submissions to:

- *Aboriginal Local Government Action Plan*
- *Act for the Future – Directions for a new Local Government Act Paper*
- *Coastal and Marine Act Consultation Paper*
- *Game Management Authority's Sustainable Hunting Action Plan*
- *Review of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- *Safe And Accessible Victorian Waterways Discussion Paper*
- *Victoria's Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy*
- *Victoria's Regional Statement.*

## **STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS**

Engagement with stakeholders is crucial to our business. We held two stakeholder events during the reporting period to share our work with stakeholders and to hear from stakeholders about their experiences with the Act and the management of Aboriginal heritage in Victoria.

In September 2016, we hosted a stakeholder meeting in Geelong with 32 stakeholders from 25 agencies/organisations, including local government and water managers.

And in May 2017, Council celebrated its ten-year anniversary with more than 70 stakeholders at the State Library of Victoria. The main focus of the event was a panel discussion of key figures, including the Special Minister of State, The Hon Gavin Jennings and former Council member and Chairperson Denise Lovett. Panel members reflected on Council's 10 years and opportunities for the future, before the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon Natalie Hutchins, spoke about Council's sound decision-making and achievements as a unique statutory authority.

*"The Council has led the way in transitioning decision-making for the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage from government to Traditional Owner groups."*

**THE HON GAVIN JENNINGS MP**

*"I didn't think [the Council] was going to be achieved... it's a wonderful achievement, not just for Victoria, it's a wonderful achievement for Australia and hopefully other places will go down the same track that we did."*

**DENISE LOVETT**

*"The Act is a reflection of brilliant leadership...the bi-partisan nature and the support for us as First Peoples to have direct conversations with Government."*

**RODNEY CARTER**

*"Working with the Act...we've done some great work...there's nothing like walking away from a site all covered up, you just get that sense walking away that your ancestors are at rest."*

**DAMIEN JACKSON**

*"I commend the Council on its work to date and I look forward to Council's increased responsibilities, along with the strengthened roles of the Registered Aboriginal Parties whom they appoint, resulting in greater positive outcomes for Aboriginal cultural heritage in this state."*

**THE HON NATALIE HUTCHINS MP**



# WORKING WITH COMMUNITY

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Of particular note in our anniversary year, was the invitation to meet with national and international stakeholders about our role in protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage.

In August, Council members met with Jim Enote, Zuni tribal member, Director of the Ashiwi Awan Museum and Heritage Center at Zuni, New Mexico, and Director of the Colorado Plateau Foundation. We reflected on our experiences as presenters at the National Museum of Australia's *Encounters* conference, held in Canberra in March 2016, as well as commonalities we share as First Peoples.

In February, Council representatives met with the South Australian State Aboriginal Advisory Committee regarding RAP decision-making and the role of RAPs more broadly.

In March 2017, Council member Rodney Carter met with representatives from the department that administers intangible heritage policy and provisions in Victoria's sister state, Aichi in Japan. While sharing his own knowledge, Rodney also learnt about the various initiatives to encourage

safeguarding of intangible heritage in Japan, such as the subsidising of certain studies to encourage young people to become involved in this work.

Council representatives were also invited to a three-day meeting with the Aboriginal Heritage Council of Tasmania in April. Both Councils shared experiences and learnings about their respective roles and the differing legislations, and agreed to meet again in the near future to continue discussions.

## LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS

As a Council of Traditional Owners, working with and for community is central to Council's work. Underpinned by a responsibility to all Aboriginal Victorians, the Council undertakes a range of legislated functions including:

- managing the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Fund
- promoting and facilitating research of Aboriginal cultural heritage of Victoria
- promoting public awareness and understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria.

In 2016, amendments to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* established the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Fund and empowered the Council to manage that Fund. Council plans to recruit a Finance Officer to develop policies and procedures to ensure appropriate management of the Fund. As the Fund grows, Council hopes to use it for initiatives which support the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria.

The amendments also afforded Council the function of promoting and facilitating research of Aboriginal cultural heritage of Victoria. No work was undertaken during the reporting period in this area, however we look forward to working with partners to progress projects in the next reporting period.

Facing page: Council member Rodney Carter with Yuko Yajima and Tomoko Kase of the International Affairs Division of the Aichi Prefectural Government



# WORKING WITH REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTIES

# WORKING WITH REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTIES

## ABOUT REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTIES

RAPs are organisations that hold decision-making responsibilities under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* for protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage in a specified geographical area.

At a local level, RAPs are the voice of Aboriginal people in the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. RAPs provide a wide range of services to the wider community.

RAPs have responsibilities under the Act relating to the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage, including:

- evaluating and approving Cultural Heritage Management Plans
- determining Cultural Heritage Permit applications
- entering into Cultural Heritage Agreements
- applying for interim or ongoing Protection Declarations
- entering into Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Land Management Agreements with public land managers
- nominating Aboriginal intangible heritage to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register and entering into Aboriginal intangible heritage agreements.

Currently, Council has appointed 11 RAPs<sup>1</sup> which collectively cover 62% of the state. These RAPs are:

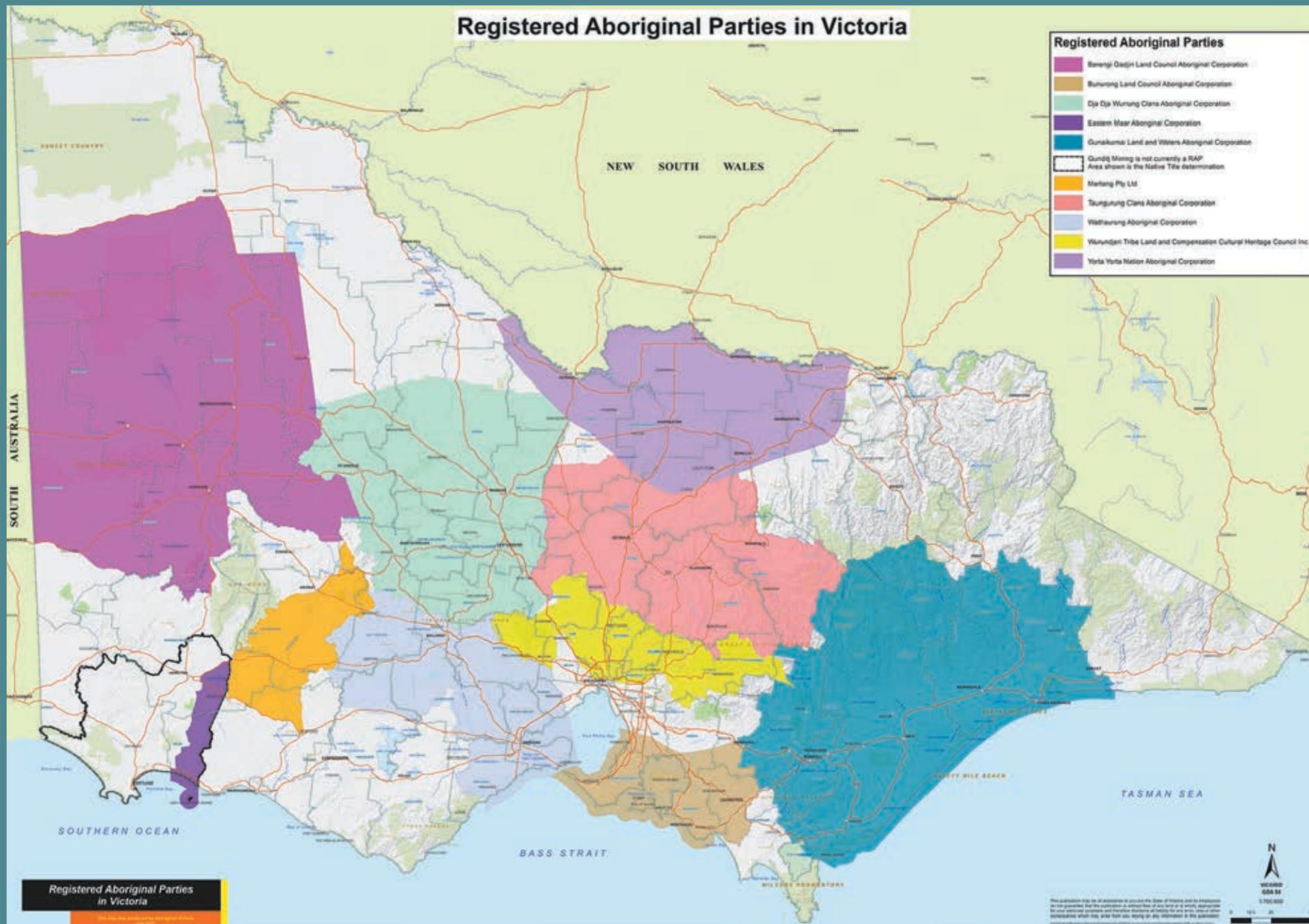
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
- Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
- Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Martang Pty. Ltd. Aboriginal Corporation
- Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
- Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation
- Wurundjeri Tribe Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc.
- Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

Council has a number of legislated functions in regard to RAPs, including receiving and determining applications for registration of RAPs and managing, overseeing and supervising their operations. As Council continues to work with RAPs to be viable, strong and inclusive, we look forward to implementing a strength based approach to overseeing their operation in the next reporting period.

In this document however we have worked with RAPs, asking them to talk about who they are, what they do and the Country for which they care.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of RAPs can change throughout a given annual reporting period if a RAP has their appointment revoked or if a new RAP is appointed.



# BARENGI GADJIN LAND COUNCIL

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



127 Wail Nursery Road  
Wail VIC 3401  
Phone: (03) 5389 1921  
Email: [admin@bglc.com.au](mailto:admin@bglc.com.au)  
[www.bglc.com.au](http://www.bglc.com.au)

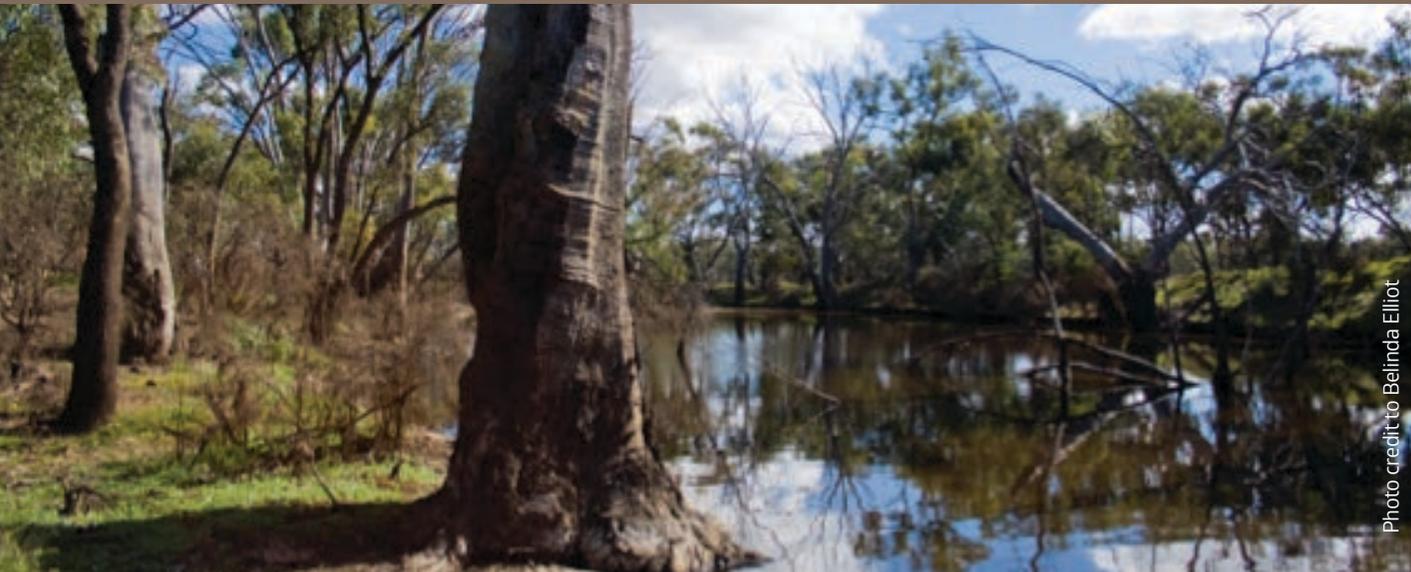


Photo credit to Belinda Elliot

Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) represents Traditional Owners of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples (collectively Wotjobaluk), recognised in a 2005 Native Title Consent Determination, the first in south-eastern Australia.

Our Vision is of Traditional Owners working together as Custodians of Culture, Country, Heritage, Lore and Language.

We value Respect for Culture, Country, Heritage, Lore and Language, and have a commitment to Professionalism, Inclusiveness, Engagement and Responsiveness.

We are the Prescribed Body Corporate for the Wotjobaluk claim area, as outlined in the *Native Title Act*, giving us legal authority and obligation to work on behalf of Traditional Owners.

BGLC is a Registered Aboriginal Party, as appointed by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

**BGLC's RAP area includes Horsham, the 'capital of the Wimmera', as well as many other key towns and includes eight Local Government Authorities. Our RAP area is 35,896 km<sup>2</sup> covering 15.2% of Victoria.**

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As well as working to protect and restore Country through Natural Resource Management services we support the training and development of Traditional Owners to build economic and sustainable outcomes.

BGLC directly engages with Departments, agencies and other organisations to facilitate respect for and recognition of Native Title and Traditional Owner rights and interests.

We also recently entered a partnership for the operation of Wail Nursery – the Wimmera & Mallee's premier location for local Native Plants.

# BUNURONG LAND COUNCIL

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



PO Box 4128  
Frankston Heights VIC 3199  
Phone: 0499 222 331 / 0455 559 727  
Email: [manager@bunuronglc.org.au](mailto:manager@bunuronglc.org.au)  
[www.bunuronglc.org](http://www.bunuronglc.org)



**Our RAP area includes the Mornington Peninsula, Point Nepean, and French, Churchill and Phillip Islands. Towns in our RAP area include Frankston, Inverloch, Wonthaggi, Leongatha and Lang Lang.**

**Our relationships include seven Local Government Authorities as our RAP area of 5439 km<sup>2</sup> (of which 1770 km<sup>2</sup> is coastal waters) covers 2.3% of Victoria.**

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Our services include: assessment of Cultural Heritage Management Plans; specialist and timely cultural advice regarding the protection and management of our heritage and Country; and Welcomes, Smoking ceremonies.

We are currently developing a 'Caring for Country' team, which will service the Mornington Peninsula area, working mostly on crown land within natural resource management, as well as other initiatives to realise our aspirations outlined in our rule book. These are important steps in getting our people back out on Country, caring for and connecting with their land, as our ancestors have done before us.

The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation is a large and inclusive organisation that represents Bunurong/Boon Wurrung people, their culture and heritage. We provide a unified voice for our 160 members and support our people's cultural goals and aspirations.

Over the last 35,000 years our people have adapted to a range of significant changes within their Country, such as asteroid impacts near Cranbourne and Arthurs Seat once being an Island.

We continue to adapt today, reaching high levels of corporate governance and expanding our enterprises.

We work with schools, universities, Government, Shire Councils, developers, archaeologists, friends groups, artists, filmmakers, the local community and others in a range of ways to ultimately protect and promote Bunurong/Boon Wurrung culture and heritage.

Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation was appointed as a Registered Aboriginal Party on 19 July 2017.

# DJA DJA WURRUNG CLANS

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



1/70 Powells Avenue  
Bendigo VIC 3550  
Phone: (03) 5444 2888  
Fax: (03) 5441 6472  
Email: [info@djadjawurrung.com.au](mailto:info@djadjawurrung.com.au)  
[www.djadjawurrung.com.au](http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au)



**Our country in central Victoria includes the major towns of Bendigo, Castlemaine, Daylesford, Maryborough and St Arnaud. Our relationships include 12 Local Government Authorities and public land managers integral to our RAP area of 17,369 km<sup>2</sup> that covers 7.32% of Victoria.**

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We conduct works in cultural heritage, environmental services and supporting regional investment in Central Victoria, including heritage advisors; cultural heritage assessments, education and protection works; traditional ecological knowledge gathering and cultural activities; Welcome to Country and smoking ceremonies; corporate and community cultural awareness workshops and on Country activities; site inspection and surveys; and the development of interpretative signage from content, design to install.

Environmental services include restoration and regeneration of landscapes; establishment of biodiversity corridors; landscaping and maintenance activities; fencing; environmental management plans; managing the impact of feral animals and pest plants; weed control; and expert environmental consultancy.

We recognise the importance of our cultural heritage – our Dja Dja Wurrung places and landscapes, our stories and language, our customs, ceremonies and continued traditional practices and our responsibilities for looking after Country.

Our aspiration is that every Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle.

Our Vision is for the health and wellbeing of our people to be strong, and guided by our living culture.

Our Vision is for our lands and waters to be in good condition and actively managed to protect our values and to promote the lore, culture and rights of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

As this Country's First People, our vision includes being politically empowered with an established place in society, and being capable of managing our own affairs from a strong and diverse social and Traditional Owner economic base.



**Our RAP area includes the major towns of Broadwater, Codrington and Tyrendarra East.**

**Our relationships include two Local Government Authorities as our RAP area of 1,298 km<sup>2</sup> covers 0.55% of Victoria.**

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Through Meerreengeyye ngakeepoorryeeyt - our Country Plan - we have defined our vision for the future. To help us on the path to achieving our vision, we have identified six goals that will form the focus of our efforts. For each of our goals, we have a number of objectives that we will work towards - as individuals, as a nation and in partnership with others. These goals are underpinned by the law of the land, our moral authority that dictates how we live and behave, who we interact with and how we will always care for our Country.

- Wellbeing of our citizens
- Active youth
- Strong identity
- Healthy Country
- Cultural strength
- Independence

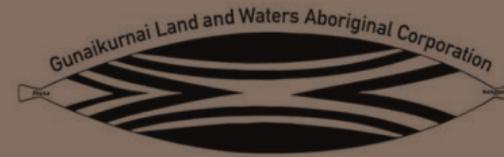
The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) is a Registered Native Title Body Corporate registered under the Corporation (*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander*) Act 2006. EMAC manages and represents the native title rights and interests of the Eastern Maar People, who are the Traditional Owners of the eastern domain of the Maar Nation.

Eastern Maar People have lodged three native title claims, one of which was successfully awarded a consent determination in 2011, and the remaining two are still active.

The Eastern Maar Traditional Owner Group is a name adopted by the people who identify as Maar, Eastern Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung, Peek Whurrung, Kirrae Whurrung, Kuurn Kopan Noot, Yarro Waetch (Tooram Tribe), Gulidjan and/or Gadubanud amongst other names.

# GUNAIKURNAI LAND AND WATERS

## ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



27 Scriveners Road  
Kalimna West VIC 3909  
Phone: (03) 5152 5100  
Fax: (03) 5152 1666  
Email: [reception@glawac.com.au](mailto:reception@glawac.com.au)  
[www.gunaikurnai.org](http://www.gunaikurnai.org)



Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) represents Traditional Owners from the Brataualung, Brayakaulung, Brabralung, Krauatungalung and Tatungalung family clans, who were recognised in the Native Title Consent Determination on 22 October 2010. On the same day, the State entered into an agreement with the Gunaikurnai under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*. GLaWAC is also the Registered Aboriginal Party for the Gunaikurnai native title determination area.

Our role is to further the aspirations of the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners and Native Title Holders through the implementation of the Gunaikurnai native title settlement agreements and the provision of high quality policy advice; to provide strategic leadership by developing and leading key initiatives; and to continuously improve the capacity, integrity and independence of the Gunaikurnai.

Our Vision is of Gunaikurnai - United, Proud and Strong.

Our Values are respect, encourage, service, persistence, empathy, courage and teamwork.

**Our RAP area includes the major towns of Morwell, Traralgon, Bairnsdale, Sale, Maffra and Lakes Entrance.**

**Our relationships include seven Local Government Authorities as our RAP area of 25,818 km<sup>2</sup> covers 10.87% of Victoria.**

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Our services include: Welcome to Country; protecting, promoting and preserving Gunaikurnai cultural heritage; doing cultural heritage assessments; participating in the preparation of Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) and evaluating CHMPs written by other Cultural Heritage Advisors; advising and negotiating on the repatriation of Aboriginal cultural heritage to Country; cultural strengthening, awareness and protection services; ensuring the protection, preservation, rehabilitation and sustainable use of our Country; research, collection and use of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge; and, natural resource management via GLaWAC's subsidiary, Gunaikurnai Enterprise.

# GUNDITJ MIRRORING TRADITIONAL OWNERS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



4/48 Edgar Street  
Heywood VIC 3304  
Phone: (03) 5527 1427  
Fax: (03) 55271704  
Email: [reception@gunditjmirring.com](mailto:reception@gunditjmirring.com)  
[www.gunditjmirring.com](http://www.gunditjmirring.com)



**Gunditj Mirring's RAP area includes Budj Bim and Tae Rak (Lake Condah), and towns such as Portland, Heywood, Casterton and Hamilton.**

**Our relationships include four Local Government Authorities as our RAP area of 25,818 km<sup>2</sup> covers 5.87% of Victoria.**

---

Gunditj Mirring is responsible for delivering its statutory services in native title and cultural heritage, including assessment of Cultural Heritage Management Plans; protection and management of Country; and specialist cultural advice.

On behalf of the Gunditjmara community, the corporation owns and manages culturally significant properties along the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape including Lake Condah, the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission site, Kurtonitj and Lake Gorrie. We also manage three Indigenous Protected Areas.

The corporation also engages with the broader community through the Budj Bim Sustainable Development Partnership, the Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Project and the Indigenous Protected Area program.

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (Gunditj Mirring) was established in 2005 by Gunditjmara traditional owners to progress our rights and interests in native title, cultural heritage and caring for country.

Through Gunditj Mirring, Gunditjmara people ensure that the responsibilities and duties which arise under Gunditjmara law, custom and beliefs are carried out in relation to caring for country and the protection and continuation of Gunditjmara law and culture.

The corporation is a Registered Native Title Body Corporate under the *Native Title Act 1993* and a Registered Aboriginal Party under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

# MARTANG PTY LTD

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



PO Box 20  
Halls Gap VIC 3381  
Phone: (03) 5356 6188



**Martang's RAP area runs along the Grampians National Park and stretches from Mortlake to east of Stawell.**

**Our relationships include four Local Government Authorities as our RAP area of 4,477km<sup>2</sup> covers 1.89% of Victoria.**

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Our services include: assessment of Cultural Heritage Management Plans; protection and management of Country; Welcomes to Country; and specialist cultural advice.

Martang Pty. Ltd. was established 1999, with a membership base of 70 Djab Wurrung people, in recognition of the number of the cultural significance and attachment of our Community to the Gariwerd region. Its Mission is to build a long term, sustainable Community, based around developing tailored and specific social, economic and cultural programs and projects.

The Community operates in an environment with a degree of disadvantage given:

- The area's remoteness and isolation; and
- The lack of access to mainstream programs.

However, Martang has as its ultimate goals to develop amongst the Community members a sense of:

- Self Esteem
- Sense of Community
- Security
- Cultural Pride, Recognition and Respect (as steps towards Reconciliation)
- Achievement and Sustainability
- Identity, maintaining and continuing to practise our cultural rights on Djabwurrung country.

# TAUNGURUNG CLANS

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



37 High Street  
Broadford VIC 3658  
Phone: (03) 5784 1433  
Email: [enquiries@taungurung.com.au](mailto:enquiries@taungurung.com.au)  
[www.taungurung.com.au](http://www.taungurung.com.au)



**Taungurung Country encompasses the area between the upper reaches of the Goulburn River and its tributaries north of the Dividing Range. From the Campaspe River in the west, eastwards to the Great Dividing Range, The Ovens River in the north and south to the top of the Great Dividing Range. Our relationships include 12 Local Government Authorities as our RAP area of 14,511 km<sup>2</sup> covers 6.11% of Victoria.**

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Our services include: Welcome to Country; Smoking Ceremonies; Natural Resource Management, native garden services (planning, consulting and landscaping); and archaeological services.

Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation represents the interests of the 15 different clan groups of Taungurung; Budhera-Bulok, Leuk-Yilam, Mum-Mum-Yilam, Naterrak-Bulok, Nira-Bulok, Waring-Yilam-Bulok, Yaran-Yilam-Bulok, Yiran-Yilam-Bulok, Yawang-Yilam-Bulok, Benbendore-Balluk, Gunung-Yellam, Ngurai-Ilaam-Balluk, Tenbringnellams, Walledriggers, and Warrinillum. – and aims to promote cultural awareness and recognition of the continuity of the traditional people on Taungurung lands.



**Our Country encompasses Geelong, Ballarat, part of Werribee, Anglesea, Skipton and Queenscliff.**

**Our relationships include 11 Local Government Authorities as our RAP area of 10,615km<sup>2</sup> covers 4.47% of Victoria.**

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Our services include: Cultural Heritage Assessments; Cultural Heritage Management Plan related business; coordinating field staff for ground works; organising meetings between sponsors and the RAP; landscaping and plant selection; construction methodology; liaising with Government Departments on behalf of Developers; negotiating public open space requirements; permit applications; providing statutory advice on legislative requirements for Local Government; Cultural Heritage Agreements; Land Management Consultancy with Catchment Authorities and Local Government Departments; Salvage and Repatriation of Ancestral Remains and Artefacts; Advice on the Preservation of Aboriginal Culture; Cultural Heritage Awareness ; inductions; Development and Delivery of Education Programs; Review of literary works for accuracy; Welcome to Country; Smoking Ceremony; Cultural Heritage 'Walk and Talks' on Country; Indigenous Community Gardens; liaising with Community Groups to incorporate Aboriginal values into projects; Representing our Members to other organisations; Interpretation of Heritage Values; and Place Names and Traditional Wording.

Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (WAC), trading as Wadawurrung, is the Registered Aboriginal Party for Wadawurrung country. WAC has a statutory role in the management of Aboriginal heritage values and culture within our region, under the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

Wadawurrung is comprised of three cohesive units; office staff, field staff and Board Members/Directors.

# WURUNDJERI TRIBE LAND & COMPENSATION CULTURAL HERITAGE COUNCIL INC



1st Floor Providence Building  
Abbotsford Convent  
1 St. Heliers Street  
Abbotsford VIC 3067  
Phone: (03) 9416 2905  
[www.wurundjeri.com.au](http://www.wurundjeri.com.au)



The Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council Incorporated was established in the 1980s by the direct descendants of the Wurundjeri people. We advocate for and support the aspirations of our community.

Wurundjeri is a Registered Aboriginal Party of a geographically diverse region that includes both urban and rural lands as well as waterways (fresh water and estuarine).

**Our RAP area encompasses Tullamarine, Sunbury, Wallan, Heidelberg, Healesville and Warbuton.**

**Our relationships include 24 Local Government Authorities as our RAP area of 6,102km<sup>2</sup> covers 2.57% of Victoria.**

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Our services include: Due Diligence Assessments; assessment of Cultural Heritage Management Plans and Cultural Heritage Permits; Cultural Heritage and Interpretation; Cultural Values Recordings; Natural Resource Management; Cross-cultural Training and Education; Wurundjeri Heritage Projects; protection, management and enhancement of environmentally and culturally significant places on Wurundjeri Country; range of cultural services such as Welcomes, Smoking ceremonies, dance and music performances, gifts for exchange and commissioned arts works; language and naming services; and cultural consultancy.

# YORTA YORTA NATION

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



2 Schier Street Barmah VIC 3639  
Phone: (03) 5869 3336  
56B Wyndham Street Shepparton VIC 3630  
Phone: (03) 5832 0222  
Email: reception@yynac.com.au  
www.yynac.com.au



**Traditional Yorta Yorta lands lie on both sides of the Murray River roughly from Cohuna to Albury/Wodonga. They include towns such as Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta and extend northwards to just south of Deniliquin.**

**Our relationships include eight Local Government Authorities as our RAP area of 13,199km<sup>2</sup> covers 5.56% of Victoria.**

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Our services include: assessment of Cultural Heritage Management Plans; protection, management and enhancement of Country; Welcomes, Smoking ceremonies, dance and music performances; cross cultural educational incursions and excursions; and specialist cultural advice.

The Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC) is comprised of 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.

YYNAC was established, amongst other objectives, to represent the members of the Family Groups who are descendants of the Original Ancestors of the Yorta Yorta Peoples; to make decisions and act on any matters of significance to the Yorta Yorta Peoples; and to enter into agreements with any person, Government agency or authority in relation to the protection of Yorta Yorta Country.

YYNAC's owned and operated enterprise, Woka Walla, provides meaningful employment and training for Yorta Yorta and other Aboriginal people in working and caring for all aspects of Yorta Yorta lands, water, cultural heritage and the environment.

In March 2001, YYNAC established Yenbena, an Indigenous Training Centre, to provide targeted and culturally appropriate training to Indigenous young people.

On 29 October 2010, YYNAC entered into a Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement with the state of Victoria for the joint management of Barmah National Park through the Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board.

# WORKING WITH REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTIES

## **COUNCIL HAS A NUMBER OF LEGISLATED FUNCTIONS IN RELATION TO RAPS.**

Receiving and determining applications for the registration of RAPS:

- Council received two RAP applications, declined one application, appointed two RAPS for part of their application areas and varied the boundaries of two RAPS.
- As at 31 July 2017, seven RAP applications were before Council.
- Reporting to the Minister annually on the performance of its functions, including a summary of any reports received by the Council from RAPS.

Managing, overseeing and supervising the operations of RAPS:

- Council has begun consulting with RAPS about adopting a strengths-based approach to fulfil this function and to avoid duplicating processes with which RAPS are already obliged to comply. Council has also established a RAP Governance Working Group with Aboriginal Victoria.

## **IMPACT OF RAPS BEING PLACED UNDER SPECIAL ADMINISTRATION.**

During the reporting period, two of the 10 RAPS were placed under Special Administration by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) and subsequently lost their RAP status. As a function of the Act, RAPS automatically have their RAP status revoked if they are placed under administration.

Council has been working with ORIC and Aboriginal Victoria around the process and impacts of a RAP going under Special Administration.



# WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT

**As an independent statutory body with legislated functions under the Act, Council works closely with the government to ensure that Traditional Owners have the capacity to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, and Aboriginal cultural heritage across Victoria is protected.**

**Exchange of information with the Minister and the Department of Premier and Cabinet is undertaken through a number of core functions prescribed under the Act.**

## **FUNCTION**

## **PROGRESS**

Advising the Minister in relation to the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria, including advising the Minister about:

- the cultural heritage significance of any Aboriginal ancestral remains or Aboriginal place or object
- measures for the effective protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria, including the management of culturally sensitive information relating to that heritage
- measures to promote the role of Aboriginal people in the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage and in the administration of this Act
- the standards of knowledge, experience, conduct and practice required of persons engaged in research into Aboriginal cultural heritage
- the training and appointment of authorised officers under this Act
- and any other matters referred to the Council by the Minister.

Council provided advice to the Minister in relation to:

- Progressing the commitment to greater independence for the Council
- Identifying opportunities to promote understanding and awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage matters that could arise following the local government election processes, such as the requirements around municipal strategy statements and training for new Councillors as a pathway for promoting greater awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Seeking solutions to the problems that arise when an individual Aboriginal person holds Ancestral Remains without reburying them in Country.
- The appointment of 15 Authorised Officer candidates.

The Council Chairperson met with the Minister in December 2016.

Advising the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet:

- on measures to establish appropriate standards and guidelines for the payment to registered Aboriginal parties of fees for doing anything referred to in section 60
- at the Secretary's request, on the exercise of his or her powers under this Act in relation to cultural heritage permits, cultural heritage management plans and cultural heritage agreements.

No advice was provided in these areas.

Previous page: Council members commemorate the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum at Bunjil (Queen's Hall) with (clockwise from left) Frank McGuire MP, the Hon. Colin Brooks MP, Kutcha Edwards, Mick Harding, Sonya Kilkenny MP, Eleanor A Bourke and the Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP

## FUNCTION

## PROGRESS

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At the Minister's request, to advise and make recommendations to the Minister on the exercise of his or her powers under this Act, including advising the Minister about:

- the application of interim or ongoing protection declarations
- a proposal by the Minister to require a cultural heritage management plan to be prepared
- whether a cultural heritage audit is necessary
- whether the compulsory acquisition of land is appropriate in any particular case
- any other matter relating to the exercise of his or her powers under this Act that the Minister requests the Council to consider.

No advice was sought in these areas.

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Considering applications for access to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register from the Secretary that relate to areas for which no RAP has been appointed.

One application was received and access was granted.

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Advising the Minister administering the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* on proposed amendments to planning schemes which may affect the protection, management or conservation of places or objects of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

No advice was provided.

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Advising the Secretary on cultural heritage permits and cultural heritage management plans related to Aboriginal ancestral remains in areas without a RAP.

No advice was provided.

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Providing advice regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage, including to the Minister and the Secretary.

Advice was provided throughout the reporting period.

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Publishing policy guidelines consistent with the functions of the Council.

No work was undertaken during the reporting period in this area.

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Reporting to the Minister every 5 years on the state of Victoria's Aboriginal cultural heritage.

No work was undertaken during the reporting period in this area.

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Considering for approval proposed cultural heritage management plans for which the Secretary is the sponsor.

No applications were received.

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# WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT

Council also reports on its Governance Functions under the Public Administration Act 2004 and other applicable legislation.

FUNCTION	PROGRESS
Strategic Planning	Council will launch its Strategic Plan 2017-2021 in September 2017.
Internal policies and procedures	Council is reviewing and updating its <i>Procedures Manual for Council members</i> , which is utilised by all Council members and also guides the induction of new Council members.
<i>Freedom of Information 1992</i>	Council lodged a return for the financial year ended 30 June 2017 as required by the legislation.  Council received nil requests in the reporting period.
Financial Management	Council's obligations under the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> (FMA) are currently discharged by the Department of Premier and Cabinet on behalf of Council. Council will continue to advocate for resources so that it is able to directly manage its own finances in accordance with the FMA.



Council members Jim Berg and Nellie Flagg are interviewed for Japanese television by Taichi Soga and filmed by Takayuki Oe

# RESPECTING OUR ANCESTORS

**In July 2017, Council members Jim Berg and Nellie Flagg were interviewed for a Japanese television documentary about the repatriation of Japanese Ancestors.**

The documentary featured as part of *Hokkaido Close Up*, a 25-minute news program, and focused on the return of the Hokkaido's Ainu peoples from the National Museum of Australia and Museum Victoria.

The Ainu people are the Traditional Owners of Hokkaido who, through oppression from government policies, lost their land, language, religion and customs. As in Australia, many of the Ancestors were stolen and used for research, remaining today in international 'collections'. Recently however there has been a shift within the museum community in regard to respectful repatriation and both Germany and Australia have announced their desire to repatriate Ancestral remains of Hokkaido's Ainu peoples currently held in their 'collections'.

In researching the international move to repatriation, the documentary makers identified that Australia leads in the repatriation and development of legislation supporting repatriation of Ancestral Remains. As Ancestors were held in 'collections' here, the producers felt that an Australian perspective was essential and Council was asked to participate in the documentary, providing an Aboriginal perspective on the importance of repatriation and processes currently in place.

Interviewed at the King's Domain memorial site, Jim and Nellie spoke to an international audience about the fundamental importance of Ancestors being returned to their Country.

**FUNCTION**

To be the central coordinating body responsible for the overseeing, monitoring, managing, reporting and returning of Aboriginal ancestral remains in Victoria.

To oversee and monitor the system of reporting and returning Aboriginal ancestral remains and secret or sacred objects.

To nominate information about Aboriginal ancestral remains, Aboriginal secret or sacred objects and Aboriginal places and objects to be restricted information on the Register.

**PROGRESS**

Council wrote to all universities and public entities to advise them of their responsibilities under the Act to report and transfer all Ancestral Remains to Council within two years of the commencement of the relevant section of the Act (section 14).

Council met with Parks Victoria regarding management of Ancestral burials in land managed by Parks Victoria.

In the reporting period, Council received 55 reports. Of these, 18 were confirmed as Ancestral Remains and one case has been repatriated.

As part of fulfilling this new function, we developed internal policies and procedures. We also developed a range of fact sheets so individuals, public entities and universities understand their new requirements under the Act regarding reporting and returning Ancestral Remains and secret or sacred objects.

Council now has an Ancestral Remains Unit (ARU) within the Office of the VAHC to support Council with its new functions relating to Ancestral Remains.

In order to respond in a timely manner to reports of Ancestral Remains, Council has established a number of Ancestral Remains Advisory Committees with delegated functions. These committees are comprised of Council members and members of the ARU.

Council is developing a Memorandum of Understanding with Museum Victoria, outlining the responsibilities and timing for the report and transfer of the Remains from the Museum to the Council.

No reports of secret or sacred objects were received in the reporting period.

Council did not nominate any information for restriction on the Register.

**In this, Council's anniversary year, we look both to the past and the future. The Council's first decade of work has focussed on the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage through the appointment of RAPs. As we move forward, Council will continue to work with RAPs, supporting their work through Council's expanded capacity and new functions.**

Fundamental to Council's status as an independent statutory body will be its further transition to a more autonomous structure over the next 12 months. The six-phase Roadmap to Autonomy developed this year will be put into action during the next reporting period. With greater financial autonomy, control of its staff and a more direct reporting line, the success of the Roadmap's implementation will underpin Council's future capability.

With the increased capacity of Council's Ancestral Remains Unit, Council will expand its work in repatriating Ancestors and use its legislative responsibilities to work with communities faced with the responsibility of returning their Ancestors to Country. Updating the Ancestral Remains database to improve the management of information regarding the transfer and repatriation of Ancestors will support this vital work.

The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Fund, the first ever created in Victoria, will be effective in the next 12 months. Over time we will maximise opportunities to build up the Fund to use it for initiatives to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage and to promote understanding and awareness of this unique heritage.

Finally, working with stakeholders to strengthen knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal cultures throughout Victoria will remain central to Council's work. Through consultation, participation on committees and stakeholder meetings, Council will expand its audience across the state.

# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY





