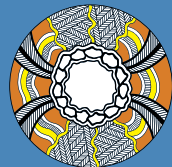
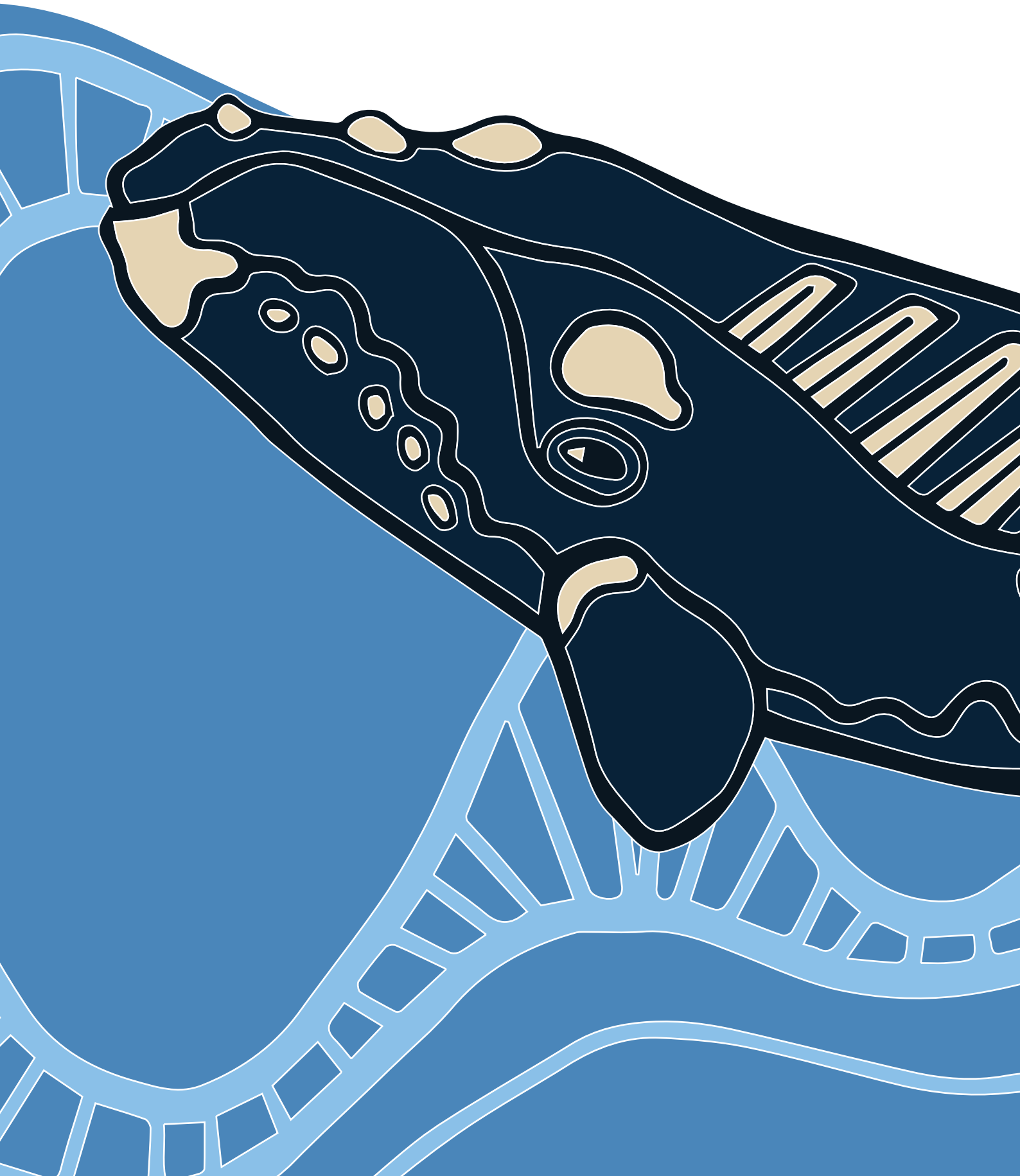




GUNDITJMARA  
NYAMAT  
MIRRING  
PLAN  
2023-2033



**GUNDITJ MIRRING**  
Traditional Owners  
Aboriginal Corporation

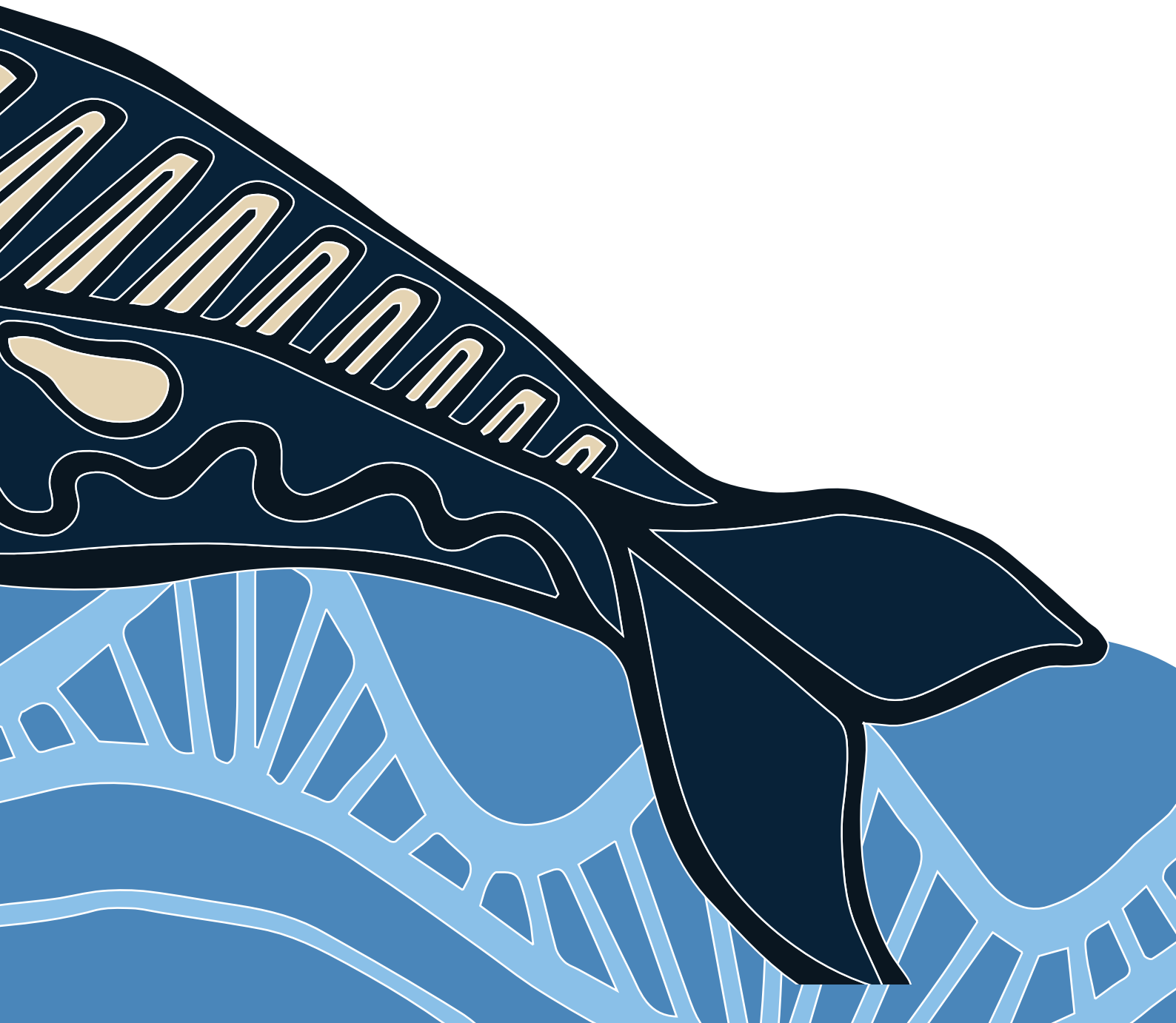


## OUR VISION

' GUNDITJMARA CARRY OUT OUR ENDURING  
RESPONSIBILITY TO CARE FOR NYAMAT MIRRORING,

SO OUR CHILDREN THRIVE, SEE THEIR COUNTRY  
HEAL AND KNOW THEIR STORIES. '

*Source Nyamat Mirring workshop*





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation acknowledges the contribution of Gunditjmara and Elders who generously shared their stories and knowledge in development of the Nyamat Mirring Plan, and the support of Coastcare Victoria and the Victorian Government.

248 Condah Estate Road, Gunditjmara Country,  
Breakaway Creek, VIC, 3304

T: (03) 5527 147

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

E: [reception@gunditjmirring.com](mailto:reception@gunditjmirring.com)

© Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC 2023

As permitted under the Copyright Act 1968,  
no part of this publication may be reproduced  
without the written permission of the publisher.

Report prepared by Helen Arundel

Artwork by Jenna Bamblett

Graphic Design by Mazart Communications



Energy,  
Environment  
and Climate Action

# CONTENTS

---

## **PART A | Introduction**

Introduction	5
Limitations	6
Development of the Plan	6
Background	8

---

## **PART B | About Nyamat Mirring**

The area covered by the plan	11
Cultural values	12
Harvesting	18
Resistance, rights, and recognition	20
Our Concerns	22

---

## **PART C | Future Management**

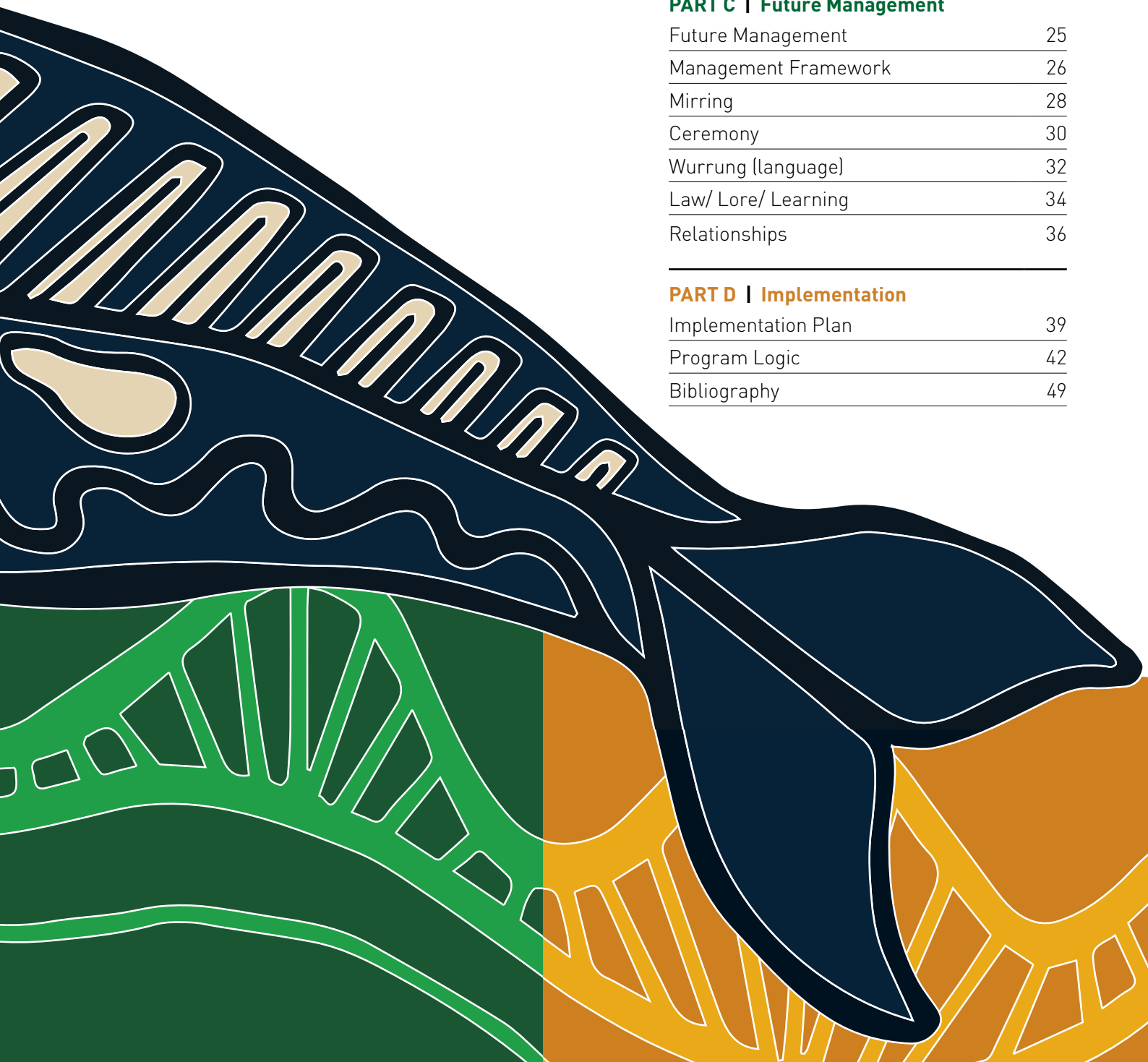
Future Management	25
Management Framework	26
Mirring	28
Ceremony	30
Wurrung (language)	32
Law/ Lore/ Learning	34
Relationships	36

---

## **PART D | Implementation**

Implementation Plan	39
Program Logic	42
Bibliography	49

---





PART A

---

INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

---

Gunditjmarra have had a deep, strong and ongoing un-ceded sovereign connection to Nyamat Mirring for over 60 000 years. The Nyamat Mirring Plan and this Summary outline for Gunditjmarra, and for others who use or have an interest in our Country, what we are concerned about and what changes need to be made to enable us to fulfil our responsibilities to Country.

Through this Plan we assert our responsibilities to Nyamat Mirring through our cultural obligation to Mirring, to Ceremony, to Learnings/Lore, to our Wurrung (language) and our Relationships, The Plan also identifies the on-going harms that impact Nyamat Mirring, and barriers that limit the Gunditjmarra's opportunities for enacting self-determination through power over decision-making, management, and economic interests. The Plan provides a framework that describes the goals for Nyamat Mirring and identifies priority actions to achieve those goals.

We hope this Plan helps natural resource managers, researchers, local government, government agencies, industry and the wider community to better understand what Nyamat Mirring means to Gunditjmarra, our concerns and their responsibilities.

We acknowledge that implementing this Plan requires the commitment and support of the people, agencies and organisations that share our Country. We want this Plan to start a conversation and facilitate respectful, beneficial partnerships to help strengthen Gunditjmarra and heal Nyamat Mirring.







# LIMITATIONS

---

The extent and type of consultation was limited due to Covid restrictions. Planned large on-Country gatherings of Community were replaced with small workshops and one on one interviews.

Nyamat Mirring is only one form of Country that constitutes Gunditjmara Country. The nature and scope of this plan means that only families with strong ties to and authority to speak for the protection of Nyamat Mirring have informed the structure and values of this plan. Future iterations of this document could therefore be informed by the ways that other types of Country – and the families that hold knowledge and authority to speak for and protect Country – understand what the priorities and values are for those entities.

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

---

In recent years, Gunditjmara have provided input to many key policies, strategies, and assessments. We have shared our stories and reflected on the people, places, events, landscapes, plants and animals of the Country to which we are connected. We have thought deeply about how best to assert our rights and obligations for managing and healing our Sea Country.

This Plan consolidates input to those documents (see Bibliography). Additional discussions with Gunditjmara members were undertaken as part of this project to determine the Plan's structure and identify priority issues and actions. This consultation, included an online forum, workshops, formal interviews and conversations with Gunditjmara who hold recognised authority to speak for Country.

# BACKGROUND

---

**Gunditjmara hold deep connections to our Country, we don't just exist on it; we exist because of, and in relation with, Country. Our dreamings, relationships, stories and lore mean we are forever intertwined within the tangible and intangible aspects of the landscapes we are here to protect.**

**Nyamat Mirring is a living breathing cultural entity, that holds dreamings, knowledge and power, that has seen the birth of generations of Gunditjmara for millennia, it's seen wars, tsunamis, and ever-changing sea levels and is home to our final earth-side resting space.**

Tahlia Warren Brand

Gunditjmara Mirring (Country) is a complex, connected landscape incorporating four Mirring; Wooroowarook Mirring (Forest Country), Bocara Wooroowarook Mirring (River Forest Country), Tungatt Mirring (Stone Country) and Nyamat Mirring (Sea Country); each with their own unique values, stories and ecological systems.

Our Nyamat Mirring holds values that are fundamental to our wellbeing and benefit Gunditjmara and other people who live on Country. Our customary obligations to Country, Ceremony, our language (Wurrung), Lores, relationships, and identities as Gunditjmara are inter-connected with Nyamat Mirring.

Nyamat Mirring is the site of white settler arrival and of the first recorded massacre of our people. It is where we fought to have our cultural heritage recognised and protected, and where the right to access part of our Country was restored.

We have retained contact with our traditional Country, maintained our inherited responsibilities to care for our Country and continue to use the resources of our Country to sustain us. Our culture and traditions require us to take responsibility for maintaining the Country in a healthy state.

This plan replaces the Kooyang Sea Country Plan (2004), which was prepared by Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and Framlingham Aboriginal Trust and was one of the first Sea Country plans prepared in Australia.

Since 2004, there have been significant changes to recognition of the rights of Gunditjmara. Through perseverance, our relationship to our un-ceded Country was formally recognised and has resulted in several key achievements. The following are particularly relevant to the Nyamat Mirring Plan.

In 2005, the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners Community established the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (GMTOAC). GMTOAC is a registered Native Title body corporate under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) and a Registered Aboriginal party under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic). Through GMTOAC, Gunditjmara ensure that cultural obligations and responsibilities which arise from Gunditjmara Country and Gunditjmara law, customs and beliefs are upheld.

In 2007 and 2011, rights and interests of Gunditjmara people were recognised under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) Part A and Part B respectively. These determinations allow for the non-exclusive right to access, use, and take resources from Crown Land in these areas.



In 2015, the Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara, South West Management Plan was developed by Parks Victoria. This was the first time Parks Victoria had partnered with Gunditjmara on land management. It led to the development of the Budj Bim Council, and co-management of Budj Bim National Park.

In 2019, Budj Bim Cultural Landscape was added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage List and recognised as one of the oldest aquaculture sites in the world.

In 2022, the proposed Gunditjmara Sea Country Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) was recognised by the Australian Government. This proposed area encompasses the coastal section of our Native Title areas and will include the sea and submerged lands. The IPA will be managed collaboratively to achieve social, cultural and economic outcomes for Gunditjmara.

The long-held fight for self-determination has been recently reflected in commonwealth and state legislation, policy, and planning. The *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* (Vic) and subsequent Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 and Marine and Coastal Strategy 2022 acknowledge Traditional Owner groups' knowledge, rights and aspirations for land and sea Country and supports development of Traditional Owner led plans such as the Nyamat Mirring Plan.

This Plan outlines our concerns about the increasing pressure on Nyamat Mirring and identifies goals, objectives and actions which provide a pathway for Gunditjmara to lead and contribute to the healing of Nyamat Mirring.





PART B

---

ABOUT  
NYAMAT MIRRORING

# THE AREA COVERED BY THE PLAN

Gunditjmara coastal Country includes the land and water from Bocara (Glenelg River) in the West to the Hopkins River in the East, and extends out to sea into Discovery Bay, Portland Bay surrounding Deen Maar Island. Nyamat Mirring is connected to the rest of Gunditjmara Country as part of a continuous, connected landscape.

Nyamat Mirring is a mosaic of private and public land with various governance and management arrangements.

Well, this is Sea Country and there's a state's responsibility five km out and there's a Commonwealth responsibility, that's about 20 km out. That's, not important to us ...from here to out is Sea Country. It's our Country.

Denise Lovett

Gunditjmara Nyamat Mirring (Sea Country)





# CULTURAL VALUES

---

Nyamat Mirring is rich in tangible and intangible cultural values that reflect the importance of this landscape to Gunditjmara families for thousands of generations. The Country holds significant sites and values.

This Plan provides some examples of the cultural values important to Gunditjmara. Additional engagement with the relevant Gunditjmara cultural knowledge holders is required for a more comprehensive understanding of Gunditjmara cultural values. GMTOAC is the first point of contact to identify Gunditjmara who speak for particular knowledge, or an area of Gunditjmara Country.

**GMTOAC Research Principles and Guidelines** provide direction to prospective researchers who wish to undertake projects on Gunditjmara Country or with Gunditjmara. The Guidelines assist researchers to undertake the studies in an ethical and culturally responsive manner. They indicate the types of research, methodologies, data collection and storage, which should be employed to ensure 'Gunditjmara Country is protected, Gunditjmara values respected, and Gunditjmara capacity and knowledge expanded.'

**The Cultural Values Assessment Policy** provides specific guidance to researchers undertaking cultural values assessments. The Policy centres Gunditjmara knowledge and protects cultural and intellectual property. The Policy notes assessments be 'prepared with the aim to understand the perspectives of the relevant Gunditjmara on cultural values, any threats to and potential impacts on those values and opinions for managing Gunditjmara Country and cultural values'.



Tarragal cave

## NYAMAT MIRRORING INCLUDES MANY SIGNIFICANT SITES, IMPORTANT AS PLACES FOR SHELTER, GATHERINGS, AND CEREMONY.



Flint stone

Flint stone, used to fashion sharp-edged tools, was not readily available on land. It was collected from holdfasts. These structures attach kelp to rocks and often wash ashore after storms.



Shell midden

'In 1870, the Portland Guardian provided stories from Victoria's volcanic history. It reports how the sea suddenly flooded through Leywholot (Portland), destroying the country and its animals.

Many Gunditjmara were killed, apart from a group who had been camped on the summit of Mt Eckersley. Mt Vandyke and Mt Mistake arose suddenly over the following two days.'

Source Context 2012

All that evidence of Aboriginal occupation is still there. You can walk into sand dunes along here and you'll come across a shell midden and it just looks like they just left.

...it's still all intact, the stone, the cutting tools, the remains of what they were cooking, you know, the animal bones and the shellfish in the shells.

... so it's all there.

Denise Lovett

THE SEA, CAVES, ESTUARIES, REEFS, NEARSHORE ISLANDS,  
AND EXTENSIVE DUNE AND WETLAND SYSTEMS ALONG  
THE COAST ARE EMBODIED WITH STORIES FROM  
CONTINUOUS USE BY GUNDITJMARA OVER MILLENNIA.







### **Deen Maar**

Deen Maar holds deep spiritual significance for Gunditjmara, as part of our creation story and a place where the spirits of our Ancestors rest.

Greater involvement of Gunditjmara in planning and management of the Island and surrounding waters will continue to strengthen connection to this culturally significant place for our people. The site is part of our Native Title Determination (Part B).

**Deen Maar, it's spiritual significance can't be overstated. Any developments there are a big concern for our community, it's a place where spiritually, when mob pass away their spirit goes there to rest. So it's a bit of a dreaming place for our community - that can't be overstated.**

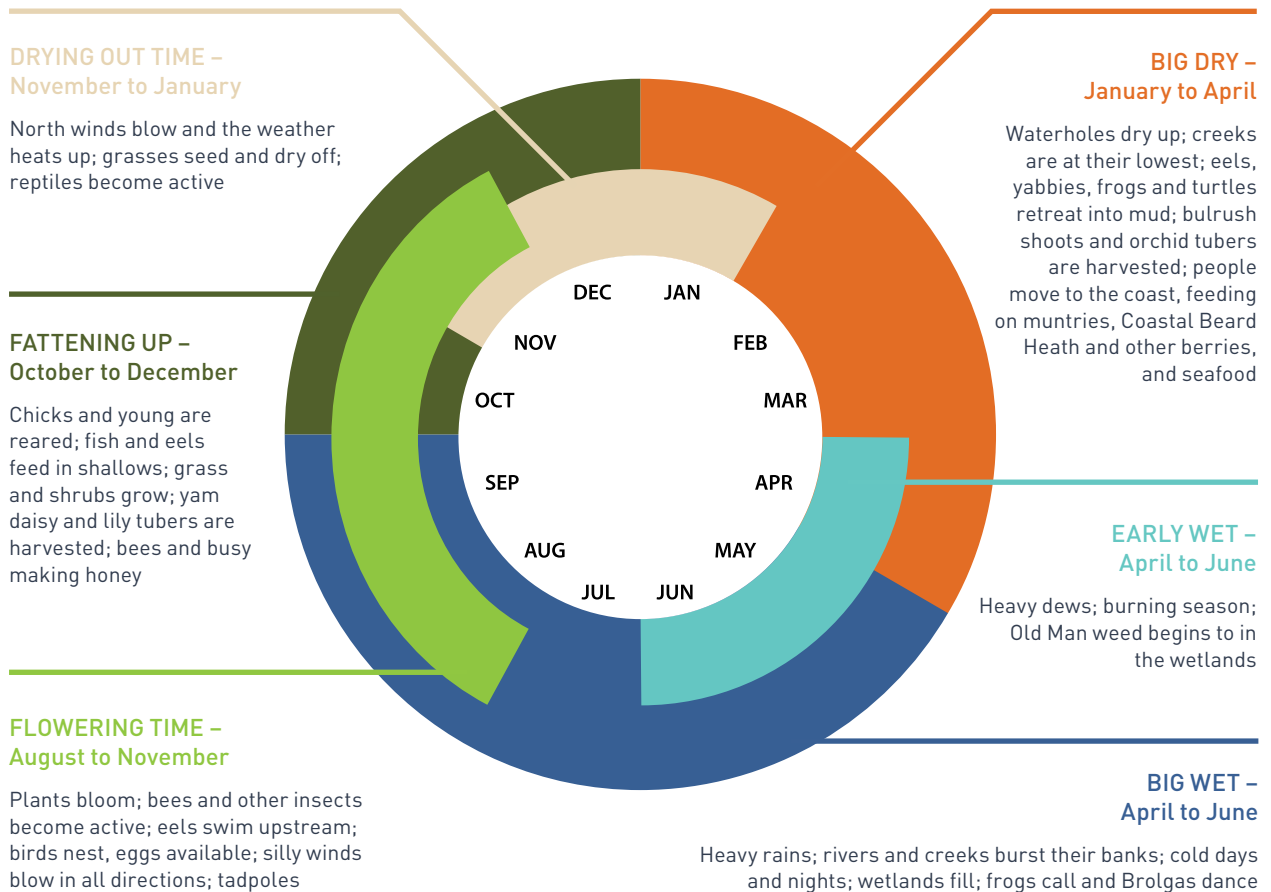
**But also, another story about, a giant that lived on top of Budj Bim and passed away and his body got carried out to sea and became Deen Maar. And so, there's all these stories and ecologies that connect the landscape...Sea Country to other types of Country and Gunditjmara Country now. It's a place of abundance of resources from the fish to, coastal vegetation. (It's a) place, where Gunditjmara go and access and practice culture.**

Tyson Lovett Murray

Lake Monebeong

## The six seasons of Gunditjmara Country

While some Clans lived permanently on the coast, others moved to the coast in the warmer weather to utilise more secure water sources and harvest shellfish and coastal plants.



Parks Victoria (2015)



# KOORYANG STORY

Kooyang are culturally significant for Gunditjmara and have been a valuable resource for thousands of years. Studies undertaken by Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) and Deakin University in partnership with GMTOAC are building on traditional knowledge and helping inform future management of the kooyang and its habitat.

The ARI study focuses on monitoring movement of eels using acoustic tagging and satellite tagging, to investigate eel migration, including their initial movement downstream in freshwater toward the sea and offshore oceanic movement towards spawning areas.

While the adult eels die after spawning, the newly hatched larvae commence their journey towards the coast, before eventually entering rivers. The transmitters attached to adult eels are programmed to pop to the surface after 4-5 months and transmit data to the satellite network. Using that data, the eels journey can be reconstructed.

Another study, developed by Deakin University in partnership with GMTOAC and ARI, is using genetic tools to better understand how eels utilise different habitats within the Budj Bim cultural landscape. The study will also explore eel's dietary patterns, investigate connectivity among populations and determine factors that influence eel recruitment. Outcomes from the project will determine the resilience of kooyang to environmental changes and fishing pressures to ensure future management supports the species longevity.

**'Managing the eels' habitat will also protect other species. It's about the whole country and caring for country as equal.'**

Ben Church

**'There are many pressures on eels, from climate change to drainage of wetlands and commercial fishing'.**

**'We're getting some better information about their life cycle, hopefully this assists in the protection and the continuing supply of young eels'.**

Denis Rose



Two eels were tracked from the west coast of Victoria for about 3,000 kilometres up to warm tropical waters around New Caledonia, an area around the Coral Sea. This is the first time the oceanic migrations of Australian eels have been tracked and documented.

The route taken and speed varied with some eels moving south around Tasmania. These differences suggest that not all eels spawn at the same time or in the same area.

Source Arthur Rylah Institute

# HARVESTING

---

...looking after those, natural values which is really important and having mob there ... returning some of those species, that have become threatened, to good health.

You know, it's, rare to find muntrie in the dunes now. They were like a staple food traditionally 150 years ago.

So trying to restore that species back in the country ... all of that kind of work is really important.

Tyson Lovett Murray

Nyamat Mirring has provided a plentiful on-going source of food for Gunditjmara. These species continue to hold strong cultural value. Coastal fish and shellfish harvested from the sea, intertidal reefs and sandy beaches are important as evidenced by cultural heritage sites and current practices. Species central to ongoing cultural connection include shellfish, such as turbos, pipis, abalone, limpets, mussel, elephant snail, crayfish/lobster, and crabs. The native oyster was also an important food but is now extinct and freshwater mussels population severely depleted. Two freshwater species, blackfish and eels, continue to be harvested.

**Magpie geese** and **Cape Barren geese** were harvested for food, but wetland habitat loss and overhunting has reduced numbers and harvesting of these species is not permitted in Victoria. Other bird species, like short-tailed shearwaters (mutton bird) and emu, were also a valuable food source prior to colonial extraction placing pressure on the health of many bird populations.

Coastal plants such as wattle seed, and muntrie berries are important food species as are the tubers of cumbungi and orchids.



**Kooyang (eels) hold special significance for Gunditjmara.**

Over millennia we have created complex stone aquaculture systems to trap and store eels, with some preserved by smoking in tree hollows enabling their use as an important local commodity for trade between neighbouring Nations.

Short-finned eels are migratory. After decades living in freshwater, adults move through estuaries to the sea and as far as the coral sea, where they breed and die. Young larval stages move into the estuaries and to freshwater wetlands and waterways.

**Koorn Moorn (seals) feature in song and dance of Gunditjmara and are used as a food source.** They were collected in traditional times by women along the Gunditjmara coast with evidence at Tarragal cave site dated to 10,000 years.

**Karntubul (Whales) have featured in dreaming stories, ceremony, song and dance of Gunditjmara people for millennia.**

Gunditjmara maintain a strong spiritual connection to all species of whales that travel through Gunditjmara country. Karntabul yarkeen (whale dreaming) stories connect Aboriginal groups all along the coasts of Australia, neighbouring groups in Victoria, including Gunditjmara, still gather today to strengthen the connection of groups to whales and their stories. The arrival of Karntabul in Gunditjmara waters also signifies the beginning of the 'big wet' season (May-Oct), one of 6 Gunditjmara seasons.

Whales are also a food source, in traditional times, tribes would send up smoke signals and gather when whales got beached. Today, Gunditjmara still gather when whales are beached and take resources from whales as we have done for thousands of years. The last time this occurred was in January 2023.

Protection of this species is paramount to Gunditjmara spiritual, physical wellbeing. Tyson Lovett Murray

**BONNEY UPWELLING**

Marine waters of Nyamat Mirring support many culturally significant species. The Bonney upwelling is a dominant feature of these waters. The current brings cold nutrient rich water to the surface, which feeds phytoplankton - the basis of the marine food web. Increased phytoplankton benefits many larger species such as fish, squid, seals, dolphins, whales, penguins, gannets and other sea birds.

# RESISTANCE, RIGHTS, AND RECOGNITION

---

## CONVINCING GROUND

Portland Bay is the site of the first invasion of what is now known as Victoria. Whalers and sealers visited Gunditjmara shores in Portland Bay, probably as early as 1810 with the establishment of a whaling station at Portland in 1829. A significant site of early conflict in Gunditjmara Country was at a place now known as the “Convincing Ground”. In 1832 – 33, when Kilcarer Gunditj came together at a beached whale, whalers used the gathering, murdering approximately 60 people at the Convincing Ground. Only two members of the clan survived the massacre. ‘The ‘Convincing Ground’ is located in Portland Bay and is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. Source Cited in Clark 1995 in Context Volumes 1 & 2.

## ALCOA SITE

In 1980, Gunditjmara Traditional Owners, Aunty Sandra Onus and Aunty Christina Frankland led the resistance to the construction of the Portland Aluminium Smelter, which would have resulted in destruction of many archaeological and sacred sites. Frankland and Onus took legal action against Alcoa for breaches of the Victorian Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act (1972). The out of Court settlement resulted in the return of land at Tae Rak (Lake Condah) with additional funds enabling purchase of farming properties, and feasibility studies to investigate restoration of water to the lake. The Actions of Onus and Frankland ultimately changed Commonwealth legislation regarding cultural heritage management in Victoria.

## WORLD HERITAGE

In 2019, the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape was inscribed on the World Heritage List. After over a decade of work - collecting and collating information - the site was formally recognised for its extensive and oldest aquaculture systems, which were developed by the Gunditjmara to trap, store and harvest kooyang (short-finned eel – *Anguilla australis*), which move from the sea, inland to wetlands and river. The site encompasses significant components of the Budj Bim lava flow including Tae Rak (Lake Condah) and Killara (Darlot Creek).

## NATIVE TITLE

In 1996, Gunditjmara lodged a native title claim on their traditional lands. Through mediation the parties to the claim agreed to a process which, after 11 years, resulted in a consent determination of native title. Non-exclusive native title rights were recognised over 1,400 square kilometres of Country. The Gunditj (earth) Mirring (belonging) Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation was established as the registered native title holder.

In 2011, Gunditjmara and Eastern Maar achieved recognition of native title over Deen Maar Island and 4,000 hectares of Crown Land between Dunkeld and Yambuk.

These determinations followed 15 years of native title proceedings for Gunditjmara Traditional Owners. Under the consent determinations, the Gunditjmara and Eastern Maar have native title right to: access or enter and remain on the land and waters; camp on the land and waters landward of the high-water mark of the sea; use and enjoy the land and waters; take the resources of the land and waters; and protect places and areas of importance on the land and waters. These rights can only be exercised on Crown land and waters and are subject to relevant state and commonwealth laws.

## PROPOSED GUNDITJMARA INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA (IPA)

In 2022, the Commonwealth Government funded GMTTOAC to develop a Gunditjmara Sea Country IPA on the coastal section of Native Title Areas A and B, including the sea and submerged lands. Gunditjmara will work to decide on the boundaries of the IPA based on cultural and ecological aspects and feasible management arrangements.

Once declared, the Gunditjmara Sea Country IPA will provide a framework for Gunditjmara to collaboratively manage Nyamat Mirring, using traditional and contemporary knowledge. The IPA will enable Gunditjmara to investigate partnerships and improve training, employment and education opportunities for our community.

We want to share the story because it's really important that everyone who lives on this Country knows this Country's history and the Convincing Grounds is how Aboriginal people were being treated ...the Kilcarer wasn't the first clan to be wiped out.

There was lots of this happening everywhere. So, we need to use the convincing grounds to tell the story...

Denise Lovett

...when I come here (to the Convincing Ground) I stand in a really important place because it's not just on the Convincing Grounds I look across and I see Alcoa, Alcoa was our first Gunditjmara fight, Sandra Onus and Auntie Tina, when they fought Alcoa and stopped the destruction of Aboriginal heritage and ended up with a determination from the High Court that gave us ... cultural heritage legislation.

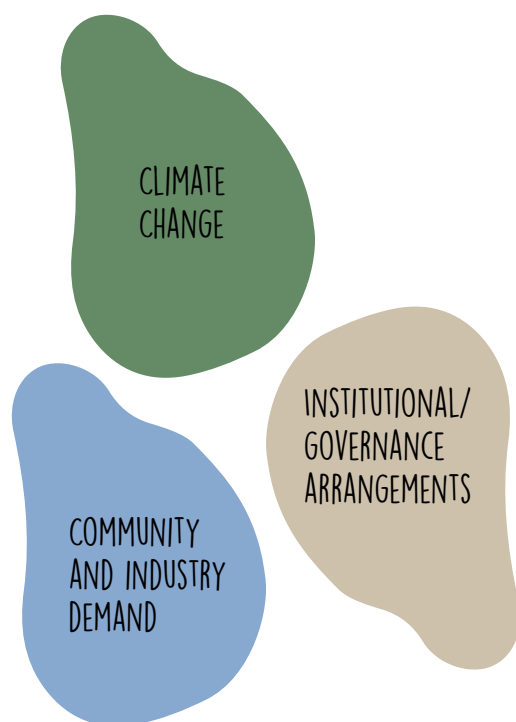
Denise Lovett



# OUR CONCERNS

This plan identifies causes, and associated threats, which impact the health of Country and the well-being of our people (Table 1).

Cultural and natural values of Nyamat Mirring are particularly threatened by changes associated with climate change, and increasing pressure from industries such as tourism, agriculture, fisheries and energy. In addition, existing institutional and governance arrangements create barriers to Gunditjmarra’s full participation. These restrictions limit cultural practices, and our involvement in planning, decision making and management of Country.



**Table 1. Existing or future threats to Nyamat Mirring**

CAUSE	THREAT	EXAMPLE OF IMPACT
CLIMATE CHANGE	Altered oceanography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to currents impact on dispersal of species relying on pelagic transport of adults and/or larvae (e.g., short-finned eels).</li> <li>• Changes in frequency or intensity of Bonney Upwelling impacts marine species (e.g., whales, seals, fish, and sea birds).</li> </ul>
	Sea level rise and increased storm surge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites of cultural significance (e.g., meeting places and middens) at increased risk of erosion and inundation.</li> <li>• Vegetation communities, e.g., saltmarsh and estuarine reedbeds impacted by saltwater increased inundation.</li> <li>• Marine fauna utilising intertidal area impacted e.g., seal haul out areas inundated, habitat of intertidal species (e.g., limpets) reduced.</li> </ul>
	Increased hot dry weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal vegetation altered and sand dunes destabilised leading to exposure and degradation of culturally significant sites.</li> <li>• Coastal wetlands reduced in area and depth.</li> </ul>
	Increased sea water acidification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on abundance of marine species.</li> </ul>
	Changed hydrological regimes/reduced freshwater flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal wetlands and estuaries impacted by reduced flow (e.g., size and salinity of wetlands, length of estuary closure). Exacerbated by intensified agricultural land use.</li> </ul>

CAUSE	THREAT	EXAMPLE OF IMPACT
COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY DEMAND	Disturbance and Physical Site destruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unmanaged vehicle and pedestrian access causes damage to culturally significant sites e.g., middens.</li> <li>• Coastal development impacts culturally important sites</li> <li>• Dredging impacts sediment deposition and marine habitat extent and condition.</li> <li>• Noise, light and visual disturbance impact marine and coastal species.</li> </ul>
	Increased development on land and sea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to culturally significant landscapes and seascapes.</li> <li>• Restricted access to Country.</li> </ul>
	Marine debris and contaminants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health of Country is impacted by debris (e.g., entanglement) and pollution (port and urban sources).</li> </ul>
	Increased nutrient and sediment levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased risk of algal blooms and reduced depths of wetlands and estuaries.</li> </ul>
	Overfishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced size and abundance of commercial and recreational target species in accessible areas (e.g., pipis, abalone).</li> </ul>
	Introduced species result in altered species composition -potential species loss/ extinction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invasive pest plant and animals on land and sea (e.g., Japanese kelp, coast wattle, rabbits, pigs, polygala).</li> </ul>
INSTITUTIONAL/GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS	Lack of representation on advisory and decision making bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making does not reflect Gunditjmara priorities and values.</li> <li>• Relevant research not undertaken.</li> <li>• Gunditjmara knowledge and leadership not valued.</li> </ul>
	Gunditjmara representation, values and rights not embedded in policy and legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management does not incorporate cultural practices, and values not adequately protected.</li> <li>• Self-determination of Gunditjmara is limited and unable to pursue economic, social and cultural development.</li> <li>• Gunditjmara language not widely promoted and practiced.</li> </ul>

The background features a complex, abstract pattern of overlapping shapes and lines. A prominent dark blue diagonal band contains a series of light-colored, stylized, hook-like shapes. The rest of the background is a mix of green and dark blue, with white outlines of various geometric and organic forms. A large, solid black circle is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, containing the text 'PART C' and 'FUTURE MANAGEMENT' separated by a horizontal line.

PART C

---

FUTURE  
MANAGEMENT

# FUTURE MANAGEMENT

---

Gunditjmara have managed our Country for millenia. We are the traditional custodians of this land but also the contemporary and future managers. We continue to build on our practices and knowledge and incorporate scientific research and new understanding into management of Nyamat Mirring.

Our management priorities respond to threats to Country (see Table 1) and are guided by principles which recognise our obligation to Country and the strong interconnection of culture and Country.

**'We are 'rights holders' not stakeholders.**

**We don't just want to be asked we want to lead.'**

Denis Rose

## PRINCIPLES

### MANAGING COUNTRY IS A CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITY

Traditional Owners lead the development and application of land and water management practices on Country; the responsibilities and authority of Traditional Owners are recognised and respected; Traditional Owners knowledge, practice and connection with Country will be respected and bring a cultural approach to planning and management.

### SEA COUNTRY PRACTICES ARE LIVING KNOWLEDGES

Our knowledges are shared for continual learning and adaptive management. Traditional Owners will work together on each other's Country to heal Country and guide practice development. Knowledges and practices are shared.

### MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH SUPPORT CULTURAL OBJECTIVES AND ENABLE ADAPTIVE LEARNING

Research practices will be used to build a body of evidence that allows Gunditjmara knowledges and practices to change and grow through changing circumstances.

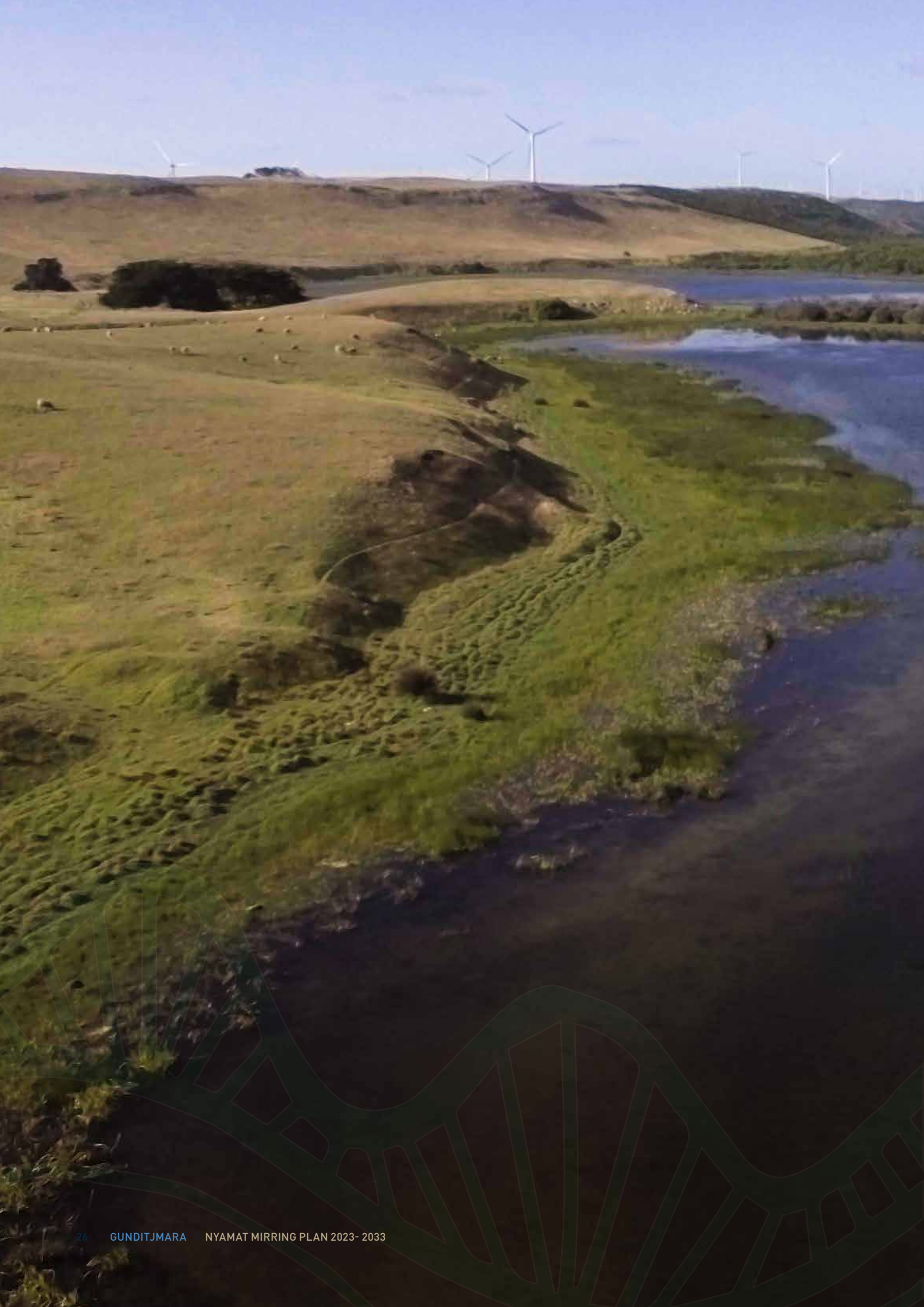
### COUNTRY IS MANAGED HOLISTICALLY

Traditional Owners manage Country holistically to address multiple values and objectives, healing both Country and culture. Partnership arrangements and management objectives are tailored to each regional and cultural landscape context.

### MANAGING COUNTRY IS HEALING

Traditional Owners' wellbeing and confidence is centred through access and authority to practice on Country. We are interested in the long-term benefit of our sea Country to our people.

Source: Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (2019)





# MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The management framework reflects our cultural obligations to protect and heal Mirring, nurture relationships, practice Ceremonies and Wurrung (language) and strengthen our Lores and learnings.

The vision, outcomes and activities in this Plan are derived from concerns and priorities noted during consultation for this project, and Gunditjmara input to other recent policies and plans.

The activities contribute to achieving short, medium and long-term outcomes and ultimately realising the vision for Nyamat Mirring.

‘Gunditjmara carry out our enduring responsibility to care for Nyamat Mirring, so our children thrive, see their Country heal and know their stories’.

For each cultural value, Mirring, Ceremony, Wurrung, Law/Lore/ Learning and Relationships, suggested activities and desired outcomes presented as in Table below. A full program logic is presented in Part D Implementation.

Table 2. Template for tables in this section

LONG-TERM OUTCOME (10 PLUS YEARS) - THE DESIRED STATE FOR EACH CULTURAL VALUE	
1. <b>Medium-term outcome (5-10 years)</b> What we will observe as progress is made towards achieving the long-term outcomes	1.1. <b>Activity</b> - specific action undertaken to achieve progress towards outcomes and ultimately the vision for Nyamat Mirring 1.2. <b>Activity</b>
2. <b>Medium-term outcome</b>	2.1. <b>Activity</b>

# MIRRORING

---

**Country and our connection to our Country, whether it be land or sea Country it's the thing that we live on and something that grows us.**

**It's the place if we aren't on Country, whether it's land or sea Country, where are we? it's our base. It's our foundation.**

**We don't have a history of movement from Country - Aboriginal people they've come, and they've stayed and stayed and stayed... so being on Country and caring for Country and respecting Country is because this is our place, this is our place in the world.**

**Because extinction of flora and fauna is really important. Development on Country, destruction of cultural heritage is really important. We lose places that are 1000, 2000, 10,000 years old.**

Denise Lovett

**...we need to audit it to find out where the sites are, document them, give them a cultural value .. with that we need rangers, but we need rangers with teeth. We want some compliance.**

Walter Saunders

Coastal land and waters of Nyamat Mirring are impacted by threats from pollution, pest plant and animals and altered hydrology. Works to address these threats should incorporate practices and priorities of Gunditjmarra and be undertaken in partnership with private landholders and natural resource management agencies (such as Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Southern Rural Water, and Wannon Water).

Gunditjmarra have experienced dramatic changes in Nyamat Mirring including sea level rises, temperature changes and storm events. The current rate of change, and restricted use and access to our Country, limits our ability to adapt to future changes. An adaptation pathways approach, which determines an appropriate response for different levels of impact, should be applied at priority sites where cultural sites and values are likely to be threatened.

A Sea Country Ranger program would support the program to protect and restore Nyamat Mirring by undertaking activities such as

- natural resource management and compliance
- wildlife rescue such as disentanglement or oil spill response
- Reading Country programs
- monitoring of selected cultural values and indicators
- promotion of cultural values to partners and the broader community
- citizen science programs such as monitoring beach erosion and species distribution
- support a Junior Sea Ranger Program.

The program would provide a pathway for Gunditjmarra to participate in sectors, such as tourism and aquaculture, and facilitate knowledge sharing and skill development with partners.

It is envisaged the Sea Country Ranger's role will develop over time in response to need, and as skills are gained.

There are numerous cultural heritage sites across Nyamat Mirring, including middens, on the dune systems at Discovery Bay. These sites are under increasing threat from recreational 4WDs, and vehicle use associated with the commercial and recreational pipi fishery. The area's remoteness limits surveillance and affects the level of compliance with regulations.

Use of fire is central to landscape management for Gunditjmarra. Pathways need to be established to enable us to lead planning and undertake cultural burns according to our cultural obligations including management of culturally significant species. The Weeyn Yarkeen Strategy and Implementation Plan provides guidance for cultural burns on Gunditjmarra IPAs. The Strategy and Plan were developed in partnership with fire agencies and land managers. The program manages wildfire risk and restores habitat, food, medicinal plants and fibre to Country through cultural burning. The Strategy and Plan will be reviewed and revised to incorporate Nyamat Mirring. Outcomes will be established, results monitored, and the program modified as required, following implementation of the plan.

**We've been building up our cultural burning program for ten years or so, .. because those practices were stopped 150 years ago, you've got these overgrowth happening and these fuel loads that are too high. It creates issues around wildfire....it creates ecological issues. It just creates better biodiversity when you do those cool burns and mosaic burns throughout the country, sea Country included.**

**MIRRING: COUNTRY IS PROTECTED FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS**

<b>M1. Gunditjmarra lead the identification, planning and implementation of natural and cultural resource management programs</b>	M1.1	Apply the full suite of Gunditjmarra-led management practices to heal and manage Nyamat Mirring
	M1.2	Lead/ Participate in climate adaptation programs by identifying priority sites and values to be considered in adaptation responses
	M1.3	Gunditjmarra are employed as Sea Country Rangers to assist in management restoration and monitoring programs
	M1.4	Gunditjmarra have the power to enforce regulations and issue warnings, fines and refer serious infringements to the appropriate authorities;- restrict camping and natural resource use and extraction near sacred and significant sites on Country
<b>M2. Cultural fire knowledge and practice is used to manage Country.</b>	M2.1	Revise Weeyn Yarkeen Strategy and Implementation Plan to incorporate Nyamat Mirring Ceremony

**We need resources to do the works... in arid places they can light fires and let them run - we want to do it safely.**

Tyson Lovett Murray

**'We have a Cultural responsibility for keeping balance in Country'**

(online consultation)

# CEREMONY

---

**We have a cultural responsibility to, look after Country, but we also have a right to enjoy Country and to reconnect with Country where that disconnect has happened over the past 200 years.**

Denis Rose

**We do have to look forward, but before we can look forward, we have to look back. We have to recognise who we were so that we can grapple with who we are and the issues we face, and that we can create and cultivate great warriors of tomorrow.**

Richard Frankland

Gunditjmara connection to Mirring and each other is strengthened through Ceremony and events. These can be Ceremonies for life events (funerals, burials, births, marriages, rites of passage); Ceremonies for Mirring (seasons festivals; NAIDOC week, World Heritage listing); and ceremonies for healing (Convincing Ground, Gunditjmara Invasion Day). Events such as family gatherings, clan gatherings and sports days further connect Gunditjmara to each other and to Mirring.

Gunditjmara Elders and families need access to Country for these events and Ceremonies which are critical for intergenerational knowledge sharing and cultural practice. Under Native title, Gunditjmara have the right to access public land. Exercising our right requires us to repeatedly prove our status as custodians of this land. Asking permission, disempowers our people, particularly our young people, and discourages regular gatherings of families, clans and elders for Ceremony or social events.

The Convincing Ground, in Portland Bay, was formally recognised as a Heritage Place on the Victorian Heritage Register in 2006. Some land was returned to Gunditjmara, following illegal works by developers on the site. Additional parcels of adjoining land were subsequently obtained by Gunditjmara. We want to create a space that appropriately recognises the site's significance and reflects Gunditjmara aspirations for the area.

## **Invasion Day**

**Gunditjmara gather at the Convincing Grounds on 26 January to recognise and reflect on the on-going impact of colonization on our people.**

**...It's so good to see families and young people here... It's important our stories are passed through them.**

Chris Saunders





Many sites of cultural importance are on private land. We want to work with landholders to enable access to those areas to record, monitor and protect sites.

Gunditjmara access to Nyamat (marine) and Paryeet (freshwater) is limited by costs associated with gaining the necessary skills and permits and buying and maintaining equipment. Training and equipment, such as boat licenses, SCUBA qualifications and kayaks, will be sought so Gunditjmara are able to more easily access Mirring.

**We haven't done the work that we want to do here (Convincing Grounds) because now the land is increased.... we have a bigger space and ...we've only touched on what we want to do and how we want it. .... So, this will be a place where we want to reflect on what happened.**

Denise Lovett

**CEREMONY: CULTURAL PRACTICE, KNOWLEDGE SHARING, AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS ARE ENHANCED THROUGH CEREMONY, GATHERINGS AND EVENTS**

**C1. Gunditjmara access and use of Country is increased to enable ceremony and events**

- C1.1 Secure permanent, exclusive access to coastal sites for Gunditjmara Ceremony and events
- C1.2 Develop a Convincing Ground landscape plan to establish a site for reflection, Ceremony and events
- C1.3 Develop relationships and agreements with private landowners to support Gunditjmara access to freehold land
- C1.4 Ensure training opportunities and equipment are available to facilitate access to Nyamat Mirring

**We need exclusive use of land, with access to the sea and rivers, so our people will continue sharing stories, practicing our culture and strengthening relationships.**

Denis Rose





# WURRUNG (LANGUAGE)

---

it's really important with names and language that that we consistently remind people that this is Gunditjmara Country, this is our Country. We never ceded the Country. And it is Gunditjmara Country.

Darlot Creek as an example. Its traditional name is Killara, which means 'always there'. And that is just a very appropriate name for the creek because it never stops flowing. And that's why our mob built the fish traps, invested time and effort and resources into the fish traps, the permanent the stone house sites... So, without going through a complex name change process, we can just put another sign up on the Darlot Creek Bridge saying, Killara, it may be in different colours. And that can be replicated right throughout the coast.

Denis Rose

Despite past policies of dispossession and assimilation, the strength and resilience of Gunditjmara has preserved cultural practices and languages which continue to be practiced and passed on to future generations.

Use of Wurrung strengthens our connection to Country and our community. Restoring Wurrung by increasing the visibility and use of Wurrung on Country will facilitate this connection.

**Revival work around language is really important. It builds identity ... when you've got a good revival program they're growing that language in Country, and there's a lot of knowledge in language... like the language word for the water rat means 'mother of mussels' ... and we've got mussel species that are endangered... so that sort of knowledge ... helps in the management of Country. So, a good revival program is good for the community but vital for the Country as well.**

Tyson Lovett Murray

Although actions in this section relate only to language, Gunditjmara understand and promote the importance of other practices such as talking to Country through song, dance, story and connecting with others. These practices are encouraged through Ceremony and gatherings (see 'Ceremony').

## WURRUNG: GUNDITJMARA CONNECTION TO CULTURE IS STRENGTHENED THROUGH LANGUAGE

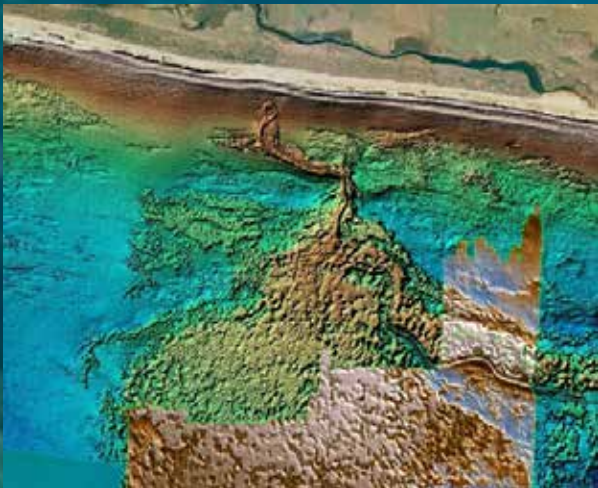
- |  |       |   |
|--|-------|---|
| <b>W1. Gunditjmara preserve, promote and practice language</b> | W1.1. | Reactivate Dhauwurd Wurrung Language Committee                                |
|  | W1.2  | Develop Gunditjmara dictionary and language resources                         |
|  | W1.3  | Ensure signs and landscape features on Gunditjmara Country prioritise Wurrung |
-

The Deakin University Marine Habitat Mapping program uses multibeam sonar to map the seafloor and identify different habitat types.

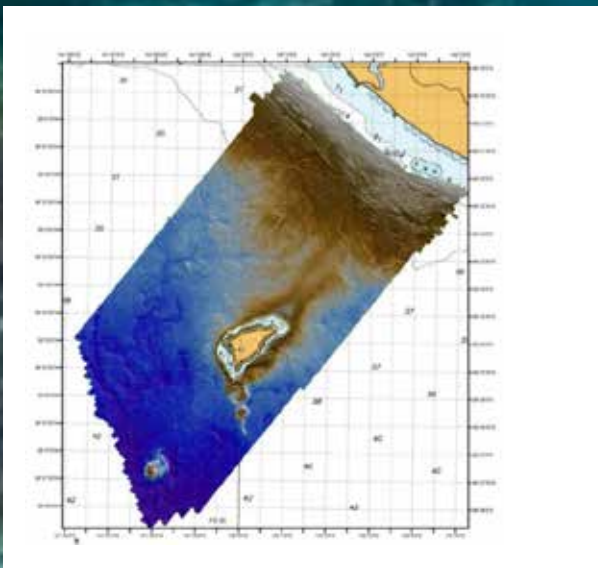
Surveys using remote cameras, as well as divers, collect further data about the extent and type of habitats and distribution of species.

The Marine Mapping program provides scientific evidence of the physical connection of Gunditjmarra seascapes and landscapes.

Technology employed can be used to better target archaeological surveys gathering evidence of Gunditjmarra occupation of now submerged land.



Fitzroy River estuary: Sonar image showing the extension of the Budj Bim lava flow to the sea



Mapping showing connection of Deen Maar to the coast at Yambuk. Images: Daniel Ierodiaconou Deakin University

# LAW/ LORE/ LEARNING

---

**(There are) stories that connect Deen Maar and Budj Bim as well, which is MT Eccles it's a volcano that erupted 36,000 years ago. The lava flow, about 30 km long - goes out to sea - under the sea. There's probably traditional fish traps in the stone there because the sea level has risen in the last 10,000 years.**

Tyson Lovett Murray

Gunditjmara are committed to and have always practiced adaptive management. Observing and altering practices in response to changes in Country is embedded in caring for Country.

Gunditjmara are guided by traditional and scientific knowledge to ensure populations of plants and animals for food, fibre, medicinal or other cultural practices are enhanced, and harvested in a sustainable way. We are interested in establishing self-sustaining populations of traditionally harvested species such as eels, magpie geese and Cape Barren geese and developing Take and use systems for a range of culturally valued species, which incorporate Gunditjmara knowledge and practices.

The Gunditjmara lead and support research, which helps us achieve our community's aspirations. GMTOAC have over many years initiated strong partnerships with research institutions. These research collaborations and relationships contribute to us achieving positive outcomes for our Country.

Potential research topics identified through development of the Plan include: marine mapping; ecology and life history of pipi and eels to inform fisheries management; coastal vegetation surveys; climate change impacts on cultural values; and identification of Institutional barriers to full participation of Traditional Owners in decisions, planning and management of Country.

A cultural values and social values assessment was undertaken for GMTOAC to inform the Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara South West Management Plan (Context 2012 Volumes 1-4). The assessment involved extensive engagement and a comprehensive desk top study. Extent and Wessex (2021) built on this information and developed a predictive model to identify likely areas to target for future on Country surveys. These surveys, including archaeological surveys of the sea floor, will enhance our knowledge of the cultural values of Nyamat Mirring.

Cultural values of Nyamat Mirring will be incorporated into education programs to improve awareness of these values with our partners and the wider community.

A Reading Country program will strengthen the connection to Country by formalising the practice of listening and responding to Mirring. The Program will integrate traditional practices and western scientific research and contribute to monitoring cultural and natural resource outcomes.

A Reading Country Program will identify and refine measures so changes in the tangible and intangible values of Nyamat Murring, expected through implementation of this Plan, can be monitored and reported. These measures form the basis the Monitoring, and Evaluation Plan (see Part D). The selected measures will be integrated into Gunditjmara data systems to enable consistent capture and reporting of these measures over time.

**LAW/LORE/LEARNING: NYAMAT MIRRORING HEALS THROUGH PRACTICE CHANGE IN RESPONSE TO KNOWLEDGE AND OBSERVATIONS**

<b>L1. Gunditjmara continue practising adaptative management responding to Country and incorporating scientific knowledge</b>	L1.1	Monitor and evaluate the response of Country to management practices including cultural burning
	L1.2	Develop Take and Use Systems (for harvesting, monitoring and management) that reflect Indigenous Knowledge
	L1.3	Identify gaps in knowledge and address research needs including those based on climate change projections
<b>L2. Increased understanding and appreciation of the cultural and archaeological values of Nyamat Murring, including the current ocean floor</b>	L2.1	Undertake marine mapping and cultural and archaeological surveys
	L2.2	Establish Cultural Awareness training, engagement and education programs for other stakeholders about the cultural values of the sea
<b>L3. Knowledge systems of Gunditjmara are held in accessible and meaningful ways, respecting Gunditjmara intellectual and cultural property</b>	L3.1	Develop and use systems and protocols to capture tangible and intangible cultural values of Nyamat Murring
	L3.2	Develop a Reading Country Program so changes to Nyamat Murring can be measured and reported



# RELATIONSHIPS

---

**I think our biggest work before us is getting the wider Victorian.... Australian peoples to appreciate cultural heritage and understand what cultural heritage is.**

**Animals that have been here, native animals to this Country that have been here for generations and generations where's their protection. The Flora and Fauna Act it's not enough.... It's not doing enough. And how do we bring that under our responsibility and the cultural obligations to protect it? Because, we've always had that relationship, that we're all equal with the Country, with the flora and fauna... and we need each other to survive and to sustain.**

Denise Lovett

Self-determination of Gunditjmara is the foundation for respectful partnerships with organisations that share our land and resources. A commitment to self-determination ensures our knowledge and expertise is recognised and barriers to full participation identified and removed.

Gunditjmara have a cultural responsibility to heal and care for Country. Planning and management of Nyamat Mirring are currently fragmented across issues and land tenure. To enable Gunditjmara to lead and participate more fully in natural resource management, a commitment is required by all partners to explore and revise governance arrangements, so barriers are identified and removed. Integration of Gunditjmara knowledge and interests into land and sea management is fundamental to our ability to care for Nyamat Mirring.

We need Gunditjmara-led planning to determine and protect the values of Nyamat Mirring and to recognise the potential cumulative and incremental damage that can occur to Country without adequate oversight and monitoring.

Environmental legislation should recognise and protect culturally valued species. Traditional uses and practices associated with these plants and animals should be acknowledged and Traditional Owner knowledge embedded in practice and legislation.

Fragmentation of Nyamat Mirring, with associated management changes across tenure, does not reflect our holistic view of Country. Approaches are not consistent across governments levels nor industry. Therefore, participation requires additional capacity from Traditional Owners and often effectively limits our contribution. Additional work is required, particularly in sectors such as extractive industries, renewable energy, and fisheries, to embed processes and principles which recognise Gunditjmara as rights holders and custodians.

Establishment of IPAs enables Gunditjmara to protect the natural and cultural values of an area for future generations and provide health, education, economic and social benefits to community. The Gunditjmara Sea Country IPA was proposed in 2022. Other priority IPA areas will be identified and developed as opportunities arise.

The *Marine and Coastal Act 2018 (Vic)* establishes management approaches relevant to planning and management of Nyamat Mirring. These approaches are described in the Marine and Coastal Policy and include: a Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Framework, which brings together multiple sectors and users to guide planning, management and decision making in the marine environment; and Regional and Strategic Partnerships, which respond to a single, regional issue affecting the marine and coastal environment.



Support is required to enable Gunditjmara to fully participate in these processes on Nyamat Mirring.

There is interest in establishing a governance model to enable Gunditjmara - led management of priority areas such as Discovery Bay Coastal Park and Deen Maar Island. Both sites are currently managed by Parks Victoria.

Gunditjmara have always had a close association with the sea; and have harvested and traded marine -based resources for millennia. Industries, such as agriculture, fisheries, and tourism, utilise our natural resources and benefit from the sustainable long-term use and management of those resources by Gunditjmara.

Our custodianship and knowledge of Country are also fundamental to the development of emerging enterprises associated with tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, and education sectors. We assert our right to be a strong decision-making voice and where activities are consistent with Gunditjmara aims, to share in the benefits arising from existing industries and future enterprises.

**...we have to be consulted but if we say no, they don't have to listen to us, they can go ahead. That's the problem with Native Title. But we're not just Native Title holders we're Traditional Owners, we're original custodians. And in a legal sense, if you keep something in custody you have to keep it safe in a legal sense. So, we're in custody of our Country.**

Walter Saunders

**RELATIONSHIPS: GUNDITJMARA STRENGTHEN THEIR IDENTITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS BASED ON RESPECT, RECIPROCITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

<b>R1. Gunditjmara lead, and establish partnerships as required, to strengthen recognition and management of Country</b>	R1.1	Ensure Nyamat Mirring legislation, policy and strategies prioritise Gunditjmara rights, values and benefit- sharing
	R1.2	Gunditjmara participate in or lead Marine Spatial Planning
	R1.3	Gunditjmara identify and develop Nyamat Mirring Indigenous Protected Areas
	R1.4	Gunditjmara assert their rights to manage priority Nyamat Mirring locations such as Deen Maar Island and Discovery Bay Coastal Park and their surrounding waters
<b>R2. Gunditjmara benefit from commercial utilisation of their resources. (e.g. energy, tourism and seafood sectors)</b>	R2.1	Gunditjmara are represented on relevant decision making and advisory bodies concerned with commercial sectors
	R2.2	Employment and training pathways are established for Gunditjmara in sectors related to Nyamat Mirring

A large, stylized silhouette of a bird, possibly a crane or heron, in a dark blue color. The bird is facing right and has its neck curved downwards. The background is a warm orange gradient with white line art patterns, including a large sun-like shape at the top and various geometric shapes at the bottom.

PART D

---

IMPLEMENTATION

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

---

Implementation of this Plan is guided by a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The approach used is based on the Australian Government NRM Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework (2009).

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, has an emphasis on adaptive management and

- describes the Plan's overarching conceptual structure.
- enables progress of the Plan to be monitored and reported.
- informs strategic decisions about investment.
- informs review and prioritisation of future actions.
- embeds learning and improvement through the life of the Plan.

**Figure 2. Key steps of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.**

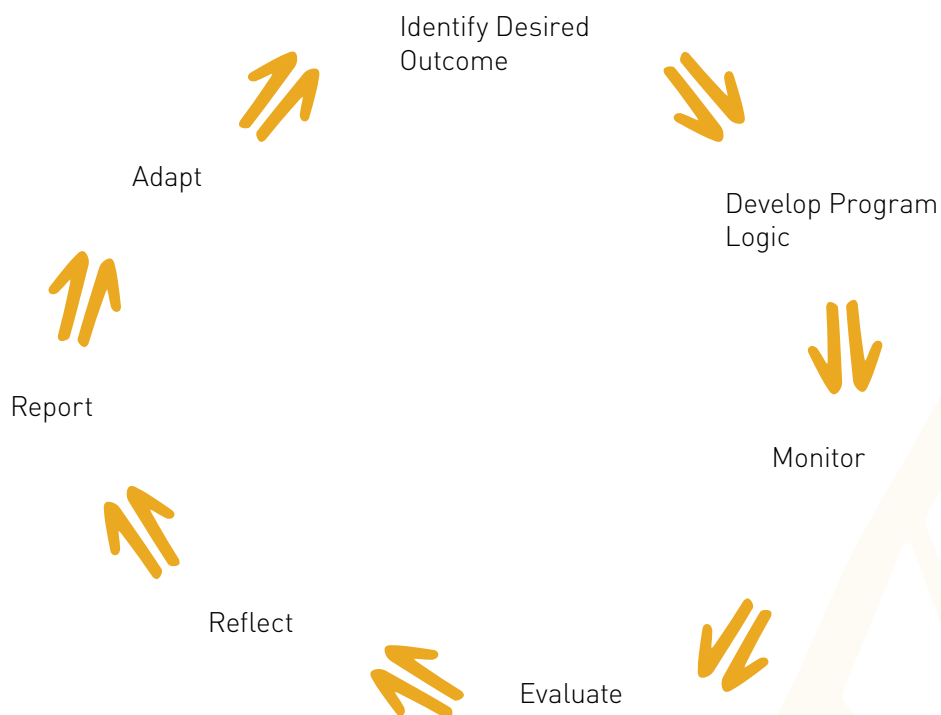






Table 3. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: Key steps and further details

STEPS	DETAILS
Identify Desired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What needs to change to achieve the vision for Nyamat Mirring (See Part C).</li> </ul>
Develop Program Logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program logic is the rationale behind the Plan. It identifies progress to achieving the outcomes and what success looks like. (see Nyamat Mirring Program Logic).</li> </ul>
Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome measures provide possible quantitative and/or qualitative ways to monitor progress towards the desired outcomes. Where applicable, these measures should be consistent with DELWP Output Data Standards (2020). Most significant change stories involve a systematic method for collecting and prioritising stories from those engaged in activities. These stories complement other measures in assessing the performance of the program (Davies &amp; Dart 2005).</li> <li>• The Reading Country program will assist in reviewing outcomes and associated measures.</li> <li>• Sea Country rangers will be actively involved in monitoring and recording outcome measures.</li> </ul>
Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of evidence from selected measures should be used to answer evaluation questions to assess impact, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and legacy of the actions in achieving the expected outcomes. For examples of high-level questions for each category, and some suggested methods and data sources, see Australian Government (2009). More specific questions should also be developed, tailored to the assessment of each outcome.</li> <li>• Performance story reports are another evaluation tool to consider. These reports are an evidence-based narrative showing progress towards an outcome for one part of a program. These reports are supported by multiple lines of quantitative and qualitative evidence and explain what was achieved and describe the causal links that show how the achievements were accomplished (Australian Government 2009).</li> <li>• Assessments should include a combination of formal external, independent evaluations and self-evaluation by GMTOAC.</li> </ul>
Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider what's working what's not and why.</li> </ul>
Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual implementation reports could provide 'traffic light' (i.e started, completed no progress) reports for each activity, key highlights and learnings, and financial reports to document funds provided directly for implementation of Nyamat Mirring Plan activities.</li> <li>• Biennial implementation report could also include a summary of all outcome measures achieved and results of the evaluation.</li> <li>• Six-year report and final report could include an independent external evaluation and collation of measures achieved to date including most significant change stories.</li> <li>• Reports should consider using a variety of presentation types to communicate findings for example, short videos and performance story reports.</li> </ul>
Adapt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt Plan according to evaluation and apply to next phase for improvement.</li> </ul>

# NYAMAT MIRRORING PROGRAM LOGIC

---

The program logic illustrates the expected cause and effect link between the selected activities, short-term, medium term and long-term outcomes and the ultimate vision for Nyamat Mirring.

**Gunditjmara carry out our enduring responsibility to care for Nyamat Mirring, so our children thrive, see their Country heal and know their stories**

In addition to the program logic, this section identifies the assumptions underlying the successful implementation of the Plan possible measures to monitor progress, key delivery partners, timing and inputs for each activity.

## ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions are fundamental to Gunditjmara capacity to deliver the activities in this Plan.

- Gunditjmara are self-determining about their land, identity, and heritage.
- Gunditjmara enjoy and care for Country.
- Gunditjmara work and live on Country.
- Gunditjmara access Country for cultural practices, healing, learning and connection.
- Facilities are maintained for Gunditjmara to access and spend time on Country.
- Programs delivered support Nyamat Mirring cultural values.
- Appropriate levels of funding and resources are provided to support Gunditjmara rights and interests in managing Nyamat Mirring.
- Gunditjmara are able to safely share their knowledge, practices and learning with others through partnerships and sustainable governance model.

## OUTCOME MEASURES

Possible outcome measures are included for each activity. A suggested first step is establishing likely changes in cultural and natural values expected through implementation of the plan and putting in place systems and protocols to capture those measures (see Activities L3.1 & L3.2).

For natural resource outcomes, suggested measures are consistent with DELWP Output Standard 2021.

## TIMING

Five, two-year phases are envisaged. Timing will be adjusted to reflect funding opportunities and changed priorities. Establishing the Sea Country Ranger program (Activity M1.3) and determining potential outcome measures are a priority for phase 1.

## INPUTS

Inputs include key tasks, equipment, staff, and resources required for each activity.

## KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

Partners involved in various activities may change as implementation progresses.

WW	Wannon Water	DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change Action
PV	Parks Victoria	DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change Energy, the Environment and Water
FV	Fisheries Victoria	CFA	Country Fire Authority
GMA	Game Management Authority	MSC	Moyne Shire Council
GHCMA	Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	SLSA	Surf Life Saving Australia
GSC	Glenelg Shire Council	PL	Private Landholders
VR	VicRoads		



Cultural value	MIRRING				
Long term outcome 10+ yr	M.   Country is protected for present and future generations				
Medium term outcome 5-10 yr	M1. Gunditjmara lead the identification, planning and implementation of natural and cultural resource management programs				M2. Cultural fire knowledge and practice is used to manage Country
Short term outcome 1-4 yr	Culturally-valued species protected and restored Waters (Nyamat, creeks, estuaries and wetlands) protected and restored	Culturally significant sites identified and protected	Sea Country Rangers engaged and working on Nyamat Mirring	Gunditjmara trained and employed to undertake compliance role	Weeyn Yarkeen Strategy and Implementation Plan revised to incorporate Nyamat Mirring Actions on Nyamat Mirring implemented through Gunditjmara led Practices
Activity	M1.1. Apply the full suite of Gunditjmara-led management practices to heal and manage Nyamat Mirring	M1.2. Lead/ participate in climate adaptation programs by identifying priority sites and values to be considered in adaptation responses	M1.3. Gunditjmara are employed as Sea Country Rangers to assist in management restoration and monitoring programs	M1.4. Gunditjmara have the power to enforce regulations and issue warnings, fines and refer serious infringements to the appropriate authorities	M2.1. Revise Weeyn Yarkeen Strategy and Implementation Plan to incorporate Nyamat Mirring
Outcome measures	Area of waterway/ wetland restored/ treated Length of fence Area of pest plant control Area of pest animal control Number of management plans developed Most significant change stories	Number of culturally significant sites identified Proportion of culturally significant sites protected Extent of coast surveyed Number of people involved in surveys Number of risk assessments undertaken Most significant change stories	Number of Sea Rangers employed Measure will depend on management activity undertaken Most significant change stories	Number of people trained Number of people employed Most significant change stories	Number of plans revised Area burnt Area assessed Number of community members and partners involved in Weeyn actions on Nyamat Mirring Demonstrated change in knowledge and skills Most significant change stories
Key delivery partners	WW, PV, GHCMA, DEECA, DCCEEW, PL	PV, DEECA, DCCEEW, PL	DEECA, DCCEEW, PV, GHCMA	FV, PV, DEECA, DCCEEW	DEECA, CFA, PL
Timing	Phase 1 On-going	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going
Inputs	Partner agencies, private landholder, consultants, agreements, Country visits, surveys and assessments, work vehicles, staff, cultural heritage advice, equipment, community workshops	Country visits, surveys and assessments, work vehicles, staff, cultural heritage advice, equipment, consultants, community workshops, cultural information management system (CIMS)	Training, permits and licences, equipment, vehicles, staff	Training, partner agencies, vehicles, staff	Training, partner agencies, Elders, vehicles, consultants, ecological advice, cultural heritage advice



Cultural value	CEREMONY			
Long term outcome 10+ yr	C.   Cultural practice, knowledge sharing, and community relationships are enhanced through ceremony, gatherings and events			
Medium term outcome 5-10 yr	C1. Gunditjmara access and use of Country is increased to enable ceremony and events			
Short term outcome 1-4 yr	Sites on Nyamat Mirring secured for exclusive access by Gunditjmara for Ceremony and events	Convincing Ground Landscape Plan developed and implemented	Agreements in place with landowners that enable access by Gunditjmara for cultural assessments, events, ceremony and gatherings	Gunditjmara have the opportunity and necessary equipment and qualifications to access Nyamat Mirring
Activity	C1.1. Secure permanent, exclusive access to coastal sites for Gunditjmara Ceremony and events	C1.2. Develop a Convincing Ground landscape plan to establish a site for reflection, Ceremony and events	C1.3. Develop relationships and agreements with private landowners to support access to freehold land	C1.4. Ensure opportunities exist for access to Nyamat Mirring to enhance cultural practices
Outcome measures	Number of meetings with private landholders or public Land managers to investigate options. Number of sites secured Area secured Number of Gunditjmara accessing sites Number of events/gatherings on sites	Number of plans developed Number of actions implemented Number of community members involved in actions Number of events to implement actions Most significant change stories	Number of agreements in place. Number of people accessing site Number of assessments/ events/gatherings Most significant change stories	Number of Gunditjmara with qualifications and licences (e.g., SCUBA, boating) Number of activities using equipment that encourage access to Nyamat Mirring (e.g. surfboards, kayaks) Number of training and skill development programs available (e.g. swimming, surfing, kayaking) Most significant change stories
Key delivery partners	DEECCA, DCCEEW, PL, PV	DEECCA, DCCEEW, GSC	PL, DEECCA, DCCEEW, GHCMA	SLSA, DEECCA, DCCEEW
Timing	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going	on-going	on-going
Inputs	Legal advice, infrastructure, partner agencies, agreements	Elders, community workshops, staff, partner agencies, consultants	Country visits, staff	Training, Country visits, equipment, vehicles

<b>Cultural value</b>	<b>WURRUNG</b>		
<b>Long term outcome 10+ yr</b>	<b>W.   Gunditjmara connection to culture is strengthened through language</b>		
<b>Medium term outcome 5-10 yr</b>	<b>W1. Gunditjmara preserve, promote and practice language</b>		
<b>Short term outcome 1-4 yr</b>	Dhauwurd Wurrung Language Committee formed and active	Gunditjmara dictionary and other language resources developed and available	Wurrung prominent on Gunditjmara Country
<b>Activity</b>	W1.1. Reactivate Dhauwurd Wurrung Language Committee	W1.2. Develop Gunditjmara dictionary and language resources	W1.3. Ensure signs and landscape features on Gunditjmara Country prioritise Wurrung
<b>Outcome measures</b>	Number of Committee meetings Number of people participating	Number and type of publications and resources promoting Wurrung Number of people participating in events or accessing resources that promote Wurrung	Number of signs that feature Wurrung Number of landscape features identified by Wurrung Most significant change stories
<b>Key delivery partners</b>	DEECA, DCCEEW	DEECA, DCCEEW	GSC, MSC, DEECA, PV
<b>Timing</b>	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going
<b>Inputs</b>	Elders, Community workshops	Staff, consultants, community workshops	Staff, partner agencies community workshops, meetings

Cultural value	LAW/LORE/LEARNING						
Long term outcome 10+ yr	L.   Nyamat Mirring heals through practice change in response to knowledge and observations						
Medium term outcome 5-10 yr	L1. Gunditjmara continue practising adaptative management responding to Country and incorporating scientific knowledge		L2. Increased understanding and appreciation of the cultural and archaeological values of Nyamat Mirring, including the current ocean floor		L3. Knowledge systems of Gunditjmara are held in accessible and meaningful ways, respecting Gunditjmara intellectual and cultural property		
Short term outcome 1-4 yr	Cultural and natural values of Country are protected and restored	Populations of culturally significant species are healthy and support harvesting by Gunditjmara	Research undertaken to address priority gaps and driven by cultural and community interests	Cultural values of Nyamat Mirring documented through on Country visits, marine mapping and archaeological surveys	Activities and resources increase awareness in the broader community about of the cultural values of Nyamat	Systems and protocols in place to document tangible and intangible values of Nyamat Mirring	Changes in natural and cultural values expected through implementation of Nyamat Mirring Plan are documented
Activity	L1.1. Monitor and evaluate the response of Country to management practices (including cultural burning)	L1.2. Develop Take and Use Systems (for harvesting, monitoring and management) that reflect Indigenous Knowledge	L1.3. Identify gaps in knowledge and address research needs including those based on climate change projections	L2.1. Undertake marine mapping and cultural and archaeological surveys	L2.2. Establish Cultural Awareness training, engagement and education programs for other stakeholders about the cultural values of the sea	L3.1. Develop and use systems and protocols to capture tangible and intangible cultural values of Nyamat Mirring	L3.2. Reading Country Program is developed, so changes to Nyamat Mirring can be measured and reported
Outcome measures	Area of Nyamat Mirring monitored pre and post treatment. Most significant change stories	Population of target species established Number of target species taken Percentage of target species population harvested Most significant change stories	Number of research proposal developed Number of meetings with potential partners Number of research partnerships established Number of research projects undertaken	Target area currently mapped Number of archaeological surveys undertaken Percentage of target area surveyed Area of sea floor mapped Percentage of sea floor mapped	Number of cultural awareness training events Number of people/ organisations participating Number and type of publication produced Demonstrated change in knowledge Most significant change stories	Number of Information management system established and used Number of people trained in use of system	Refer to outcome indicators and measures associated with other actions. Number of events and participants Number of reports and assessments Most significant change stories
Key delivery partners	DEECA, DCCEEW, GHCMA, WW	DEECA, DCCEEW, GMA, FV	DEECA, DCCEEW, universities and research institutions	DEECA, DCCEEW, universities and research institutions	DEECA, DCCEEW, universities and research institutions	DEECA, DCCEEW	DEECA, DCCEEW
Timing	on-going	on-going	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going
Inputs	Staff, partner agencies, Country visits, consultants, vehicles	Staff, partner agencies, Country visits, consultants, community workshops vehicles	Staff, partner agencies, Country visits, consultants, vehicles	Staff, partner agencies, Country visits, consultants	Staff, partner agencies, Country visits, consultants, community workshops vehicles	Staff, partner agencies, consultants	Staff, partner agencies, community workshops, consultants. Most significant change stories. cultural information management system (CIMS). Refer to inputs required to implement other actions

Cultural value	RELATIONSHIPS					
Long term outcome 10+ yr	R.   Gunditjmara strengthen their identity through partnerships based on respect, reciprocity, and accountability					
Medium term outcome 5-10 yr	R1. Gunditjmara lead, and establish partnerships as required, to strengthen recognition and management of Country			R2. Gunditjmara benefit from commercial utilisation of their resources. (e.g. energy, tourism and seafood sectors)		
Short term outcome 1-4 yr	Gunditjmara rights, values and benefit-sharing embedded in Nyamat Mirring legislation, policy and strategies	Gunditjmara work with stakeholders on MSP	Nyamat Mirring IPA/s established	Gunditjmara led management of priority Nyamat Mirring locations established	Representation on advisory and decision making bodies in priority commercial sectors	Staff employed within GMTOAC Gunditjmara employed in sectors related to Nyamat Mirring Gunditjmara building skills and undertaking training
Activity	R1.1. Ensure Nyamat Mirring legislation, policy and strategies prioritise Gunditjmara rights, values and benefit-sharing	R1.2. Gunditjmara participate in or lead Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)	R1.3. Gunditjmara identify and develop Nyamat Mirring Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs)	R1.4. Gunditjmara assert their rights to manage priority Nyamat Mirring locations such as Deen Maar Island and Discovery Bay Coastal Park and their surrounding waters	R2.1. Gunditjmara are represented on relevant decision making and advisory bodies concerned with commercial sectors	R2.2. Employment and training pathways are established for Gunditjmara in sectors related to Nyamat Mirring
Outcome measures	Number of legislation, policies and strategies identified and changed to embed rights, values and/or benefit sharing. Number of reports/assessments produced Number of meetings held and participant numbers	Number of partners/stakeholders and community involved in MSP Number of risk assessments undertaken Number of events, meetings and participant numbers Number of plans Most significant change stories	Number of reports/assessments produced Number of meetings held and participant numbers Area of changed management practice	Number of partnerships established Number of meetings held and participant numbers Area of changed management practice	Number of decision making and advisory bodies with Gunditjmara representation Number of meetings held	Number employed in sectors related to Nyamat Mirring Number undertaking training
Key delivery partners	DEECA, DCCEEW, GMA, FV, PV, LG	DEECA, DCCEEW, commercial sector, recreational sector, universities and research institutions	DEECCA, DCCEEW, PV	DEECCA, DCCEEW, PV	DEECA, DCCEEW, commercial sector	DEECA, DCCEEW, commercial sector, recreational sector, universities and research institutions
Timing	Phase 1 and on-going	Phase 1 and on-going	on-going	on-going	on-going	on-going
Inputs	Staff, partner agencies, meetings, community meetings, consultants	Staff, partner agencies, consultants, meetings, community workshops	Staff, partner agencies, consultants, meetings, community workshops	Staff, partner agencies, consultants, meetings, community workshops	Staff, partner agencies and groups, training	Staff, partner agencies and groups, training



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

- Australian Government (2022), National Fisheries Plan, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra.
- Australian Government (2009) Australian Government NRM Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework.
- Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Victoria (2018) State of the Environment Report.
- Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Victoria (2021) State of the Marine and Coastal Environment 2021 Report.
- Context (2012) Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara South West Management Plan: Cultural Heritage and Social Values Assessment: Volumes 1 - 5: Unpublished reports prepared by Context Pty Ltd for Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Parks Victoria.
- Davies, R. and Dart, J. (2005) The Most Significant Change Technique. A guide to its Use.
- Extent Heritage Pty Ltd and Wessex Archaeology Ltd (2021) 'Nyamat Mirring' Portland Bay Gunditjmarra Underwater Cultural Heritage Study. A report for Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.
- Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (n.d.) Cultural Landscapes Strategy.
- Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (n.d.) The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy.
- Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (n.d.) Game Management Strategy.
- Framlingham Aboriginal Trust and Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation (2004). Kooyang Sea Country Plan.
- Gunditjmirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (2022) Weeyn Yarkeen Strategy 2022-20
- McKinnon, L. (2006). Victorian Protocol for the Translocation of Eels. Fisheries Victoria Management Report Series No. 27.
- National Introduced Marine Pest Information System (n.d) <https://nimpis.marinepests.gov.au/>
- Parks Victoria (2015). Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara-South West Management Plan.
- True Places, (2019). Draft Analysis of Marine and Coastal Context and Issues for Gunditj Mirring Koonang Mirring. Report prepared for Federation of Traditional Owner Corporations
- Victorian Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (2022) Marine and Coastal Strategy
- Victorian Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (2020) DELWP Output Data Standards
- Victorian Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (2020) Marine and Coastal Policy
- Victorian Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (2017). Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037
- Victorian Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (2016) Water for Victoria. Water plan.
- Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC), 2019. Assessment of the Values of Victoria's Marine Environment.
- Victorian Fisheries Authority (2021). Aboriginal Fishing Strategy.
- Victorian Fisheries Authority (2018). Victorian Pipi Fishery Management Plan.



**GUNDITJ MIRRING**  
Traditional Owners  
Aboriginal Corporation

