



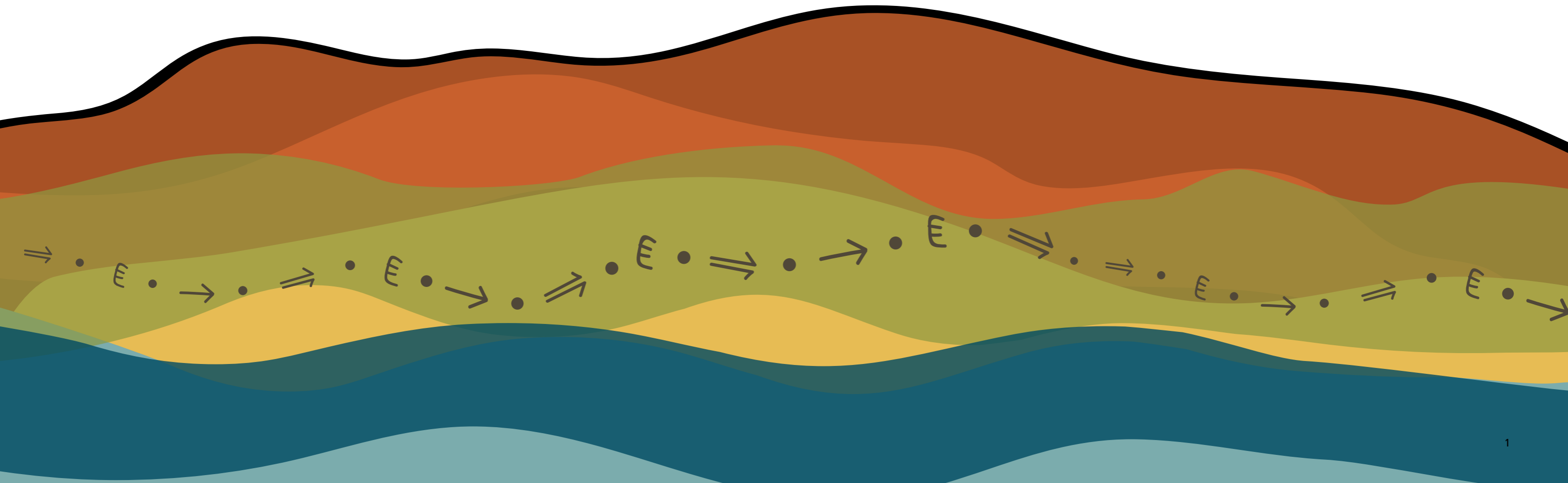
Taungurung Land and Waters Council
Annual Report 2022–2023





CONTENTS

ABOUT TLAWC	2
MAP	6
CHAIR REPORT	9
CEO REPORT	10
22-23 HIGHLIGHTS	12
COMMUNITY AND CULTURE	14
WAWA BIIK	18
CULTURAL LAND MANAGEMENT	20
AGREEMENTS	26
CULTURAL HERITAGE	28
CORPORATE SERVICES	30
BIIK CULTURAL LAND MANAGEMENT	32
PARTNERSHIPS	34
STATEMENT ON JANUARY 26	36
THE VOICE	38
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE	40
ORGANISATION STRUCTURE	42
GLOSSARY	46



Who WE ARE

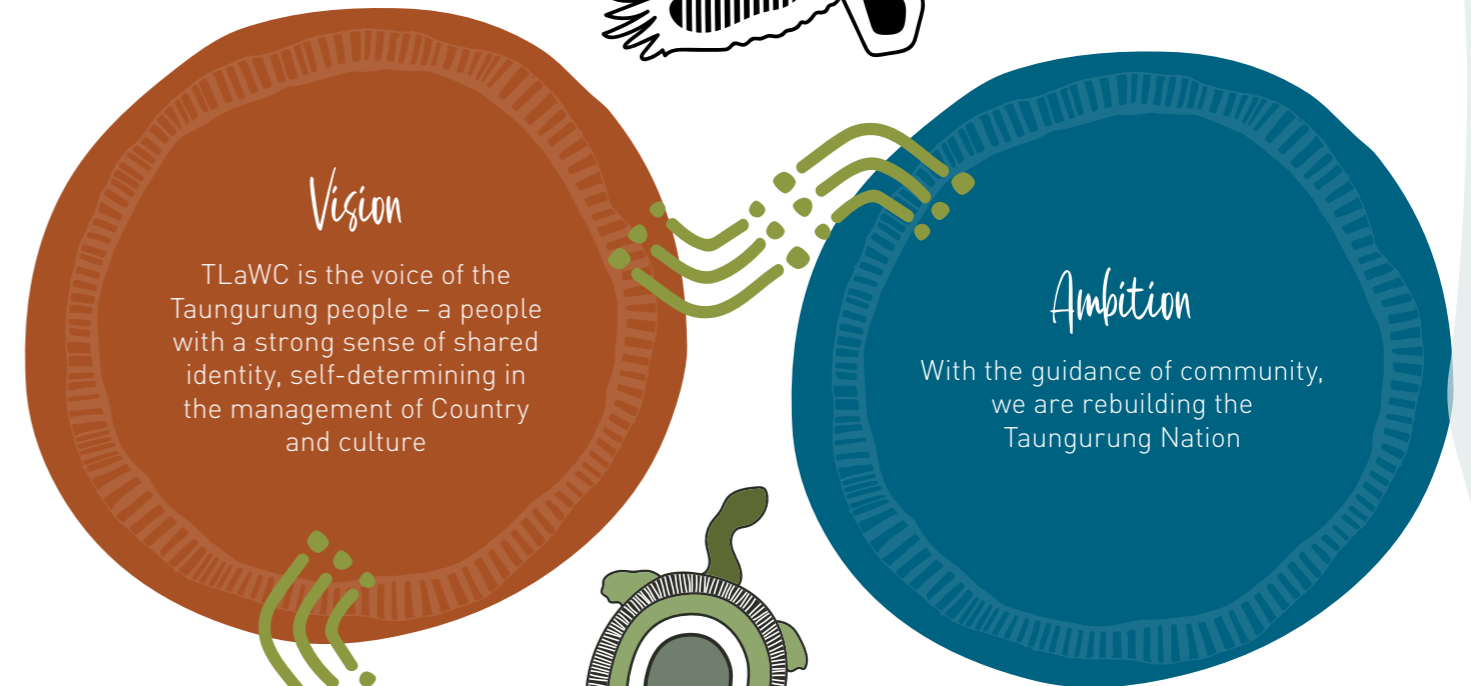
The Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC) is the corporate representative of the Taungurung people.

- 2003** The organisation was established in 2003 to advocate for Taungurung recognition and land management rights with regard to our traditional Country.
- 2009** TLaWC was given Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) status in 2009, which has recognised Taungurung Traditional Owners as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and allowed for the management of cultural heritage across Taungurung Country.
- 2018** In 2018, TLaWC reached an historic settlement with the State of Victoria through a Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) the culmination of over a decade of hard work and negotiation. TLaWC now manages Traditional Owner rights and exercises the responsibilities set out in the RSA.

The formal recognition of the Taungurung people's long standing rights and obligations on Country has created many new opportunities, including ensuring the Taungurung voice is heard clearly in relation to any significant activities on the Taungurung Crown land estate.

KEY functions OF TLaWC

- To support Taungurung people to be the voice of Country
- To support Taungurung Community to be a people with a strong sense of identity, and self-determining in the healing and caring of Country and Culture
- Through the guidance and leadership of Taungurung people, TLaWC is to support the revitalisation of the Taungurung Nation
- To raise awareness, respect and understanding of Taungurung people, culture and Country
- To enhance the benefits and opportunities for Taungurung people in employment, living on Country, and overall well-being
- To preserve and reinvigorate cultural knowledge for current and future generations
- To increase the economic strength and security of the Taungurung Nation through investments, property, and partnerships
- To revive the Taungurung language for use in community
- To be the keeper of shared Taungurung land, assets and intellectual property
- To engage with partners for the best outcomes in land and water management across Country
- To inspire Taungurung people to engage with their culture, live on their Country and take an active role in events
- To activate Taungurung cultural land management knowledge and practice



- INTEGRITY** – We act and communicate with honesty and authenticity
- RESPECT** – We treat our team, our members, and all other people with respect and sensitivity, recognising the importance of diversity
- CULTURAL COMPETENCY** – We are committed to cultural safety and cultural integrity in all we do
- ACCEPT AND GROW STRONGER** – We accept our failures and grow stronger from our learnings
- ACCOUNTABILITY** – We accept responsibility for our actions. We remain resilient and committed to achieving morally right outcomes
- TEAMWORK** – We are one team representing one people – respecting each other's contributions, and caring for each other both personally and professionally
- SAFETY AND WELLBEING** – We all have a responsibility to support the physical and mental wellbeing of the team and the Taungurung community
- LEADERSHIP** – We remain bold and brave and take on new challenges, embracing positive change and committed to achieving the best outcomes for the Taungurung community



The
Four Pillars

COMMUNITY

Strengthening our community

1. Strengthening Taungurung Community
2. Contributing to Health and Wellbeing
3. Improving Connectivity to Community

COUNTRY

Managing our Country

4. Building Our Land Base
5. Managing Country through Traditional and Modern techniques

CULTURE

Protecting and reviving our culture

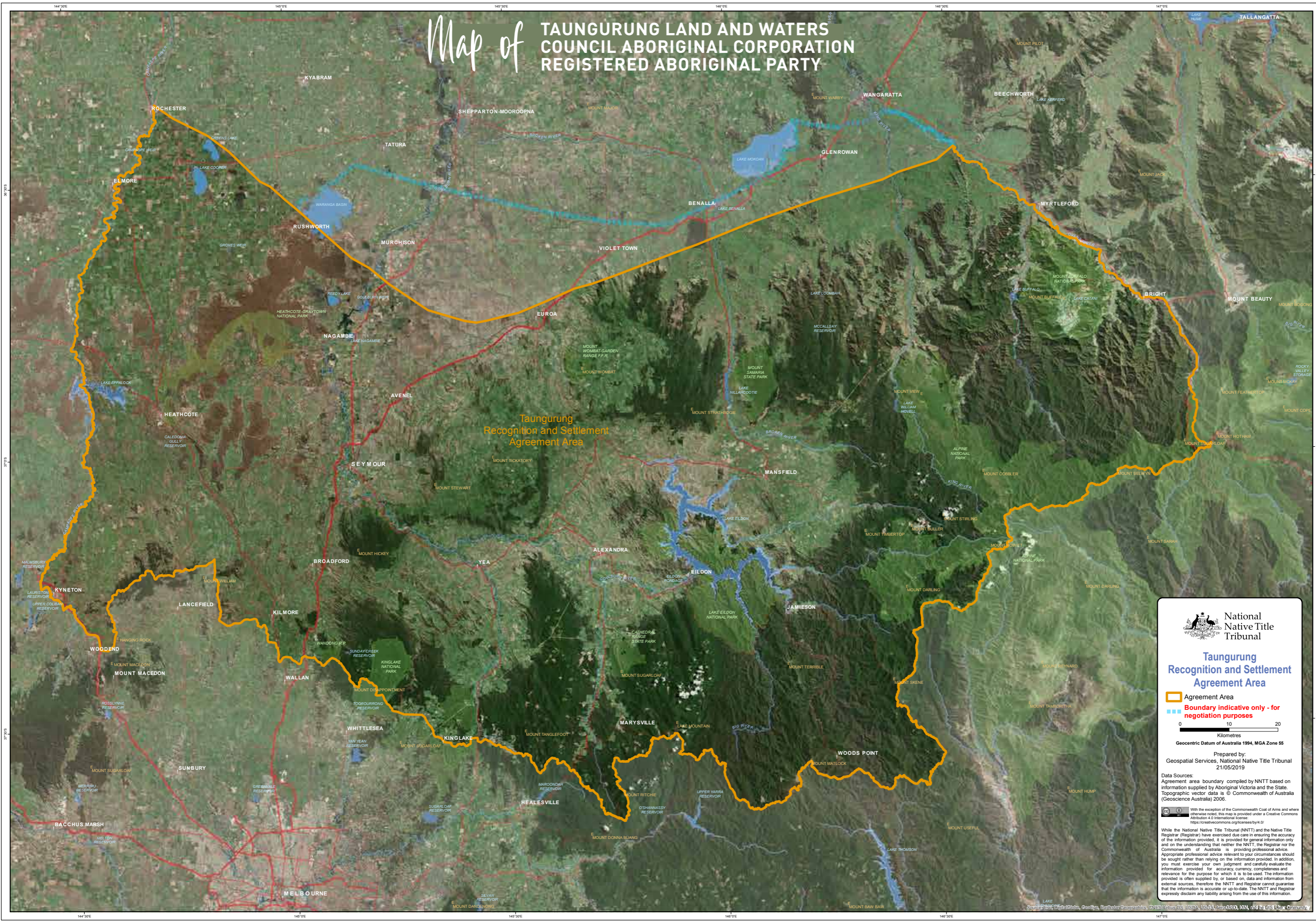
6. Reviving Our Language
7. Restoring Cultural Knowledge
8. Protecting and Preserving our Cultural Heritage

CORPORATE


Building our economic independence

9. Strengthening Organisational Capacity
10. Ensuring Financial Sustainability
11. Building Strong Corporate Partnerships


Map of TAUNGURUNG LAND AND WATERS COUNCIL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY




Taungurung
Recognition and Settlement
Agreement Area

 National Native Title Tribunal

Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement Area

 Agreement Area


 Boundary indicative only - for negotiation purposes

0 10 20
Kilometres

Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994, MGA Zone 55

Prepared by:
Geospatial Services, National Native Title Tribunal
21/05/2019

Data Sources:
Agreement area boundary compiled by NNTT based on information supplied by Aboriginal Victoria and the State. Topographic vector data is © Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia) 2006.

 With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and where otherwise noted, this map is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

While the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) and the Native Title Registrar (Registrar) have exercised due care in ensuring the accuracy of the information provided, it is provided for general information only and on the understanding that neither the NNTT, the Registrar nor the Commonwealth of Australia is providing professional advice. Appropriate professional advice relevant to your circumstances should be sought rather than relying on the information provided. In addition, you must exercise your own judgment and carefully evaluate the information provided for accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for the purpose for which it is to be used. The information provided is often supplied by, or based on, data and information from external sources, therefore the NNTT and Registrar cannot guarantee that the information is accurate or up-to-date. The NNTT and Registrar expressly disclaim any liability arising from the use of this information.



... this year provided a vast range of opportunities for mob to spend time on Country with community and celebrate achievements across the Taungurung Nation.



CHAIRPERSON Report

As Chairperson of the Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC) and on behalf of the Board, I present the Annual Report for the 2022/2023 financial year.

This year provided a vast range of opportunities for mob to spend time on Country with community and celebrate achievements across the Taungurung Nation. I have been honoured to attend camps, culturally significant locations and emotional events to see such strong and proud leaders educating all generations of Taungurung people. Our focus on the Strategic Plan's pillars – Country, Community, Culture and Corporate – has provided guidance in the decision-making process as important programs entered new phases alongside the growth of the organisation's capacity.

We were proud to announce Matthew Burns as the Taungurung Treaty Representative, which was decided by an election with strong levels of engagement from members. Both applicants expressed their passion in representing the Taungurung Nation in the journey to Treaty in a very close and cooperative process – I would like to congratulate both Isobel and Matt on the way they conducted themselves. Matt's leadership as the TLaWC CEO and previous experience on the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria provides us with a determined voice in the next chapter of negotiations.

The newly formed Language Reference Group (LRG), a sub-committee of the Community and Culture Division of the TLaWC Board, commenced quarterly meetings in August 2022. The LRG works to reinvigorate, discuss and expand the use of Taungurung language with valued insight and support from community. A core focus is to progress the Language Revitalisation Strategy – a goal in our Strategic Plan that will see language used and understood by Taungurung people and communities living on Taungurung Country into the future. Special thanks must be reserved for Aunty Loraine Padgham, Chair of the LRG, for organising and hosting the first Language Camp in May. The weekend was insightful, interactive and fun for all involved.

I was excited to be appointed onto the inaugural Board for Alpine Resorts Victoria, which manages six alpine resorts at Falls Creek, Mount Baw Baw, Mount Buller, Mount Hotham, Mount Stirling and Lake Mountain, replacing four alpine resort management boards and the Alpine Resorts Co-ordinating Council. From the perspective of a Taungurung woman, this will ensure strategic leadership on important Taungurung locations into the future. The future Taungurung leaders in Wayilak Bayubarring (Youth Advisory Group) attended the snow in their first trip together – and for many, saw snow for the first time. It fills me with joy to see such progression and growth from our younger generations alongside their engagement with alpine Country.

In April, I was fortunate enough to represent TLaWC at the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York, where I delivered a speech calling on the UN to support our demand that the Australian Government do more to support our members and other First Nations Peoples in the current housing crisis. Safe and secure housing is a fundamental human right and we know that Aboriginal People are far too often locked out of the housing market. We hope that this advocacy helps to drive action for our people and communities.

It is also pleasing to see the strengthening of the Traditional Owner Corporation Caucus (TOCC), through which we have had the opportunity to work in a strategic and coordinated way with other Traditional Owner (TO) groups to advocate for Country and advance TO rights across the state.

I would like to thank the Board, the leadership team and all staff for their continued commitment in upholding the interests of all Taungurung people while healing Country and promoting culture. This Annual Report details many of the updates and achievements made across the year, but also cites the opportunities and possibilities for the future. I hope to see you all out on Country soon.



Kaley Nicholson

CEO Report

The last 12 months have seen the commencement and completion of many important projects without the restrictions that were imposed in the previous two years. Celebrating Taungurung's 20-year anniversary as an organisation was a chance to reflect, connect with community, engage in culture and discuss the future with a high level of enthusiasm that we all share in our dedication to Taungurung people and Country. The Board, leadership team and staff at TLaWC have driven growth, generated positive outcomes and utilised innovative solutions in the ongoing journey to fully supporting a self-determined, financially stable and united future.

TLaWC was one of the first Traditional Owner groups to establish a statement on the Voice to Parliament, with the wording featured on the homepage of the website covered across a range of local media publications. Empowered by the Taungurung community through an in-depth consultation process, we reached a shared position in support of the Voice and have included the full statement in this Annual Report (see page 38). This is a tangible step towards a more equitable and just Nation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples, and specifically the Taungurung community.

... the results of the organisation are achieved not because of one person or a small group of people, but through a values-driven workplace culture that thrives on challenges and a desire to make a difference for the betterment of the Taungurung Nation.

I was immensely proud to be elected as the Taungurung Representative for the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria (the Assembly), the body elected to represent Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Communities in the next phase of Treaty negotiations, and as we move into a critical moment in this state's history. Marcus Stewart must be commended for his vital role in establishing the foundations for Treaty in Victoria as both a Taungurung representative and an advocate for the rights of all First Nations people during his time as Co-Chair of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria. This term the 31 members of the Assembly will focus on negotiating the initial elements of a Statewide Treaty that reflects specific aspirations and priorities, and my primary focus is engaging with our mob to promote Taungurung preferences and identity in the process.

Financially, we have yet again achieved a surplus in what continues to be a difficult economic climate. The Victorian State Government has indicated that substantial changes will take place over the next few years to rectify significant State budget pressures following important financial supports provided by the State to businesses and households through the COVID years. The State's budget repair activities may impact the types of funding supports available to TLaWC and means being financially diligent is an absolute must over the coming years.

While TLaWC has always been successful in achieving surpluses to date, the rate of growth in staff and the direct correlation with the organisation's solvency requirements is something the Board is acutely conscious of and continues to present as a risk to the organisation. This organisational growth coupled with no increase in core operational funding will likely impact TLaWC's ability to grow until further sustainable core funding arrangements are secured. We are consistently pursuing avenues to articulate the need for improved funding arrangements to ensure that the entire TLaWC ecosystem is funded, including the vital Community governance structures in place at TLaWC, and we will continue to pursue funding reform through the Traditional Owner Corporation Caucus.

TLaWC continues to negotiate and manage many individual FTE funding agreements to reach our current operational capacity, although the administrative burden is great and places pressures on the Corporate Services unit to be on top of the milestones and conditions. TLaWC's cash reserves continue to be healthy, however the majority of funds are directly tied to agreements with funding bodies for programs which are carried into the next financial year for specific expenditure.

The Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) is continuing in its operation despite ongoing processes to clarify and substantiate any matters of research with a view to authorising a new Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) in the coming years. We are hopeful that the ILUA registration timeline will be clearer by the end of next financial year and allow TLaWC to plan for the full implementation of the RSA.

The results of the organisation are achieved not because of one person or a small group of people, but through a values-driven workplace culture that thrives on challenges and a desire to make a difference for the betterment of the Taungurung Nation. The guidance of the Board and the support provided by TLaWC's leaders has been integral to creating an environment that encourages everyone to have a go and learn from each experience. As we enter a critical time in advocating for Traditional Owner rights and recognition, I must also highlight the work of our partners in collaborating with TLaWC to understand and endorse initiatives that will generate positive circumstances for all generations of Taungurung people. Lastly, but of the utmost importance, TLaWC recognises the work of Taungurung Elders in educating the next wave of leaders into a future that is open to endless possibilities.



Matt Burns

2022-23 Highlights



NYAGAROOON – A FUTURE

In November 2022, TLaWC announced the formal transfer of the Nyagarooon property from the Victorian Government to the Taungurung people. Nyagarooon – the Taungurung name for the property located in Buxton – is part of the former Mohican Run and most recently operated as the Acheron Youth Camp on more than 100 hectares of Taungurung Country. The Taungurung people now have the land rightfully returned, following the many years of work by the community in advocating to reclaim a place that saw the harsh impacts of colonisation.

This Nyagarooon property and surrounds hold a deep and sad history for the Taungurung people, but now an opportunity presents to create a welcoming, positive space for Taungurung people and future generations, connecting with Country and culture. A group of TLaWC Board members

and staff visited the property in the TLaWC bus prior to the announcement to assess the grounds, yarn about the significance of the transfer, and discuss the future for the site. Events such as the 20-year anniversary celebrations, yarning circles and staff days have been held on the land.

Special thanks to the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) for their tenacity and commitment to ensure land justice was achieved for the Taungurung people.

The filming and release of the emotional Nyagarooon video was a highlight in Taungurung storytelling, featuring on SBS News, the National Indigenous Times and accessed by more than 30,000 people across social media channels to become TLaWC's most shared story.



WAWA BIIK TAKES FLIGHT

In February, TLaWC launched the new cultural experiences business 'wawa biik' meaning "hello Country" – a name with the dual purpose of honouring the deep importance of Country to all Taungurung people, while welcoming the wider community to visit Country and deepen their relationship with Taungurung culture.

Taungurung Elders and youth are leading the immersive cultural experiences, sharing their stories and perspectives in a way that celebrates and regenerates their living culture. wawa biik cultural experiences take place in significant locations across Taungurung Country, including the waterways of Tahbilk Wetlands in Nagambie and the Euroa Arboretum – a pocket of rehabilitated native bush in Euroa. As well as acknowledging Taungurung history and cultural heritage, experiences provide visitors with quality time to yarn with members of the Taungurung



wawa biik's launch included a new website – www.wawabiik.com.au – and an Instagram page to ensure all followers and visitors can keep up to date with all news.

community to understand living culture. Visitors will gain insight into the Taungurung-led cultural revitalisation and cultural land management projects shaping the positive future of the Taungurung Nation.

Engaging the public in cultural experiences provides all visitors with the opportunity to understand the purposeful journey Taungurung people are on to strengthen cultural identity and repatriate ways of caring for Country. Visitors form a deeper relationship with Taungurung Custodians, learn about the biocultural values of Country and receive the cultural education that many missed out on in the education system.

TLaWC celebrated its 20-year anniversary as an organisation



3,800 followers

Facebook followers rose from 2,200 to 3,800 across the financial year (+72%)



from 700 to 1100 followers

LinkedIn rose from 700 to 1100 across the financial year (+57%)



1000+ subscribers

TLaWC newsletter subscribers surpassed 1,000 and wawa biik newsletter subscribers reached 300



The Executive Management team (4) at TLaWC are all Taungurung people 12

GARDEN RANGE ROCK ART RETURN

In March, the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) and TLaWC came together with community to celebrate the return of the Garden Range Rock Art Site. In 2019, TLaWC sought assistance to acquire the culturally significant 23-hectare parcel of land in the Garden Ranges, Euroa. The ILSC granted \$265,000 for the purchase of the site, as well as fencing to halt degradation by livestock and other costs.

The parcel of land contains two rock art sites estimated to be over 22,000 years old and as the site is particularly unstable and fragile, its exact location will remain in the trust of TLaWC and the Taungurung community. The acquisition of the Garden Range Rock Art Site from the ILSC is of substantial cultural significance to the Taungurung people.



The sites are a series of four rock shelters that feature paintings using natural pigments, with the largest shelter displaying 172 motifs. The art provides further evidence of the Taungurung peoples' connection to this Country that extends thousands of years. The return of this land will enable TLaWC to care for Country using techniques passed down by Ancestors, ensuring the location is preserved and protected for all Taungurung people – present and future – to see.

COMMUNITY and CULTURE

The Community and Culture team create a range of exciting engagement opportunities for Taungurung people to enable meaningful cultural and spiritual connection. Acting as the connection between TLaWC operations and the guidance provided by the Taungurung community, supporting the organisation's Community Advisory Groups has been crucial in progressing key projects and activities that strive to meet the priorities and expectations of the Taungurung Nation. This year, the team launched Dhum Gaab – a monthly morning tea alternating between the two TLaWC offices on the first Friday of each month to encourage time together on Country. This has been an opportunity for community and staff to connect and share ideas for progression.



ADVISORY GROUPS

The Community and Culture Advisory Group (CCAG) continues to support Taungurung community involvement and leadership in the progression of Taungurung community objectives. Members of CCAG provide important cultural advice to the Community and Culture team on a range of organisational projects, ideas and initiatives including cultural experiences and projects on Taungurung Country. It is also a chance for community to connect and check in with each other, while working together to provide advice to the organisation. At the end of 2022, the CCAG enjoyed a day on Country to immerse in culture while tending to regular meeting business.

The Elders Advisory Group is an important cultural governance mechanism providing wisdom and guidance on important policies, procedures, events and activities. This includes significant requests requiring Elders to deliberate and recommend a way forward to ensure TLaWC continues to act in the best interests of the Taungurung Nation. Within the Community and Culture team, an Elder takes on the Cultural Lead role to help facilitate the Elders Advisory Group meetings and lead Cultural Ceremony, where our Elders are empowered to accept opportunities to provide Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremonies on Taungurung Country. The financial year concluded with a visit to the Melbourne Museum's Bunjilaka exhibition and viewing the *Taungurungia garrattii*, one of Victoria's oldest fossil plants discovered in 2015 along a roadside cutting near Yea.

WAYILAK BAYUBARRING

Wayilak Bayubarring is the Youth Advisory Group of TLaWC, led by a group of future (and current) leaders emphasising all matters relating to the younger generations of Taungurung people. The group currently has 17 members, coming together through 11 online meetings and a camp across the financial year. While still in its infancy, Wayilak Bayubarring began operations by creating a powerful logo (designed by one of the members), assigned a representative to attend Elder Group meetings, developed a Youth Services Directory and provided information to mob at the 20-year anniversary event – hosting activities such as a scavenger hunt, jewellery making and colouring-in for attending children. The meetings and events provided the group with an opportunity to be seen by the Taungurung community and TLaWC staff as involvement increased confidence, pride and collectiveness. This is clearly demonstrated by the youth making speeches on behalf of the group, and taking senior roles in online meetings in initiatives such as the rotating chair position.



Wayilak Bayubarring is growing and developing each month, with aspirations for the next financial year to be guided by a desire to be seen as the leaders of tomorrow, to learn from Elders and knowledge holders about culture, and to be proud in a strong yearning for mentorship to better themselves, strengthen the group and be self-determined in their future.



LANGUAGE

The first meeting of the newly formed Taungurung Language Reference Group (LRG) – a sub-committee of the Community and Culture Division of the TLaWC Board – was held in August following an application process. Working closely with Professor Barry Blake and Dr Julie Reid, two eminent linguists with wide experience and knowledge about Kulin languages, the LRG's focus was the review of the current Taungurung word list for application into new and updated language resources, including the Taungurung Dictionary and Yarnin Up Booklet. The LRG also has a focus on updating placenames and plant knowledge to develop a revised phrase book.

TLaWC was successful in being awarded a Ministry of Arts grant from the Commonwealth Government to deliver a Wurrung Yilam (language camp) to the community in May at Common Ground, Hilldene. The objective of the Camp was to encourage greater participation in and an understanding of Taungurung language. The program's sessions included creative story writing for children, identification of flora and fauna during the scavenger hunt, Lingo Bingo and language-specific sessions related to gaining an understanding of Taungurung verbs and pronouns to create simple sentences and phrases. At the conclusion of the program, Certificates of Participation were presented.

With the increased use of language, it has been necessary to create new Taungurung words to express concepts that were not previously known or captured. New words developed to convey meaningful cultural information include Wirrabi mirng (ochre quarry or ochre hole) and Mirrnyong (oven mound), while a range of TLaWC teams and divisions now operate using a name in Taungurung language.

GORANWARRABUL HOUSE

Goranwarrabul House has been a trusted community gathering place for well over a decade, providing culturally appropriate services, resources and information for the local Aboriginal community. Led by an Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Officer, the House focuses on improving health and wellbeing outcomes and enables access to specialist services such as an optometrist, dentist, fortnightly foodbank, and an alternating Women's and Men's Group. Focused on strategic objectives under the well-being and safety strategy, Korin Korin Balit Djak, the House supports the broader community – particularly celebrated for the NAIDOC march and event held in Seymour for NAIDOC Week each year. This year's event, a celebration of Elders, saw record numbers join the march, host stalls and come together following years of interruption.



COMMUNITY & CULTURE Events

Monday 4 July 2022

NAIDOC Week Flag Raising

NAIDOC Week was celebrated by hosting a Smoking Ceremony and Flag Raising morning tea for all staff and community. It is a time to yarn, connect and reflect. Occurs on the first Monday of NAIDOC Week every year.

Broadford and Alexandra Offices



Saturday 10 September 2022

Community Festival Day at Tahbilk

Tahbilk hosted a Community Festival Day and invited Uncle Shane and Aunty Jo for a Smoking Ceremony and facilitation of cultural activities. There were four workshops in rotation, including a history walk and talk, colouring and story time, a burning chat, and possum skin cloak making. Tahbilk is closely connected to wawa biik.

Tahbilk Wetlands



Sunday 27 November 2022

First and Forever Festival

The festival was an All First Nations lineup celebrating Blak Excellence.

TLaWC provided support and guidance across the planning of the festival and created a Song and Dance group consisting of three Taungurung Community Members and one Elder.

Hanging Rock



Friday 3 February 2023

Dhum Gaab (Yarn Up)

On the first Friday of every month, TLaWC hosts a morning tea for all staff and Community Members to spend an hour having a yarn, connecting, and building stronger relationships. The first morning tea was launched on Friday 3 February, continuing to alternate every month between offices.

Alternating between Broadford and Alexandra Offices



Saturday 4 March 2023

Garden Range Rock Art Celebration and Quarterly Meeting

TLaWC partnered with ILSC to return the 20,000-year-old Garden Range rock art sites back to the Taungurung people. The two sites returned are part of a complex of four rock shelters featuring paintings using natural pigments. The return of this land created an exciting opportunity to celebrate on Country.

Tuesday 21 March 2023

20 Year Anniversary

TLaWC celebrated the 20-year anniversary of the organisation's registration. The aim of the event was for community members and staff to immerse themselves in culture whilst celebrating all that has been achieved over the past 20 years. This event is to become an annual celebration.



wawa biik

wawa biik (hello Country in Taungurung language) is the Taungurung-led cultural experiences business that was launched on February 8. The positive impact on both the Taungurung community and the wider public in enjoying immersive, cultural learning experiences on Country has been evident through visitor feedback, yarns and ongoing partnerships. wawa biik's purpose is to build strong relationships with all who live, work, and visit Taungurung Country and to inspire deeper appreciation and support of Taungurung aspirations. wawa biik offers three experiences, each with a Welcome and Smoking Ceremony and guided cultural walk:

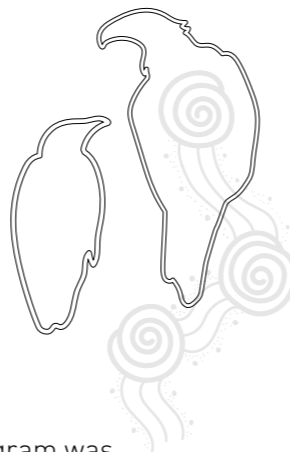
The wawa Euroa experience introduces guests to the rehabilitated woodlands of the Euroa Arboretum with a look at the seasonal cultural uses of plants for food, medicine and life. Guests on this experience have loved tasting warat (cumbungi) pulled straight from the ground.

The wawa tabilk-tabilk experience focuses on the cultural significance of the tabilk-tabilk wetlands both on and off the water, with opportunities for spotting incredible wildlife on an eco-cruise.

The wawa Nagambie experience tells the story of waring (Goulburn River) with a journey through the wetlands and a visit to a culturally significant site in the nearby floodplains. Experiencing this location in flood, with cacophony of birdlife, has been a highlight of the year so far.



wawa biik
(hello Country)



PARTNERSHIPS

A wawa biik partnership program was established with select tourism partners on Country to create a culturally safe space to nurture two-way commercial and educational opportunities. These partnerships support a pipeline of new wawa biik experiences and community benefits into the future. The wawa biik guides and broader team have delivered a consistently high level of service and inspiring educational events for visitors, positioning wawa biik strongly within the cultural tourism market in Victoria. Through positive interactions with guests, extensive media interest and a busy forward bookings calendar for private groups, wawa biik amplifies its impact in a sustainable way. The team is undertaking the Eco-Tourism Australia's certification process by reviewing and enhancing every aspect of business operations to ensure wawa biik delivers positive benefits to Country, culture and community.



Uncle Shane: "wawa biik has given me an opportunity to share our culture with the wider community. I am so proud to be able to work in the tourism space so we can help with the learning of our culture"

BRANDING AND GROWTH

A website dedicated to wawa biik was launched with the business at the start of the year, available at www.wawabiik.com.au to highlight the experiences, updates, a link to booking system and snippets of the Taungurung story. Blog posts featuring interviews with Taungurung Elders generated high levels of website traffic, while the wawa biik Instagram page reached 367 followers only months after being established. A logo, colour palette and specific artwork created by a Taungurung artist combined to provide a strong visual brand to wawa biik, with banners and uniforms proudly displaying the imagery.

A total of 32 tours – both private and public – were successfully operated with a total of 413 guests on Country.

97% of guests surveyed stated that they learned more about Taungurung Country, Culture and aspirations thanks to the experience and the knowledge of the guides.

A range of media opportunities were highlighted by a feature in Tourism Australia's 'hot list' of experiences for March 2023, one month following launch, as well as a feature in the Melbourne Official Visitor Guide. The team had the opportunity to present to more than 600 people at the Visit Victoria tourism conference in May, taking wawa biik to Melbourne as the business continues to grow.

Jonah: "Sharing some of what I've learned about Taungurung Country, my heritage and my story has helped me understand that the greater world is ready to engage with Taungurung Traditional Owners and learn our story on Biik."

Aunty Jo: "It makes me proud to show our beautiful Country to visitors. It is something that I am honoured to do, to share, to include and to invite visitors to learn and partake in our cultural tours."



CULTURAL LAND Management

The Cultural Land Management (CLM) unit was focused on the completion and distribution of the Cultural Land Management Strategic Plan, which was launched in April. The Strategy is led by four strategic pillars: Healing Knowledge, Healing Country, Managing Country and Governing with Country. This establishes the framework through which the CLM unit sets objectives and measures outcomes according to Taungurung Cultural Values. The unit has experienced exciting growth and strong strategic development over the last 12 months, with managers in place for all program areas. The CLM unit has been able to recruit key staff to further deliver the objectives of the Taungurung community, with roles available through grants from funding sources. Additional project staff have joined the team to support Cultural Water, Biocultural Diversity and Private Land Acquisition, while in the process of supporting a new Cultural Forests Program in response to rapid changes currently underway across the state.



FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS



HEALING KNOWLEDGE

This pillar's work is about healing, strengthening, and reconnecting cultural knowledge, knowledge holders and knowledge transfer systems in support of practice development. The Cultural Water Program and Baan Ganalina (Guardians of Water) continue to provide strong leadership in this space with a growing membership undertaking reading water Country and knowledge healing work. A particular focus has been the headwaters of the Waring (Goulburn) and the Ovens River. The Ovens provides connection to the work of the Biocultural Diversity Program in Taungurung's Alpine Country. With the assistance of Taungurung knowledge holders, the program has been developing tools for assessing biocultural values which will be applied across Taungurung Country. Two well attended camps have been held on Mt Buffalo, supported by a representative from the University of Melbourne who has been taking peat samples to understand fire regimes and vegetation change on Country. This is the first step in a long-term program of works between TLaWC and the University, funded by the Australian Research Council. The annual migration of Deberra (Bogong Moth) included the Biik unit's successful use of biocultural indicators, such as the presence of crows, to identify moth sites on Mt Buffalo.

The Geospatial Solutions unit has used drones to start collecting data, assisting in reading Country and informing management decisions. Telling the story of Taungurung Country through mapping remains an area of focus in continual work towards ways of mapping Taungurung knowledge.

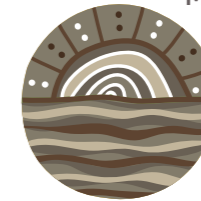
HEALING COUNTRY



This pillar supports the healing, adaptation and application of cultural land management practices, supported by the Taungurung Rangers program and Biik CLM unit. Taungurung Rangers have worked within the Cultural Water Program at Horseshoe Lagoon, Molesworth Reserve and Gooram Falls, and continue to be a vital part of Healing Country. The program

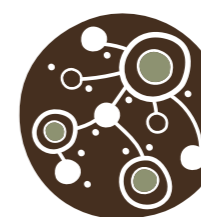
is moving ahead with the finalisation of the Taungurung Park Ranger Program Strategic Plan leading to preparations for recruitment and training. The Taungurung Ranger Team Leader participated in a leadership development exchange to the Northern Territory providing important peer support and connection. Aquatic planting, habitat support and fish releases have been completed at McLarty's Lagoon and successful winter watering undertaken at Horseshoe Lagoon. A Traditional Owner-led watering trial has been accepted at Molesworth and will build on previous healing knowledge and healing Country works undertaken at this site.

MANAGING COUNTRY



Managing Country supports the planning and management of Country by leveraging existing frameworks, policies and strategies to create opportunities for Taungurung people, such as the return of the Nyagaroon property to Taungurung Nation. Nyagaroon and Cheshunt are a focus for the Private Land Acquisition and Development and Cultural Landscapes units. As longer-term options are explored for the Nyagaroon property, a program of work has started with the Biik unit to undertake plant and animal surveys with Taungurung people. This work is part of a broader process of understanding the values of Taungurung places and helps the team manage Country as a series of cultural landscapes with all their rich and diverse expressions of place. Possibilities for economic development continue to be investigated at the Cheshunt property, Mountain Pepper trials are nearing completion, and new ideas such as seed orchards are being explored.

GOVERNING WITH COUNTRY



This pillar seeks the structural reforms and co-capacity needed to establish enduring governance arrangements that embed Taungurung rights and interests in land and water management. The unit activate Taungurung rights and interests on Country and move towards sole and collaborative management arrangements

according to Taungurung Cultural Landscapes framing. Significant work was undertaken to identify the Strathbogies Cultural Landscape and advocate for the classification of this area as a Cultural Reserve. If successful, this will be the first reserve designated in Australia. Rapid changes in the forest management space in Victoria may see other areas of Taungurung Forest Country join the Strathbogies in new, culturally informed management arrangements. Looking ahead, the CLM unit has started a significant program of multi-agency partnership building to support the Corop to heal this important waterscape for garorrk (brolga).



PROGRAMS

BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY PROGRAM

The Biocultural Diversity Program is completing its current focus on High Country, having built a number of tools for Reading Country. Work was centred on Mt Buffalo through a series of well attended camps and events. Monitoring the Deberra (bogong moth) season and noting biocultural relationships between Deberra, landscape types and other species was integral. The program also delivered a partnership agreement with the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (DEECA) Biodiversity Division. Yananyin gadhaba (We Walk Together) provides a roadmap for the expression of Taungurung rights and interests on Country and will form a sound basis for work moving ahead.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES PROGRAM

Several Cultural landscapes have now been identified across Taungurung Country. The CLM unit is progressing the Corop Cultural Waterscape as a pilot with a focus on healing, managing and governing to support cultural and CLM strategic objectives. The Corop Cultural Waterscape Management Program was launched with significant investment, support and involvement from Victorian government agencies. This includes working on collaborative governance, management and partnership arrangements in this landscape beginning with co-design workshops to map the process and a two-year feasibility investigation. Biik CLM was commissioned to complete vegetation and fauna surveys at Nyagaroon, involving Taungurung

people in fieldwork and contributing to establishing connection to Country and pathways to knowledge healing. A Nyagaroon Yarning Circle has been established and is working with community, TLaWC staff and consultants to determine the future at the property. Work to investigate elements associated with the return of the property is underway including planning advice, fire emergency planning and site conditions and capacity.

CULTURAL WATER PROGRAM

The Waring Working Together Framework was co-designed with the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) to enable better collaboration between organisations. This has improved working relationships and led to the creation of a joint Waring Healing Country group, with significant works to heal important places currently in development. Baan Ganalina continued to grow in strength, with Aboriginal Waterway Assessments carried out in the Waring headwaters and Ovens River. Along with Biik CLM, the group also undertook waterway assessments and ongoing Reading Country monitoring on the Campaspe River to produce a 'Health of Country – Campaspe' report and inform this year's Campaspe seasonal watering proposal by the North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA). A 3-day wetland ecology course focused on Horseshoe Lagoon, culminating in the collaborative development of management objectives and watering plan for the Lagoon. Molesworth Lagoon was accepted as a pilot site by the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) for a Traditional Owner-led watering trial. This will build on previous cultural assessments.

TAUNGURUNG PARK RANGER PROGRAM

All planning and documents have been completed in the Taungurung Park Ranger Program, which includes a Strategic Plan outlining the vision, aims and objectives. Recruitment will begin in the next financial year alongside a training program developed to assist Taungurung recruits into the role. TLaWC has worked closely with Parks Victoria to educate them in providing a culturally safe workplace for Taungurung Park Rangers, beginning with an on-Country cultural awareness session with Elders and the development of a Cultural Safety Plan.

KNOWLEDGE HEALING PROGRAM

Healing knowledge is a foundational program and is cited as a specific theme in the CLM Strategy. This program is considered fundamental to asserting Taungurung culture and identity in caring for Country. The program includes re-activating Taungurung systems of knowledge and practice transfer and management, and healing practice.

ON THE HORIZON: CULTURAL FOREST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

An announcement was made in May by the Victorian Premier in committing to ending timber harvest in old growth forest by January 1 2024. In response, the CLM unit is establishing a new role to support Taungurung to be prepared to be engaged in the work that is required to be done to rethink the future of forested Country on Taungurung Biik. This is a new program area but is a continuation of work in Reading Country.

AGREEMENTS

YIYAGA BA WONGARRA – We See and Know

The **Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA)** binds the State of Victoria and the Taungurung people to a meaningful partnership founded on mutual respect. It is a means through which Taungurung people can provide a strong future for the next generations and is an avenue for Taungurung lore, culture and relationships with Country to be recognised, supported, safeguarded and promoted. On this basis, the unit's activities over the past 12 months have provided opportunities to recognise, protect and exercise Taungurung rights and obligations to Country. This has included building relationships and processes that will enable TLaWC to deliver on Taungurung obligations to Country. Establishing open, healthy and respectful dialogue has been integral.

Within this settlement, the **Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA)** articulates how to administer activities on public land that may have an impact

on the rights and obligations of the Taungurung Nation. It establishes processes for TLaWC to be involved in, consent to or refuse future uses of public land. The unit has been committed to realising the aspirations of Taungurung people through the LUAA, creating a culturally safe framework for interactions with land management partners, sharing the Taungurung story and the knowledge of the mob, and building respectful relationships with agencies, councils and utilities. This has included attending more than 50 site inspections and travelling to all parts of Taungurung Country. The unit assessed 234 LUAA notifications across the financial year and negotiated with 20 companies who hold Exploration Licenses on Country. Annual access fees collected over the past financial year totalled \$85,000, with all funds moving to the Taungurung Community Trust supporting key community programs. The Yiyaga ba Wongarra unit will continue to uphold the rights and obligations of the Taungurung people to Country and cultivate respectful relationships with all partners.

BAGUNGA BA WIRRPMA (Gather and Use)

The unit has started to focus on the legal rights of Taungurung people to practice Culture, gather and use resources, and to have a say in what happens on Country. The Plain Language Guide is currently under development to assist Taungurung people in understanding how to exercise rights and meet cultural obligations under the **Natural Resources Agreement (NRA)**.

Waydjak bunbunarik liwik-nganjin yaraga-ngala dhumbali daada gurnap biik-nganjin yulendi-nganjin

Nganga-ngala biik-nganjin yaraga-ngala bumdap gerr ngarmga bak wilanja nganjin

Ngala barra gerr-nganjin gilbruk biik-nganjin yarang bak daada gurnap dhumbali biik-dhan bak wilanji-dhana

We are the descendants of our old people and we have an ongoing responsibility to look after our inheritance, which is our Country and our culture

We look after Country because we have an intimate relationship with Country like thousands of generations of Taungurung before us

We will continue our relationship with respect for our Country and teach the new generations that they have the same inheritance and responsibility to their Country as every generation before them has had

AGREEMENT DEFINITIONS

The Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA)

The LUAA gives procedural rights to the Taungurung people regarding proposed activities on public land.

The Natural Resource Agreement (NRA)

The NRA provides for Taungurung people to carry out agreed activities, including to take, use and manage natural resources on public land, consistent with sustainability principles.

Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA)

The Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) binds all the agreements together and formalises these agreements as a native title agreement. This allowed the Taungurung settlement package to be formally registered under the Native Title Act.

Land Agreement This agreement provides a mechanism for transfer to TLaWC of national parks and reserves as Aboriginal title and any Crown land the State has agreed to transfer as freehold.

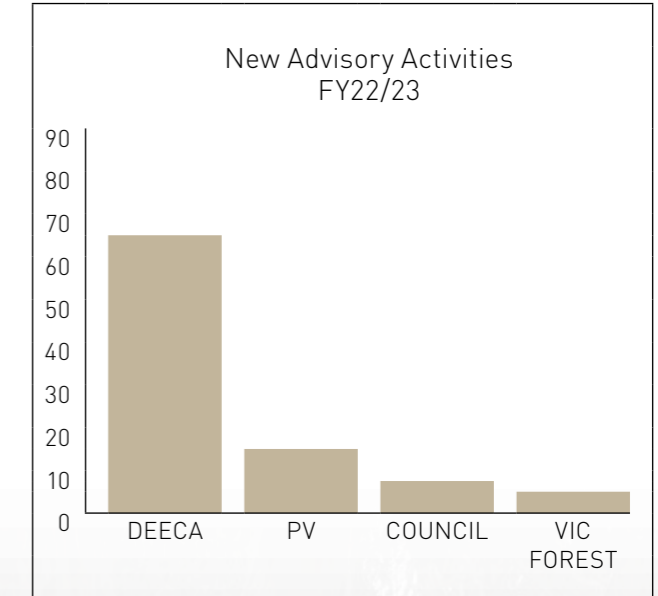
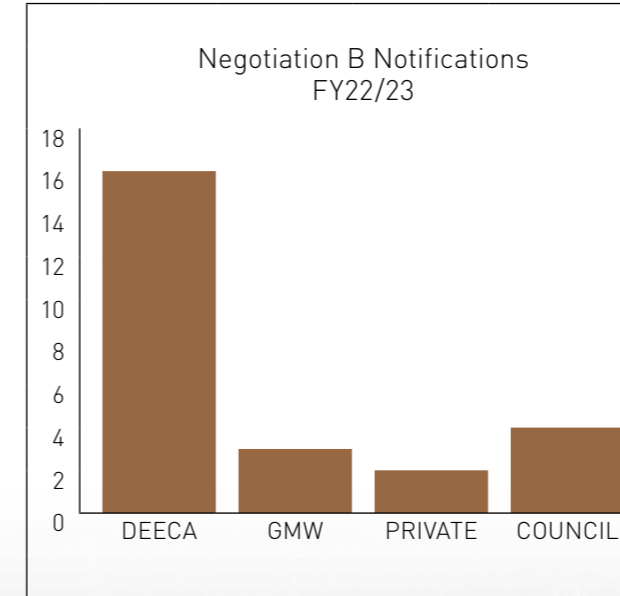
Funding Agreement The State provides TLaWC with a range of funding which includes core operations funding, once-off interim capacity funding and economic development funding.

Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement (TOLMA) This Agreement provides for the setup of the joint management and governance structure for the Aboriginal Title parks and reserves.

Traditional Owner Land Natural Resource Agreement (TOLNRA) The TOLNRA allows for Taungurung community members to exercise their NRA rights on land owned by TLaWC, irrespective of any planning or other regulations which may otherwise prohibit such activities.

Participation Agreement (VTOTPA)

This agreement sets out the framework for the management and distribution of funding to be deposited in the trust, VTOT.



CULTURAL *Heritage*

The Cultural Heritage unit fulfils and manages TLaWC obligations as a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) under the Aboriginal Heritage Act (AHA) 2006. This ensures that Taungurung cultural heritage values are protected and that TLaWC's statutory obligations as a RAP apply best practice principles in the interests of the Taungurung people. In carrying out its legislative responsibilities, the organisation works closely with government agencies, local government, and the heritage industry. Through efforts in cultural heritage management and other initiatives, the aim is to help maintain Taungurung cultural places and artefacts for future generations.

The RAP unit remains fully booked for fieldwork, with 42 open Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) fieldwork jobs at the standard or complex testing phase. During the reporting period, there were 10 to 12 Field Services Officers (FSOs) deployed per day on the CHMP and internal TLaWC projects.

- 14 CHMPs (and 1 amendment) were approved by the Cultural Heritage Team
- 32 Notice of Intents (NOIs) for new CHMPs
- 4 Cultural Heritage Permits (CHPs) were evaluated and approved

Compliance activities focus on responding to potential noncompliance with the AHA 2006. Over the reporting period there were 8 active investigations and 1 closure – 7 of the investigations remain ongoing.

The RAP unit continues to work on projects such as the Taungurung Fire Story Project, the Strategic Fire Breaks Project, participation in the Victorian Great Outdoors (VGO) heritage evaluations, the provision of cultural heritage management advice prior to DEECA fuel reduction burns, and engagement on cultural heritage matters specified within the Local Government Authority MoU agreement.

In addition to CHMP and CHP activities, the following projects are at various stages of development, application, and delivery:

STRATEGIC FIRE BREAKS PROJECT

The archaeological surveys for the proposed Strategic Fire Breaks on existing footprints (Renewals) were completed for the Ovens District, Port Phillip District (Road 16), and for the most part of the proposed breaks located in the Goulburn and Murrindindi District. There remains one break complex to finalise in registration (Gonzaga Ridge Break).

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Strathbogie Shire Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been finalised. Strathbogie Shire Council has established a TLaWC referral pathway for High Impact Uses and Development that includes areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity. This is where the activity area is outside of the cultural heritage sensitivity area but where it would trigger a CHMP if located within. Under this MoU agreement, referrals to TLaWC for comment will also be required for Planning Proposal submissions to Council. Discussions between parties on standard conditions will include buildings and works ancillary to a single dwelling among other activities.

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY VICTORIA (BRV) PROJECTS

A small amount of the original funding remains to visit the Isabel McBryde greenstone axe collection at the Australian National University (ANU). The RAP Unit intends to send 5 FSOs to investigate, catalogue, and connect with this collection at ANU in the next financial year. Representatives from La Trobe University and ANU are arranging the trip while also planning future grant applications to work with TLaWC on greenstone axe provenance and experimental archaeological activities to establish residue on the greenstone axes. This will lead to analysis of early diet and food gathering activities. A second Bushfire Recovery Victoria grant – Community, Culture and Resilience' Project – will commence in the next financial year and is aimed at developing community resilience and protecting Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs) from bushfire risk. The purpose is to have two-way learning for the RAP with community and to better protect at-risk areas of Taungurung Country. Work has begun surveying Reedy Lake and CMTs to increase protections.

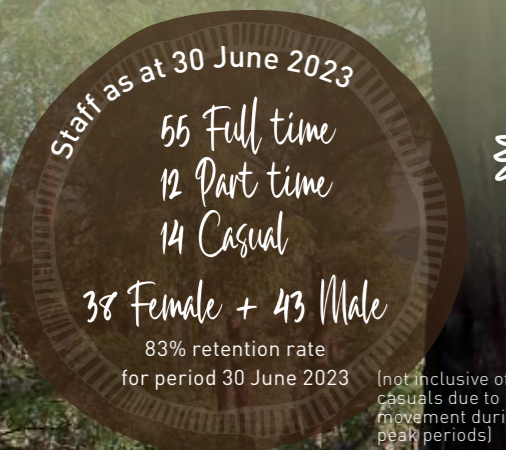
SKILLS PASSPORTS

The RAP unit has been liaising with the developers of the Australian National Committee for Archaeology Teaching and Learning (ANCATL) Skills Passport for Archaeology with an upcoming presentation from La Trobe University. The ANCATL passports offer alternative pathways into graduate level and Masters level courses in archaeology (in place of an undergraduate degree) and pathways to becoming recognised as a Heritage Advisor. This is intended to be offered as an option to all experienced FSOs as a pathway into cultural heritage management through recognition of experience.



CORPORATE Services

TLaWC's Corporate Services continued to expand its unit of specialists to provide essential support services to staff and the Taungurung community, aligning with the growth of the organisation. Dedicated to strengthening core operations such as finance, people and workplace culture, OHS and risk, communications and projects, the unit tracked outcomes in response to the TLaWC strategic plan by operating a roadmap system with monthly check-ins and collaborative discussions. The result was an increase in completed projects, released initiatives and innovative solutions that assist all staff in their day-to-day operations.



PEOPLE AND WORKPLACE CULTURE

TLaWC's recruitment process and focus on support initiatives continued to be key themes in tracking workplace culture and staff wellbeing. An Occupational Health and Safety Officer was hired to specialise in the safe work practices of all staff. This included implementation of a safety management system to access all safety related documents and streamline incident reporting.

Recruiting was improved by using this program in conjunction with the HR Management System, enhancing consistency and drawing on new induction resources. A range of policies were implemented to provide further support in navigating complex or challenging situations, factoring in a new policy review process to see regular changes made through staff feedback.



The appraisal process was updated to include professional development and training, also aiding performance and development conversations between staff and their leaders. Further benefits were added to assist work/life balance, such as being paid for a day off on birthdays and increasing both cultural and paid parental leave. This provides a niche offering when recruiting talent to TLaWC. The unit also distributed a Staff Satisfaction Survey to the entire organisation to understand and analyse workplace culture, prioritising key initiatives and to celebrate the positives. An action plan was created following the survey to ensure the high priority feedback items will be addressed in the next financial year.

FINANCE

Following a successful transition to a new cloud-based accounting software – the finance unit (with the addition of a new resource) targeted improvement on the management of funds and the reporting and tracking of funds. Available money has been managed to generate the best possible returns across the year, with an eye on the future where the outlook across the economy is uncertain. The unit has been working collaboratively with staff across TLaWC to provide support in managing finances for projects and operations, including the refining and improving of financial reporting for managers across the organisation. How grant money is managed on an ongoing basis is vital, as well as the final acquittal and reporting stage. Specialist advice has been provided to Daada Gurnap Nhilam (Risk and Audit committee) and the Board to offer timely information in a format that works for important governance groups. It is expected that this will continue to evolve in response to ongoing feedback and the changing needs of TLaWC. Finance has also provided support to other key initiatives of TLaWC during the year, particularly the development of the Housing Strategy and assistance with Biik CLM's operations.

COMMUNICATION

The unit entered the second year of its Communications Strategy with achievements in extended reach, building new partnerships and enhancing TLaWC's presence across social media, traditional media and within the community. The total number of social media followers via the four platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn) surpassed 7,000 and the number of quarterly newsletter subscribers reached 1,000, demonstrating the growing connection between the organisation and advocates, schools/ kindergartens and businesses eager to engage. The merchandise offerings and sales increased, providing the opportunity for Taungurung artists to submit works for printing on t-shirts in the Buwiga (Create) series. The unit covered a range of TLaWC events with short videos to accompany media releases and build visual storytelling for distribution and preservation. From a branding perspective, the wawa biik logo and website, and the digitisation of the Wayilak Bayubarring sketching set the visual foundations for the new functions within TLaWC. Staff testimonials and an induction featuring the executive leadership unit were filmed and are now established as showcase videos to new starters and partners. The Treaty Election process was hosted to members via Zoom sessions and a wide range of media options to ensure Taungurung Members could access all data to make an informed decision – resulting in record levels of engagement.

PROJECTS

Corporate Services increased its capacity in Project Management by adding two new resources across the financial year. This enabled the unit to deliver and provide expert advice on a wide range of new and important projects for TLaWC. Many of the projects are about supporting the organisation's capacity and efficiency during substantial growth periods. Examples include developing an organisation-wide project management and reporting framework, and supporting the development of the Natural Resource Agreement (NRA) Plain Language Guide. A project priority list has been developed to assist in preparation for the next financial year.

Biik Ganyin Datbu
BIIK
 CULTURAL LAND MANAGEMENT
Reading, Healing & Caring For Country



Biik CLM crews have also worked towards healing alpine areas by managing invasive weed species such as Soft Rush populations in Mt Buffalo and Grey Sallow Willow infestations in Headwater Stream and Alpine Peatlands. Crews planted 1,300 Indigenous plant species at Reedy Lake in November, efforts that will further work to heal Country for many years to come.

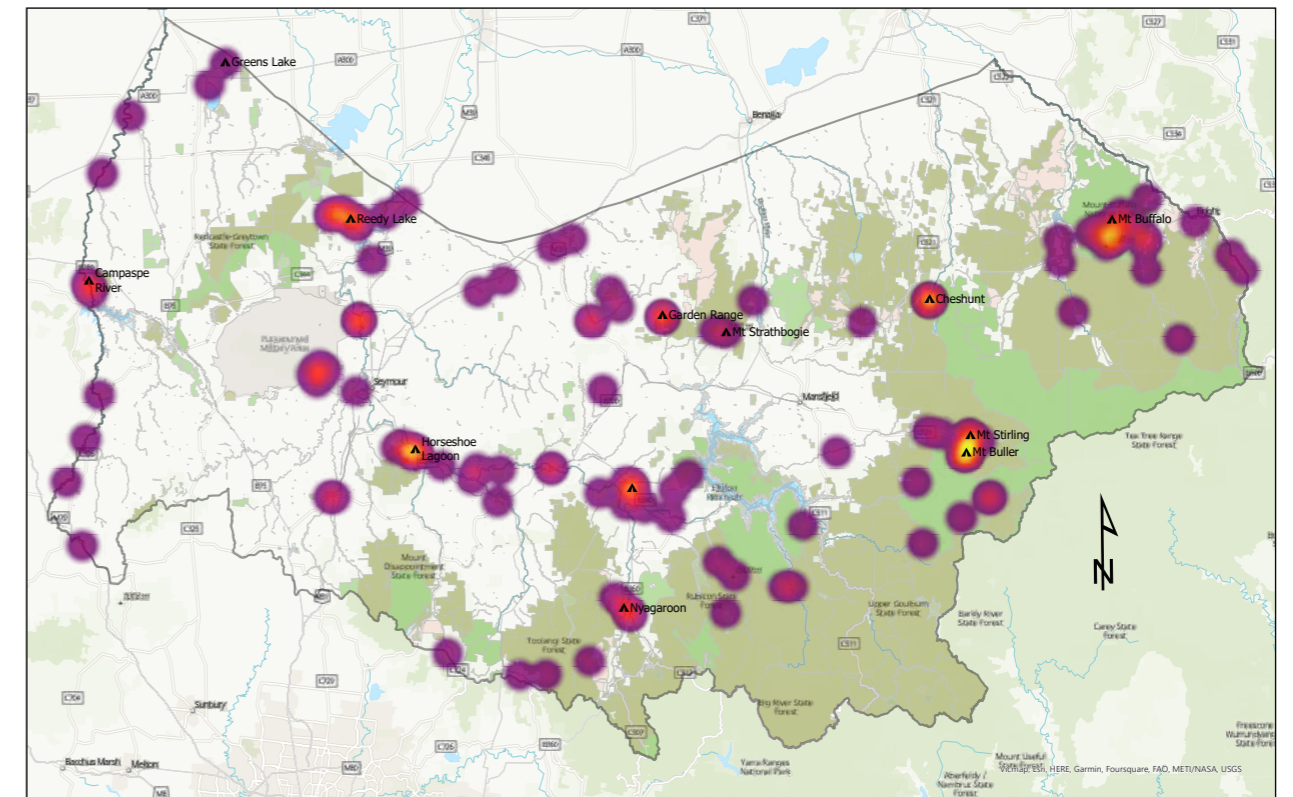
Biik Cultural Land Management (Biik CLM) has grown rapidly, proudly operating as a mechanism to further realise the broader goals of TLaWC and the Taungurung Nation. Biik CLM continues a responsibility to custodianship, operating on the values of reading, healing and caring for Country through traditional and modern techniques. Such culturally informed management works towards ensuring Taungurung people can actively manage Country.

A refresh of the Biik CLM branding saw the business unit transition from previous trading names, and amalgamation with the heritage unit has resulted in a new branding suite. Along with the trading name Biik CLM, branding on uniforms, letterheads and vehicles is in the process of rollout.

In the past twelve months, Biik CLM engaged a second full time crew member in North-East Victoria and six casuals across various locations to take the full capacity to 12 staff at peak. Biik CLM has also delivered 65 contracts and secured three funding grants, consistently searching for new opportunities to foster professional relationships and to maintain strong connections with those existing. These efforts further increase an ability to create sustainable opportunities for Taungurung people in caring for Country.

The secured grants have initiated the formation of a Business Development Manager role, which will enhance and strengthen Biik CLM's financial growth and stability. With available funds, Biik CLM is also purchasing a tractor to further the ability of TLaWC in building economic independence and strengthening organisational capacity through enhanced vegetation management and crew training potential.

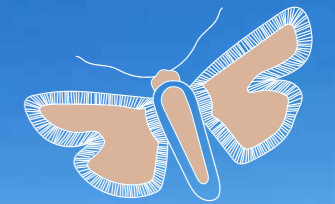
Strong corporate partnerships have been formed and maintained with organisations such as Goulburn Broken CMA, Park Victoria, the Victorian State Government, North Central CMA, Venetia, Forest Fire Management Victoria, the CFA and North-East CMA, as well as many more. Flora and fauna surveys and assessments have been undertaken across Taungurung Country to understand the distribution of various species and provide an internal knowledge base for future access more thoroughly



Biik CLM, Healing and Reading Country Heat Map
 ▲ Key Taungurung Places □ TLAWC RAP
 Sparse
 Dense
 0 10 20 30 40 Kilometers
 Biik CLM makes no representation or warranty regarding the accuracy or completeness of the information in this document. Biik CLM further accepts no responsibility for any omissions or inaccuracies that may exist, and disclaims all liability for any loss or damage which may arise directly or indirectly from reliance on the information in this document, whether or not that loss is caused by any negligence on the part of Biik CLM or its employees.



Biik unit's have conducted Deberra (Bogong Moth) monitoring work in collaboration with researchers from the University of Melbourne as part of the Biocultural Diversity Program to assess and understand their distribution across Taungurung Country. This increased information strengthens an ability to protect and preserve cultural heritage.



PARTNERSHIPS

TLaWC's connections with partner organisations is vital to the growth of the Taungurung Nation. Their advocacy, reach and areas of expertise provide us with opportunities to target new audiences, open employment pathways, and build relationships that can influence change in our communities.

A partner is not a competitor – our ongoing discussions and projects with partners adds trust and transparency to all that we aim to achieve for Taungurung people and Country.

Many of our values – respect, teamwork, leadership – extend to our partners. The more we communicate positively and openly, the greater the relationships and partnerships we build. What we do now will set the path for future generations, and to be known as approachable rather the confrontational is such an important step in building and maintaining a strong reputation.

Our strategic plan has a goal that reads 'Building Strong Corporate Partnerships'. This has been carefully considered to see us achieve more Memorandums of Understanding with councils and businesses, to ensure greater decision-making sits with TLaWC, and to align partners with TLaWC's goals and objectives.

Working together is the most productive form of change – a progressive partnership with a school impacts youth and future leaders.

To be respectful, supportive, approachable and honest in our emails, conversations and meetings with partners sets an expectation for community to follow. They will not have all the answers, and they may make some mistakes along the way, but that is part of how we move forward and educate others.

We control only our own actions, but through those actions we lead by example.

PARTNERS



STATEMENT ON JANUARY 26

The Taungurung Land and Waters Council, following collaboration with Taungurung people at a Quarterly Meeting, published the following statement on January 26 at the beginning of 2023.

While many Australians believe January 26 (Australia Day) is a celebration of all the things we love about Australia: land, sense of fair go, lifestyle, democracy, the freedoms we enjoy but particularly the celebration of people and culture, the Taungurung people do not share this view.

For the Taungurung people, January 26 celebrates the colonisation/invasion of our lands and the lands of Traditional Owner Nations across this continent. It celebrates the suppression of Taungurung language and culture, the incarceration and genocide of our people, and is an annual reminder of the dispossession of our people and the ensuing systemic and institutional racism which continues to this day.

In the 2018 Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA), the State formerly recognised the devastating impact of colonisation upon Taungurung people, and the role that the State played in dispossessing Taungurung people of our Country. The State also acknowledged the continued suffering of the Taungurung people through the implementation of laws and policies that discriminated against us in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

These far-reaching laws and policies fragmented both our families and the community. Beginning in the nineteenth century, Taungurung children were forcibly taken from parents in one of the most traumatic examples of State policy and practice. Depending on how the State defined Aboriginality over time, Taungurung people could either be forced to live on a reserve or, under what came to be known as the Half Caste Act of 1886, forcibly evicted from a reserve, and prevented from living with our families. Other laws regulated Aboriginal marriages and employment. These laws and policies, including under the State's assimilationist efforts in the twentieth century, ensured that Taungurung people were excluded from the life of the nation, the intrinsic value of our culture and our identity denied.

The State formerly acknowledged that the actions of early colonists on Taungurung Country including the deliberate killing of Taungurung people. The State also recognises the deadly and widespread impact of foreign diseases upon the Taungurung population, and the hunger experienced by our people who were no longer able to sustain themselves on Taungurung lands.

The Taungurung people continue to experience the ongoing effects and the impact of colonisation over 200 years later. This is seen through the continued dispossession of lands, denial of inherent rights, intergenerational trauma and institutional structures designed to negate and restrict.

From the very beginning, however, our people fought to survive. In the early days of colonisation, when sheep and cattle destroyed our traditional food sources, the Taungurung people took livestock and destroyed crops to push pastoralists from our lands. The Taungurung people never accepted that the colonists owned our Country. The Taungurung people signed no treaties, nor took any action to relinquish our sovereignty.

Though Taungurung people were forced to find sanctuary at stations and missions such as Mitchelstown and Murchison, the Taungurung people also fought to maintain connection to our Country. In 1859, a group of Taungurung men – Bear-ring, Mur-rum-Mur-rum, Parn-gaan, Bur-rip-pin and Koo-yarn – petitioned the colonial government for land in their own Country where they could grow crops, but where they could also continue to maintain their traditional ways of obtaining food. This stands as one of the earliest examples in Australia of Aboriginal people taking direct political action for the return of their land. Their appeal resulted in the Central Board appointed to watch over the interests Aboriginies (Aboriginal Protectorate) approving the Taungurung people's selection of and then surveying of land at a place they called 'Nakkrom' on the Acheron River near Alexandra. At the time, Guardian of Aboriginies William Thomas described location as the 'Promised Land' of the Taungurung people.

Despite the land being approved by the Aboriginal Protectorate and the Board of Land & Works, there was strong resistance by pastoralists. Our people were later driven off our 'Promised Land' by the local pastoralists. Denied a realistic alternative, most Taungurung survivors later joined other Kulin peoples at Coranderrk Station, on Woiwurrung Country. Over time, our people moved to mission stations and reserves elsewhere in Victoria – to Lake Tyers, Lake Condah, Franklinford, and Ebenezer – or to Cummeragunga in New South Wales. A number of Taungurung people, however, refused to leave our own Country, and remained there for the rest of their lives. Some found work within the colonial economy, including on local pastoral stations such as Molka, Wappan and Doogalook, as a way of staying on Taungurung land. One Taungurung man even took up a selection on his own Country in 1879, when it was rare for Aboriginal people to gain leaseholds. The Taungurung peoples' push to retain, and reclaim, their Country continued.

Through much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the State actively discouraged the practice of Taungurung culture. Despite this, our people continued to pass down knowledge via family and community gatherings, out of view of the wider community. In 1967, Camp Jungai was established near Alexandra, just south of Lake Eildon, in the heart of Taungurung Country. Named using the Taungurung word for meeting place, Camp Jungai became a place where culture would thrive, and continues to this day.

In the eyes of the Taungurung peoples, Australia Day ignores our history, our struggle, and the fact that our Ancestors have lived on, cared for, and maintained cultural obligations to and for Taungurung Country for over 65,000 years.

It is for this reason that many Taungurung people call Australia Day 'Invasion Day' as a reflection on the effects invasion had and still has on our community and Country. Taungurung people also refer to Australia Day as Survival Day, a day to reflect on our resilience and survival, and our continued determination and drive to exercise our cultural and inherent rights, and our continued fight for and assertion of rights on Taungurung land.

Moreover, January 26 has a long history of protest within the Aboriginal Community. On 26 January 1888, on the centenary of British colonisation, Aboriginal leaders boycotted the 100-year anniversary celebrations.

On 26 January 1938, on the 150th anniversary of Arthur Phillip's arrival, Yorta Yorta man William Cooper and other members of the Aboriginal Progressive Association held the Day of Mourning and Protest. The protest took place in Sydney after an event to celebrate Arthur Phillip's landing, which included a parade and a re-enactment of the First Fleet's arrival. Afterwards, over 1000 First Nations people and their supporters formed a silent march through the streets of Sydney.

All this history of Aboriginal resilience, mourning and protest on January 26.

In 1946, the Commonwealth and state governments agreed to unify all the state-based Australia Day celebrations and celebrate on January 26 as a country – the public holiday was taken on the Monday closest to the 26th.

Australia Day officially became a public holiday for all states and territories only 29 years ago, in 1994.

Taungurung people therefore continue to see January 26 as a day of mourning and reflection, and not a day of celebration.

It is Taungurung peoples' wish that all people living on our Country take time to truly consider and respect that 26 January does not bring a sense of unity and pride and implores people to educate themselves about the true history of this Country and to consider what you can do to become an ally of the Taungurung people.

The easiest way to be an ally of Taungurung people is to engage in the Yoo-rrook truth telling process, share these resources with others and start conversations with friends and family on what you have learnt through the process.

The Taungurung Land & Waters Council, through the direction of the Taungurung people have chosen not to participate in any activities associated with January 26 and request that our partners and stakeholders respect this position.

It is important to note the Taungurung people respect our partners/stakeholders' responsibilities and commitments to January 26, however, also request they frequently consider deeply the views of the Taungurung Nation and the actual need to continue celebrating a day which would continue to isolate and segregate the Taungurung people on their own Country.

THE VOICE TO PARLIAMENT



The Taungurung Land and Waters Council, empowered by the Taungurung people, published the following statement on the Voice to Parliament in April 2023.

In 2023, Australians have been asked to vote yes or no on the following question: 'Do you support an alteration to the Constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice?'

The Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC), empowered by the Taungurung people, supports A Voice to Parliament. The only way to change the Australian Constitution is by holding a referendum. This means that the Constitution cannot be altered without 'the approval of the people' – an approval we support at full voice.

Having a group of Traditional Owners advising the Government and Parliament on how matters such as policies and laws affect Indigenous peoples is the next step in creating a stronger future not just for the Taungurung Nation, but all Nations.

The social, cultural and economic wellbeing of our people are matters that require consultation with Aboriginal people, for the betterment of Aboriginal people.

The importance of such change cannot be understated, for anything written into the Constitution means protection from changes of Government. Previous Indigenous bodies have not had such protection.

It has taken 96 years of calling for constitutional recognition to reach this referendum, which does not include the many years of injustice prior. This is a rare opportunity to have a say in affecting the changes our people need through Government policy and legislation. Such opportunities must be taken, for we never know when they will arise again.

When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who know and understand the best way to deliver real and practical change in their communities have a say through a Voice, we will finally be able to close the gap that still exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The hopes of our Ancestors will echo through Parliament.

The Voice will be empowering, community-led, inclusive, respectful and culturally informed. It will prioritise youth and represent the needs of local communities. It will be accountable and transparent. It will see a line drawn in 2023, driving positive change into the future.

The Taungurung people and TLaWC advocate for this change, now and forever.



CORPORATE Governance

ATTENDANCE TABLE

DIRECTOR	Attended	Eligible
Kaley Nicholson	6	8
Isobel Morphy-Walsh	5	8
Marcus Stewart	4	8
Alex Burns	7	8
Jarrold Hughes	4	5
Lorraine Padgham	7	8
Jacqui Stewart	7	8
Patsy Smith	6	8
David Merry	0	3

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Kaley Nicholson
Chair

As Chairperson of the TLaWC Board of Directors, Kaley is committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for the Taungurung nation.

She is passionate about caring for Country, employment, and education – seeing these pillars as the key to strengthening the position of Traditional Owners, while advancing the cultural rights and economic development of Taungurung people.

Kaley is focused on ensuring that Elders are respected and elevated in decision making, that young people are empowered and have a voice, and that there are opportunities in place for future generations.



Isobel Morphy-Walsh
Deputy Chair

Isobel is a proud Taungurung woman who loves her land, her culture and community. She has a strong voice and always looks out for Elders,

children, women and Country. Isobel has placed protecting, promoting and healing Victorian countries, peoples and languages into every part of her life.



Aunty Loraine Padgham
Director

Lorraine is a member of the Nira ballug clan and has a commitment to preserve and honour her Taungurung heritage. Loraine's objective as a Board member is to continue TLaWC's work in promoting cultural heritage and language, and to promote a better understanding and appreciation by the wider community for the rich legacy forged by those who occupied and cared for the land through the millennia.



Aunty Patsy Smith
Director

Patsy is one of our longest serving Board members and has spent more than ten years as a member of the TLaWC Board. Patsy is an accomplished

creative artist, photographer and sculptor, and has participated in many art installations and community events, as well as being the founding director of Baluk Arts. Patsy has contributed greatly to TLaWC over many years.



Alex Burns
Director

Alex is a proud Taungurung man who works in the corporate world and brings strong skills to the Board. He has expertise in business planning, risk management, and corporate practice.



Aunty Jacqui Stewart
Director

Jacqui is a Taungurung Elder and has extensive experience delivering welcomes to Country and participating in cultural consultations. Jacqui enjoys taking part in cultural and community activities and has participated in the annual Kulin Nation's *Tanderrum* event. She has a strong background of involvement as an Aboriginal Elder for the Koori Court.



Marcus Stewart
Director

Marcus Stewart is a Nira illim bulluk man of the Taungurung Nation. He is a seasoned negotiator and strategist and has held several senior

management positions. He has helped implement a number of strategies and policies through senior roles in State Government and as a previous TLaWC CEO. His broad understanding of politics, policy and the challenges facing Traditional Owners gives Marcus the ability to lead and be a voice of change. He believes Traditional Owners should be at the forefront of the decision-making process for self-determination and achieving economic independence.



Jarrold Hughes
Director

Jarrold is motivated to support TLaWC to become both strong and sustainable in relation to its economic position, governance structures and organisational capacity so that it can fulfill the social and cultural needs of its membership.



ORGANISATION *structure*

EXECUTIVE STAFF



Matthew Burns
CEO

Matthew Burns is the CEO of TLaWC and a proud Taungurung man. He is also a Director of Greater Western Water

Corporation and an elected member for the metropolitan region on the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria, the body which operates as the voice for Aboriginal communities across the state, representing them in the next phase of the Treaty process.



Cameron Myrtle
Executive Manager

Camm is a proud Taungurung and family man. He is the Executive Manager of TLaWC's Corporate Services team and

aims to utilise his skills and experience to lead positive change at TLaWC and ultimately the Taungurung community. Camm has a strong corporate leadership background in banking and finance. Camm is responsible for finance, HR, health and safety, technology, workplace culture, communications, risk, procurement and office administration.



Sherryn Antonopoulos
Executive Manager

Sherryn is a proud Taungurung woman with a long history of involvement in Taungurung cultural activities. Prior to

taking up a management role with TLaWC, she was for a couple of years a member of the TLaWC Board and was in 2019 elected as Deputy Chair of the Board. Sherryn brings very strong corporate management experience to her role and is responsible for the Agreements division.



Bonnie Cavanagh
Executive Manager

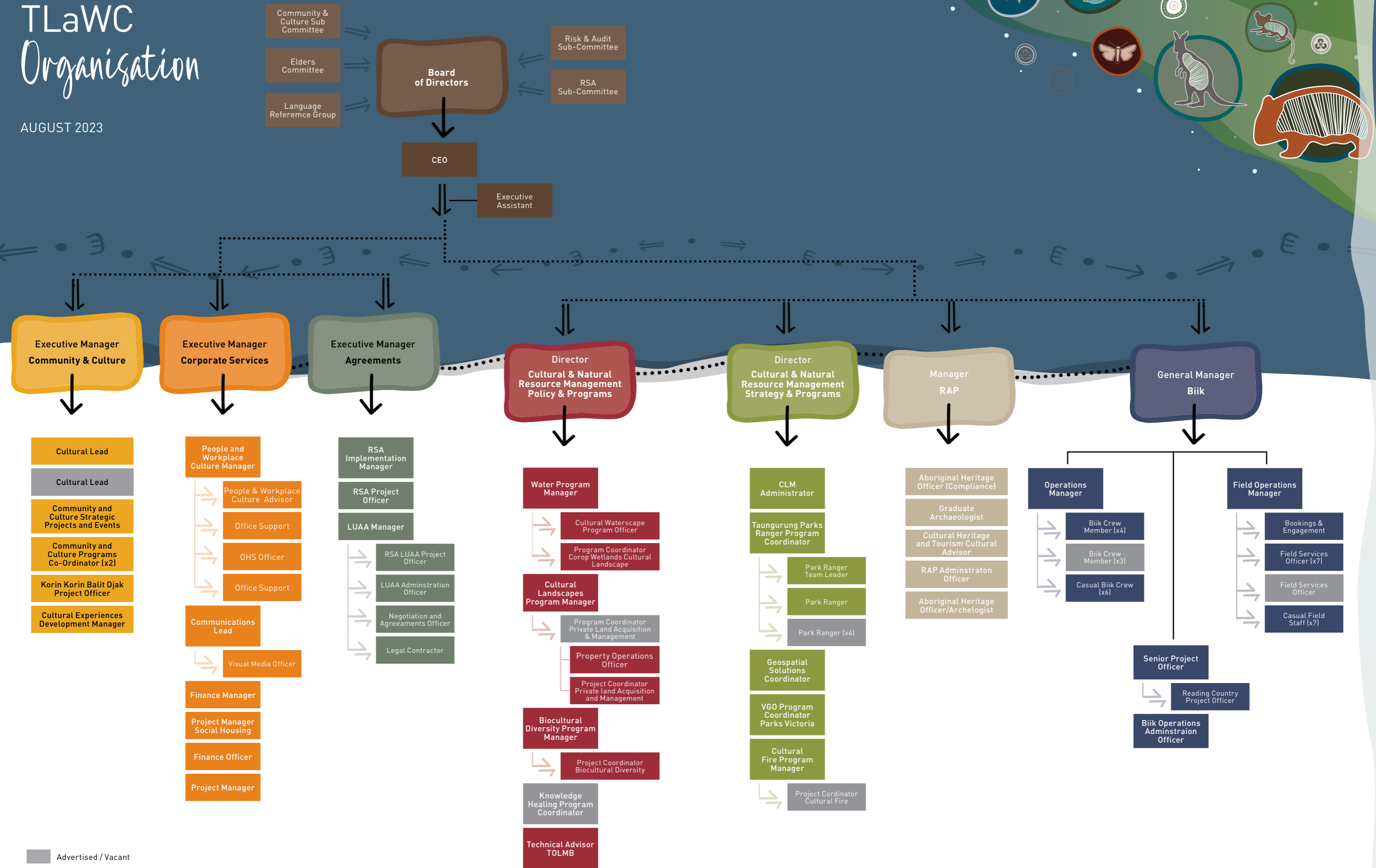
Bonnie is the Executive Manager, Community and Culture, with lifelong ties to Taungurung Country and the Broadford

community. As a Taungurung woman, Bonnie is proud to not only strongly represent her mob, but to support their aspirations and build an exciting future for the Taungurung Nation. Prior to joining the corporation, Bonnie was a highly respected and long-serving public service employee, bringing with her extensive experience in governance, project management, community and stakeholder engagement, communications, policy, and justice.



TLaWC Organisation

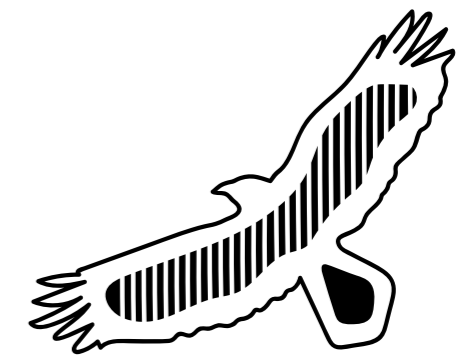
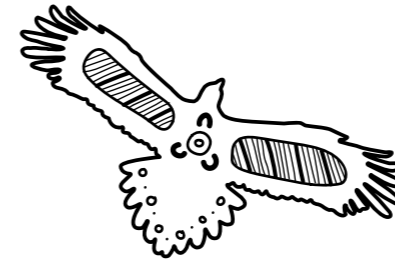
AUGUST 2023



Advertised / Vacant

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AHA 2006	Aboriginal Heritage Act
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ANCATL	Australian National Committee for Archaeology Teaching and Learning
ANU	Australian National University
Baan Ganalina	Guardians of Water
Biik CLM	Country – Cultural Land Management
BRV	Bushfire Recovery Victoria
CCAG	Community and Culture Advisory Group
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plans
CHP	Cultural Heritage Permits
CLM	Cultural Land Management
CSSP	Culturally Significant Species Plan
CVA	Cultural Values Assessments
Daada Gurnap Nhilam	Careful danger
DEECA	Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action
DJPR	Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety
Dhum Gaab	Yarn Up
FPSR	First Peoples - State Relations
GBCMA	Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
ICIP	Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property
ILSC	Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
LUA	Land Use Activity Agreement
LRG	Language Reference Group
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NRA	Natural Resource Agreement
NCCMA	North Central Catchment Management Authority
NOIs	Notice of Intents
VTOTPA	Participation Agreement
RSA	Recognition and Settlement Agreement
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
SFB	Strategic Fire Breaks
TLaWC	Taungurung Land and Waters Council
TOCC	Traditional Owner Corporation Caucus
TOLMA	Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement
TOLMB	Traditional Owner Land Management Board
TOLNRA	Traditional Owner Land Natural Resource Agreement
VEWH	Victorian Environmental Water Holder
VGA	Victorian Great Outdoors
VTOCLS	Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy
wawa biik	Hello Country
Yananyin gadhaba	We Walk Together
Yiyaga ba Wongarra	See and Know



Special thanks to photos by Simon Birch, Chris Sutton, Dee Barry, Kirsten Humphries, Jen Grindrod, Nicola Beautyman, Nadine Monger, Owen Cavanough, Ruby Honeysett, Voytek Lapinski, Rebecca McGrath and Amanda Williamson.

Art by Maddi Moser.

Design by Mazart Communications.



Ngun Godjin

