

NYERNILA

LISTEN

CONTINUOUSLY

ABORIGINAL CREATION STORIES OF VICTORIA

NYERNILA



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**CREATIVE
VICTORIA**



NYERNILA

LISTEN

CONTINUOUSLY

nyernila

nye

ny like the 'n' in new

e like the 'e' in bed

rn

a special kind of 'n'

i

i like the 'i' in pig

la

la

Message from the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages

This book represents a significant shift towards recognising the value of language in Aboriginal Culture. Language is ingrained in culture, stories and history. Culture is described as attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguish one group of people from another. Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art, from one generation to the next. These stories are the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next; they tell us about the land, the people and the rules to live our life by.

Language connects to spirit and the land. Languages uphold and reinforce Indigenous world-views held by previous generations. Reviving and maintaining language is core to reviving cultural and spiritual practices. Aboriginal knowledge is a resource to everyone and this publication provides an insight into the diversity and depth of Aboriginal people's connections to the land.

The stories were sourced in various ways via community language development workshops, community offerings and individual contributions.

For many Aboriginal communities the revival of their languages is a new and complex process that competes with community demands but rewards people with a renewed sense of identity and enthusiasm towards the possibilities. Language revival is an ongoing process and is currently at various stages across the state of Victoria and with support from VACL sees different approaches and outcomes.

On behalf of the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, I would like to thank the supporters and Creative Victoria for making this publication a reality but it would not have been possible without the generosity of the storytellers in sharing their culture and language, giving us a new perspective on the culturally rich Victorian landscape.

Paul Paton

Executive Officer

Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages

Mother Tongue

The publication *Nyernila – Listen Continuously: Aboriginal Creation Stories of Victoria* is unique. This uniqueness is differentiated by two significant and distinguishing features. It is the first contemporary compilation of Victorian Aboriginal Creation Stories told by Victorian Aboriginal People, and it is the first to extensively use languages of origin to tell the stories.

'Nyernila' to listen continuously – a Wergaia/Wotjobaluk word recorded in the 20th century. To listen continuously. What is meant by this term. What meaning is being attempted to be communicated by the speaker to the recorder? What is implied in this term? What is the recorder trying to translate and communicate to the reader?

'Nyernila' means something along the lines of what is described in Miriam Rose Ungemerr's 'dadirri' – deep and respectful listening in quiet contemplation of Country and Old People. This is how our Old People, Elders and the Ancestors teach us and we invite the reader to take this with them as they journey into the spirit of Aboriginal Victoria through the reading of these stories.

Our stories are our Law. They are important learning and teaching for our People. They do not sit in isolation in a single telling. They are accompanied by song, dance and visual communications; in sand drawings, ceremonial objects and body adornment, rituals and performance. Our stories have come from 'wanggalatung waliyt' – long, long ago – and remain ever-present through into the future.

Aboriginal people are culturally and linguistically diverse Peoples. Our languages come from an oral history tradition stretching back through time immemorial. Across Australia, in pre-European times, there were up to 700 languages being spoken. Through the impacts of invasion and the colonisation of our lands and the cultural genocide practices of the newcomers we were denied our mother tongue. Our Old People fought and died defending our Country. Families were massacred and forced onto missions where our cultural practices were banned. The legacy of this time is still reverberating through our communities.

All Aboriginal people prior to the arrival of the Europeans were multi-lingual, speaking up to or more than five languages. Today 145 are still being spoken with more than half of those endangered.

Across Victoria there are about 38 languages or dialects of origin. Many of those languages in Victoria have, in part, been retained within families and local communities. The few fluent speakers remaining belong to one or two languages.

However, despite the impacts of European culture our language has remained embedded within the cultural framework of families and communities. It has survived through our continuing kinship connections, our contemporary language of 'Aboriginal English' – a mixture of English, mother tongue words and phrases – and our cultural customs and stories handed down.

Today we are reviving and reawakening our mother tongue languages.

In this process we work with the sounds of our language; the sounds of Country and the knowledge handed down from the Old People. Language is connected to and is the voice of the Country it belongs to, just as we belong to the Country.

We have developed orthographies, sound and spelling systems, so we are able to read and write our language as well as speak it. Through this reclamation and revival process we gather our knowledge through our Elders and community. We re-dream and re-interpret the historical records; those messages left for us by our Old People.

To revive our language we need to make it current and relevant. Much of the vocabulary is from the 19th century and has no words/concepts for current lifestyles. To achieve this we are looking deeply into the meanings of the words, the ways in which our language is constructed and we are learning how our Old People adapted language, made new words and integrated new concepts to accommodate the changing world.

Aboriginal intellectual cultural property has been appropriated into publications and various other mediums since the arrival of Europeans. With this publication we are taking steps to reclaim our stories and languages and retell those stories in our own way, in our voices. It is a re-positioning of our inherent right to own and share our culture; a challenge for readers to consider.

Over the past 20 or more years with VACL leading the way, tireless, impassioned individuals and groups have dedicated themselves to carrying out language revival work across Victoria. VACL and all those who are travelling this collective journey of language revival must be commended and congratulated in bringing this landmark publication to fruition. It is and will remain a legacy for the future.

The stories for this publication were sourced from community, from the knowledge holders, custodians and keepers of those stories. We gathered the stories through community: in workshops specifically directed towards language development and story translation for 'Nyernila'; from individual and family group contributions; and most importantly through the spirit of generosity our Peoples have in their willingness to share our stories and our Culture.

Story, song, dance, movement, motif/symbol, painting and carving are integral parts of our languages. Our languages are the Voices of the Land. Remember, reclaim, revive and regenerate.

Vicki Couzens

Project Co-ordinator

Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages

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Spelling of Language words in this book

The spoken Aboriginal Languages of Victoria were recorded in writing using the Roman alphabet, as used in English. Therefore Aboriginal language sounds were rendered in many different spellings. And English letters are still used today to describe the sounds of Aboriginal Languages.

Through the process of Aboriginal Language reclamation, many aspects of language including spelling are now undergoing long and complex development processes in Aboriginal communities.

This means that the reader will sometimes find the same words – including language groups and place names – spelt in two or three different ways in the book, since this reflects the various uses of English letters by Aboriginal communities to render the sound of their language.

While the policy in this book has been to reference the VACL Map for the spelling of language groups and place names, other spellings have been included out of respect for authors and community preferences.

NB: Gunditjmara comprises the following language groups – Dhauwurd Wurrung, Wooloowoorroong, Kee woorroong, Koornkopanoot, Peek woorroong, Keerray woorroong, Tyakoort Woorroong and Gadubanud.



**‘...the language is very much
tied up to the culture as it is to
the Country and so language
revival must equal those things,
that’s what our Old People
taught us...’**

Doris Paton
Gunnai,
Monaro Ngarigo



BIDAWAL

Tharra and Googar

Tharra and Googar don't like each other. Tharra ngang Googar, Googar moonyuup munjari a medicine plant. Googar moonyuup buundani Tharra.

That is why Tharra and Googar don't like each other.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Goanna and the Snake

The goanna and the snake don't like each other. If Tharra bites Googar, then Googar will go and eat a medicine plant. Googar then comes back and kills Tharra.

That is why Tharra and Googar don't like each other.

This story was told by Bevan Harrison at a language camp in Mallacoota April 2011



Lace Monitor

Bidawal word list

buundani	kill	munjari	eat
googar	goanna	ngang	bite
moonyuup	go	tharra	snake

Sounds of Bidawal

a as in car	g as in goat	dj, dy, t or d these sounds are made by making a 't' or 'd' sound with the middle of the tongue on the roof of the mouth
oo as in blue	j as in jump	
uu as in foot	ny as in onion	
u as in hut	ng as in sing	
th as in three	n as in not	

This spelling and sound chart was developed at the Bidawal Language Camp in Mallacoota 2011. It is a preliminary chart for use in this book. Further community development of a definitive spelling and sound system by the community is an ongoing process.

The Big Snake

There was this big snake. Djidjigan, the Rainbow Serpent. He was huge, ngarandyil. He moved across the country making the valleys and hills, manan, marru, everything, he cut them with his tail, wirruk.

He came across the plains near Canberra, he came past Kosciuszko, he wound his way up Mount Goongerah and he lay his eggs there, big eggs, still here look all these big ones, the kooralmanbuyal, the serpent's eggs. Special country there.

He followed the Bundian Way along, he was on the Boorai, looking, looking for country, he was dunangngunladyan all the way. He went all the way, way past that Wilson's Promontory and when he finished his head, his duduk, was at Port Melbourne, right there near the Bay. He went everywhere.

Old people told me that story when they looked after me when I was a little kid. I still come up here to Mount Goongerah to see these buyal, these eggs. Goongerah country. I still dream about that snake.

By Clayton Harrison – Bidwal

*As told to Bruce Pascoe and Lyn Harwood on Mount Goongerah and at Sandy Point,
May 2011*

Boulders at Mount Ellery

Sounds of Bidawal

a as in car

oo as in blue

uu as in foot

u as in hut

th as in three

g as in goat

j as in jump

ny as in onion

ng as in sing

n as in not

dj, dy, t or **d** these sounds are made by making a 't' or 'd' sound with the middle of the tongue on the roof of the mouth

This spelling and sound chart was developed at the Bidawal Language Camp in Mallacoota 2011. It is a preliminary chart for use in this book. Further development of a definitive spelling and sound system by the community is an ongoing process.

Nrung-a Nargune

Nargune was a cave-dweller nanma tier in gingin moogaan ma nanma gingin Mitchell Yarram. Jilly had yaail caves, il should a Gunnai yangan janana noonga jilly was yad-ba mangina gingin cave il nandha kaang barrat. Woothamal kanu jilly kur-nin-ger a wal munga Nargune, jilly nulla-gullum-bai it, always bren-bren-garrarook gingin nurnba ganai. Jilly kehan not be buladyin!

Barrath cave jilly had was munga Lake Tyers; il ngalko nurnba ganai would dare to yangan janana. Gunnai woorcat kooteganman had a pandean thoolo noonga janana thindu cave, but she disappeared, so ngalko kooto kalandaningat wunman gingin pandean berndoo berndoo berndoop.

Nargune was magleanman a wallung girtgan wallung except makoote his bang, birndang il bret il ngalko kooto knew nanma these were made ma. Jilly was always on gingin doona makoote nurnba gunai in Gippsland il nyeeanbulla were tee-nar-gun ma noonga.

Translated by Hollie Johnson

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Nargune was a cave-dweller who lived in the valley of what is now the Mitchell River. He had many caves, and should an Aboriginal go near him, he was pulled into the cave and never seen again. If he threw a spear munga Nargune, Nargune returned it, always wounding the black fellow. He cannot be killed!

Another cave he had was munga Lake Tyers; and no black fellow would dare to go near it. An Aboriginal woman once had a fight with him near this cave, but she disappeared, so no-one knows how the fight ended.

Nargune was like a rock; all stone except for his chest, arms and hands and no one knew what these were made of. He was always on the look out for black fellows in Gippsland and they were frightened of him.

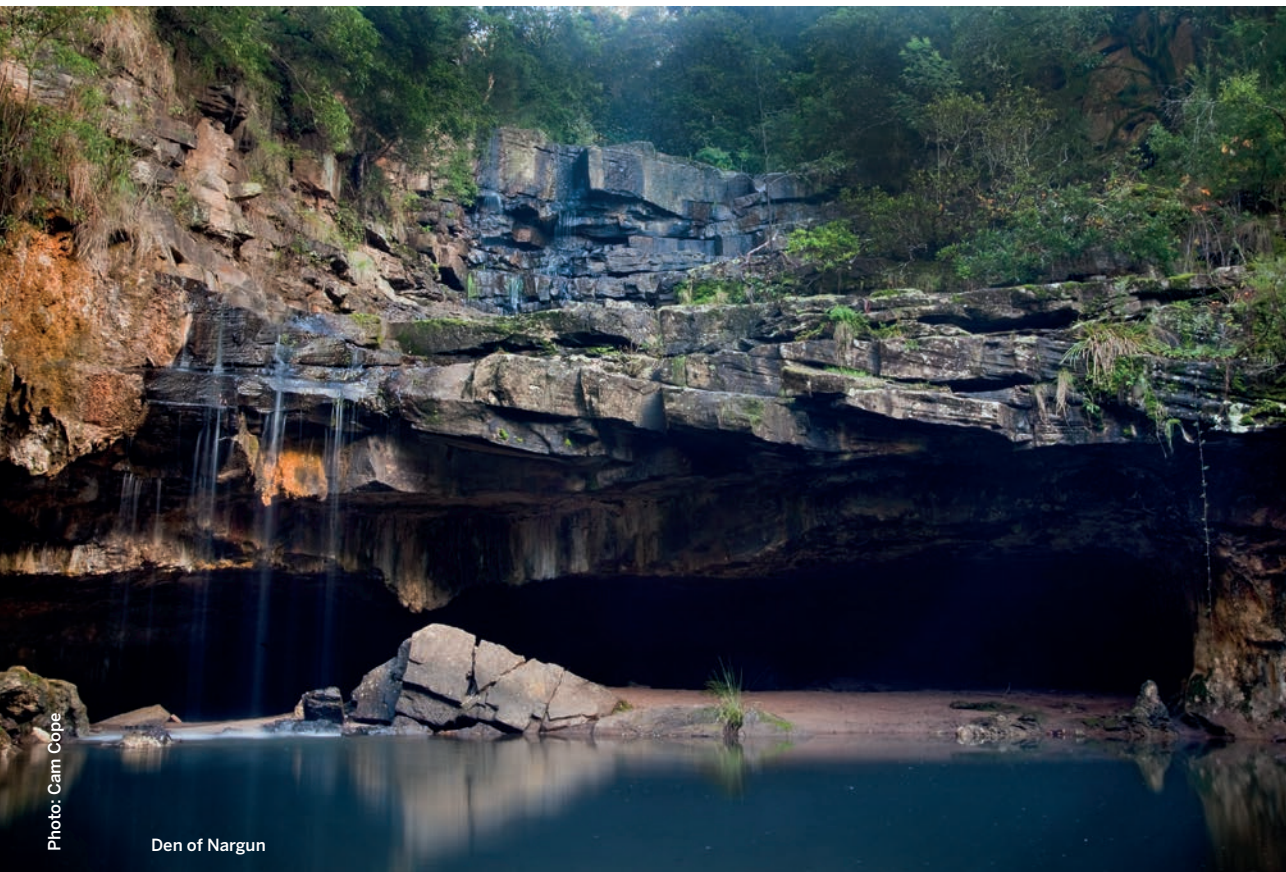


Photo: Cam Cope

Den of Nargun

Sounds of Gunai/Kurnai

a as in but

oo as in foot

a as in but

e as in get

u as in out

rr rolled r sound

ng as in sing

i as in lick

Gingin Legend ma Burr-narti-dyahrn Kitty or Bolgan

Burr-narti-dyahrn Kitty ma gingin Krauatungalung gaunay-way-yung died an unfortunate burraring: she was hunted thanga il wal by a member ma gingin Tatungalung gaunay-way-yung, her limbs being pinned thanga mangina gingin nullung ma a lagoon on Boole Poole, her brug, baht-ginnah plakoma il pushed thanga-thanga her bang.

A relative ma gingin tootbuken, walking mangina gingin area wariga a strange whirtbran, wunmangal jilly knew lung to his brauung, tier in gingin mrartj world in gingin warrun. Manana makoote jilly started gill wurt thoolo his tan mangina gingin nullung il felt gingin barrun. Gingin machta was recognised, by gingin pering barrun it is said ketchoon on wangoot bookang gingin whirtbran kehan be wariga in gingin area.

Translated by Hollie Johnson

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Legend of Hopping Kitty or Bolgan

Hopping Kitty (a member of the Krauatungulung tribe and thus named because of an early hip fracture) died an unfortunate death. She was hunted down and speared by a member of the Tatungalung tribe, her limbs being pinned down into the mud of a lagoon on Boole Poole, her head cut off and pushed under her chest (the method used when secreting a body).

A relative of the unfortunate girl walking into the area heard a strange whistle, which he knew belonged to his cousin, now living in the spirit world in the sky. Therefore he started digging with his toes into the mud and felt the bones. The body was recognised, of course, by the ill-fitting hip bone. It is said that on some nights the whistle can be heard in the area.

Sounds of Gunai/Kurnai

a as in but	u as in out	ng as in sing
oo as in foot	e as in get	i as in lick
a as in but	rr rolled r sound	

Jiddelek

The story of Jiddelek

Long ago there was a big frog and his name was Jiddelek. He went to the river to have a drink. He began to drink the water from the water hole, then from the creek, then the river, 'til there was nothing left.

All the animals were thirsty. There was no water anywhere. The animals called a meeting, they decided that one of them should try to make Jiddelek laugh. Turtle and platypus played leapfrog. That didn't make Jiddelek laugh. Duck and bird flew around. That didn't make Jiddelek laugh. Bataluk strutted to and fro puffing out his stomach. Jiddelek was nearly asleep.

Snake said, 'Let me try'. He started a wiggly, squiggly dance. He twisted and nearly tied himself in a knot. Then came a rumbling noise from Jiddelek and it grew louder and louder. His mouth opened and he began to laugh. A mighty gush of water came out of his mouth, all the water came back to the water holes and the rivers.

Gunai/Kurnai Traditional Custodians

Gunai/Kurnai word list

Bataluk	goanna
Jiddelek	frog

Sounds of Gunai/Kurnai

a as in but	e as in get	ng as in sing
oo as in foot	u as in out	i as in lick
a as in but	rr rolled r sound	

The Story of the First Man and Woman

There was a time when the first Gunai, who was Borun the Pelican, came down from the mountains of the northwest and reached the level country. He crossed the Latrobe River near Sale and continued his journey to Port Albert; he was alone carrying a bark canoe on his head. As he was walking he heard a constant tapping sound but, look as he may, he could not find the source of it. At last he reached the deep waters of the inlet and put his canoe down. Much to his surprise, he saw a woman sitting in it.

She was Tuk the Musk Duck. He was very pleased to see her and she became his wife and the mother of all the Gunai.

Gunai/Kurnai Traditional Custodians

Female Musk Duck

Sounds of Gunai/Kurnai

a as in but

oo as in foot

a as in but

u as in out

e as in get

rr rolled r sound

ng as in sing

l as in lick

The Southern Cross and Nerran the Moon

Nerran was a mighty warrior and fearless hunter.

Koote wurrin, after travelling a long way he couldn't find any napan at all.

At last he tackan Ngurran on the other side of the yarram but the water was very deep and he couldn't get across.

He searched for a way to get across the yarram when he noticed a parrawatti kallack further down the stream. But Brewin, a mischievous spirit, was hiding nearby.

He liked to move about like a whirlwind and play tricks on people.

As Nerran reached the middle of yarram, Brewin turned the parrawatti kallack over and Nerran fell off into the deep water and he drowned.

Nerran's spirit went into the sky where he is now, Nerran the moon.

Ngurran also went to the sky and he is now the Southern Cross.

Nerran still hunts through the sky trying to catch Ngurran.

Translated by Lynnette Solomon-Dent

Gunai/Kurnai word list

Brewin	mischievous spirit	Ngurran	Emu
kallack	sticks	parrawatti	big
koote	one	tackan	see, look
napan	food	wurrin	day, sun
Nerran	moon	yarram	river

Sounds of Gunai/Kurnai

a as in but	r sound
oo as in foot	ng as in sing
e as in get	i as in lick
rr rolled	u as in out



The Learning Walk

My name is Nyarman. My family belongs to the Monero tribe. This is our story.

A long time ago, when I was a little girl, my family decided to take the children on a learning walk, as they had done when they were small. The learning walk would take us from the very high mountain we lived beside, where the wide rolling water touches the land.

When it was time to leave, the women gathered up all their belongings. On their hips and shoulders they carried grass baskets for food, kangaroo rugs for sleeping under, and their babies. We older children walked with them. Our only clothing was made of possum skins wrapped around our bodies.

All the men walked ahead with their spears and boomerangs, always ready to protect the women and children from harm.

Before nightfall the whole family would look for a place to camp. We children helped our mothers gather up bushes to make a shelter to sleep in out of the cold night air. We called this shelter a mia-mia.

The men made a fire to cook our food. After everyone had eaten we lay down in the mia-mia to sleep. The men would keep watch, sitting around the fire in their possum skin cloaks waiting for the moon to come up. It was only then that they could lie down beside the fire and go to sleep.

Then the moon would watch over the camp while the men slept too.

The next day we got up early and moved on. It was a very long walk, over the mountains and down through the gullies where the clear water was flowing. All along the banks tall bushy ferns were growing and under the ferns there were rocks covered with soft green moss.

I found a large rock to sit on while I watched water flowing by. It called to the birds playing in the trees and the tiny flowers in the grass. 'What a magical place this is', I thought to myself. 'I wonder if it will be the same in the place where the water rolls over and over before it touches the land?'

In a few days we were travelling through a different kind of country. This land was flat and swampy, not like our own high mountains.

The men lit fires to chase the kangaroo ahead of us. This made the kangaroos and emus easier to spear as they moved out onto the open land and it made the way easier for the women and children coming along behind.

Today we moved on again. All day we walked until we came to a wide river. It had started in the high hills not far from our country and now it curved its way across the plains.

There was no way we could cross the river until the men made some canoes. The men decided to make a more permanent camp using bark from the trees to build stronger shelters.

We stayed there by the river for a long time. Soon it was getting cold. Bunna was beginning. We didn't mind though. There was plenty of fish and kangaroo to eat and the kangaroo skins kept us warm at night.

After the men had gathered enough food for us all, they would light a fire to signal that it was time to make camp and to cook what they had caught. Everybody was always very tired and hungry by the end of the day.

Now we had reached the plains, we camped for many days. Each day my Ngujarn and the rest of the women and children searched for berries and yams. Yams are my favorite because they are crunchy and sweet. I like them cooked in the ashes of the fire as well.

After Bunna had passed we went swan egging in the swamp. It was great fun for us kids because we could play hide and seek in the reeds. The men caught water birds by throwing their boomerangs. We always had plenty of fresh food because each day everyone helped to gather things for us all to share. We just took what we needed, not too much, that way nothing was wasted.

Now it was time to move on again. I was beginning to wonder if we were ever going to get to where the rolling water meets the land.

NGARIGU

'How much further do we have to walk?' I asked my Ngujarn. 'Not far now,' she said, 'I can smell the salt water'. Soon I, too, could smell the salt water but I felt afraid because I could hear a loud booming noise. 'Do not be afraid Nyarman,' said my Ngubby, 'it's only the water rolling onto the land and then it goes back again to its bed.

I felt better then. All the boories ran over the huge hill that looked like yellow earth and tumbled down the other side. We felt so happy that we chased each other all along the yellow earth where the rolling water touches the land.

We were so fascinated by the yellow earth that we rolled and played in it all day. Then we all walked along the edge of the water towards the place where the fresh water ran out into the rolling water. This place was known as Wingan.

Soon it was time to make camp again. We stayed for many days, feasting on the fish, mussels and oysters that we found plenty of in the lake.

Then it was time to move on again. We packed up our baskets and kangaroo skins and walked on to the place my elders knew as Mallacoota, the place of many waters.

At Mallacoota the men sat down and decided to have a corroboree. This corroboree was to be a special one so women and boories were not allowed to see what was going on.

Being curious, I hid behind a tree to watch while the men painted themselves with white clay in readiness for the corroboree. Before long, I fell asleep and didn't wake up until sunrise. Mallacoota is a special place because the spirits are there to watch over you, just as they watched over me and put me to sleep so I couldn't watch the corroboree.

Now it was the middle of Nimbing. Our tribe was ready to leave and go back to our home land. This time it would be easier because we only had to follow our tracks back the way we had come so many months before.

Where we had lit the fires on our way to the sea the new grass and leaves were growing which meant plenty of food.

I love Nimbing. Everywhere it's so fresh and green with all the new growth and young animals to see.

During the long walk back home to Monero land the tribe travelled to a sacred mountain. We made camp where my Ancestors have been coming every Ngooma. Inside this cave it was very dark and many, many, many moths lived there. We lit a fire and put green bushes on it to make lots of smoke which made the moths fall down, then we gathered them up to cook on the coals.



Yam Flower

Moth eating time was a happy time for celebrating because it meant our long learning walk was nearly over.

Soon we would be back home, the place we had started from.

I sat by the fire thinking. Thinking of my people who walked each year to the place where the water rolls over and over and back again.

And I think about my own learning walk, the walk that you have shared.

.....
Told by Aunty Rachel Mullett – Monero-Ngarigo Elder

This story is based on the annual walk of the Monero people from their mountain homelands to Mallacoota. They walked approximately 300km each way. They followed the Snowy River to the mouth and along the coast to Mallacoota and the return journey took the people across the Errinundra Plateau.

Ngarigu word list

boories	children	ngubby	grandfather
bunna	winter	ngujarn	mother
mia-mia	hut	nimbing	Spring
ngooma	Summer		

Uncle Boobla's Story

One day three small boorabarls decide to sneak away from the camp and go for a swim in the lake. They had to walk a long way to get there. By the time they got to the lake they were feeling very hungry. Now the boorabarls knew about the bumlbers in the lake; bumlbers are the shellfish their nguajarn would gather and fetch back to the camp.

But the boorabarls never gathered bumlbers before; that was women's work. Only nguajarns and mullagarng did that. So they sat at the edge of the water and groaned with hunger. Bimm said 'If we don't find something soon we will be too weak to walk back to camp and we will get into big trouble for sneaking away.' Narby, the youngest boorabarl said, 'Let us try and find some bumlbers'. So in the water they went, each of them carrying a stick because they thought they had to dig to find bumlbers. They stayed in the shallow water and poked about with their sticks. But while they were doing this, they didn't see the three sneaky joongars following them around until one wrapped his long arms around Bimm's legs. Bimm screamed with fright, 'Something has got me!' The others ran over to help but found there was more than one joongar there, so they started to splash the water with their sticks to scare the joongars away. But they didn't know that if you scare a joongar it squirts out black inky stuff so they can escape.

Now all this time, the boories didn't know that an old warrior of the tribe had followed them and was sitting on the hill watching over them. When the boorabarls saw what was happening they forgot they were hungry and ran out of the water screaming with fright. They ran so fast past the old warrior they didn't see him. They ran on and on until they disappeared over the hill towards the camp. The old warrior never stopped laughing for a long time to come and so did the whole camp. And from that day on the three boorabarls were known as the disappearing boories, even though they never sneaked away, ever again.

Told by Auntie Rachel Mullett – Monero-Ngarigo Elder



Pippies

Ngarigu word list

Bimm	brother/cousin	joongars	octopus
boorabarl/s	boy/boys	mullagarng	girl
boories	children	ngujarn	mother
bumblers	shell food		

Nimbing

One day a little boorabarl and mullagarng ran to their nguarn and said
'Nguarn, nguarn, Nimbing came to our land last night.'

Their nguarn asked, 'How can you tell if it was Nimbing?'

'Well', said the boories, 'there are new eggs in the boojarngs nest, new leaves
on the trees, new fresh grass, fresh sweet yams and the water is singing in
the creek.'

'Well my boories, I am pleased you have remembered Nimbing, for she is the
most beautiful of all our Dreamtime.'

Told by Aunty Rachel Mullett – Monero-Ngarigo Elder

Nesting Fantail

Ngarigu word list

nimbing	spring	ngujarn	mother
boorabarl	boy	boories	children
mullagarng	girl	boojarngs	birds

**‘...I leave the next legacy
from the old unseen legacies
of our Ancestors...’**

Carolyn Briggs
Boon Wurrung



The Journey of the iilk – iilkyawa

The months of February and March were known to the Boon Wurrung as weegabilnye-weeny.

During this season, yel-in-wa became cooler as the ngamaee began to grow tired. Gareealngalinggu. Weegabilnye-weeny was also known as the iilk season. The female iilk began their yawawa Birrarung, wurneet that ran into nairm. The iilk had grown marrmbool on the food in Birrarung and the wurneet and baany taageek surrounding the nairm.

The female iilk were caught in long woven traps as they yawoneit wurneet. But many iilk began yawa, travelling out through weegabeel wurneet channel of nairm and into warreeny.

Once the iilk left, they would not be seen for woorddyalyal.

The ngamaee grew weegabeel, changing from Manemeetto Beerreen.

With the arrival of Pareip – when the murnong and gyeem apple flowered – the iilk began ngalinggu from their yawa.

The nglinggu iilk was celebrated through the ngargee held during Pareip.

The bagurrk of the Boon Wurrung decorated their yarra with murnong flowers and purple flower of the gyeem apple. They drummed on drums made from walert skins stretched tightly between their barring. They yuuring-tilbuk with a rhythm that represented the yuuring-tilbuk of the iilk as they made their yawa. The guleeny ngargee to the rhythm created by bagurrk.

The iilk that ngalinggu were salty but marrmbool after their yawabiik. They were caught in the iilk traps, long funnel shapes carefully woven by bagurrk.

Some of the iilk were roasted over wiing, the marrmbool causing them munip to flare. Some were preserved. They were hung above the weeny burtya nuntil they were dry. Then they were hung in the branches of tarrang, dhangayan mulugu.

The yawa iilk provided certainty for the Boon Wurrung. The weegabeel people had always told them that as surely as the ngamai would rise every yel-lin-wa, the iilk would ngalinguin Pareip. The iilk worrdyyalyal yawa and ngalinggu each year was a sign of monamit.

In good years, when the biik had been cared for, the laws of Bundjil obeyed, the iilk would breed in woordyyalyal and return in Pareip woordyyalyal. They would grow marrm boolon the tubers and gugukbaanytaageek and provide the Boon Wurrung with a steady supply of food during wygabilnye-weeny.

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Translated by Fay Stewart-Muir

BOON WURRUNG

Boon Wurrung word list

baanytaageek	swamp	nairm	Port Phillip Bay
baanytageek	swamps	ngalinggu	returned, come back
bagurrk	women	ngamaee	sun
barring	knee	ngamai	sun
beerreen	no more sun, Winter	ngargee	celebrations, dance
biik	land	pareip	Spring
birrarung	Yarra River, 'river of mists'	tarrang	trees
Bundjil	eagle/creator	wa	to or from a place
burtyan	smoked	walert	possum
dhangayan	eaten	warreeny	sea, ocean
gareeal	Summer rain	weegabeel	old
guguk	mosquitos	Weegabeelnye-weeny	Old Man Sun
guleeny	men	weegabeelwurmeet	old river
guyeem	kangaroo	weeny	fire
iilk	eels	wiing	coals
manemeet	Autumn	woorrdyalyal	many months
marrmbool	fat	wurneet	creek
monamit	plenty	yawa	journey, long
mulugu	later	yawawa	long journey away
munip	coals, embers	yawoneit	swam
murnong	murnong daisy	yel-in-wa	day
		yuuringtilbuk	beat

Sounds of Boon Wurrung

u as in put or cook

a as in pasta

o as in hot

e as in bed

ee as in big

ii as in sleep

aa as in pass

uu as in put, but a long u

b (p at end of words) somewhere between a 'b' and a 'p' but 'p' at the end of words

t somewhere between a 'd' and a 't'

g (k at end of words) somewhere between 'g' and 'k', but 'k' at end of words

ng as in sing (often at the start of words in Boon Wurrung)

rt 't' sound but with the tip of the tongue curled backwards behind the gum ridge

dj like English 'j'

th a 'd' sound made with the tongue against or between the teeth

l the same as English 'l'

rl 'l' sound made but with the tongue curled back behind the gum ridge

rn 'n' sound made but with the tongue curled back behind the gum ridge

ny 'o' sound made with the middle of the tongue on the roof of the mouth

m the same as English 'm'

n the same as English 'n'

nh the middle of the tongue at the back of the teeth while making an 'n' sound

rr a rolled 'r' sound as in the Scottish pronunciation of round

r an English 'r' sound as in round

Most of the words in this story follow new Boon Wurrung spelling using the alphabet above.

Some words have been used in written form for many years so are just spelt as they have been for many years, for example 'womindjeka' welcome.

Some words are borrowed by Boon Wurrung from Woiewurrung and Taungurung our language neighbours. These words were originally recorded from these neighbouring languages but it is likely they were Boon Wurrung words as well.

The Filling of the Bay – The Time of Chaos



Port Phillip Bay

Many years ago the biik we now call greater Melbourne extended right out to the warreeny. Nairn (Port Phillip Bay) was then a large flat grassy plain. The Yarra River, as it is known today, flowed out across this flat plain into the warreeny. For the Boon Wurrung, this wurneet was known as Birrarung (the river of mists).

Later this wurneet is called Birrarung.

This large plain was covered in buath and tarrang biik on which the Boon Wurrung men hunted gyeem and barramaeel. The bagurrk cultivated the murnong. They collected food from the wurneet and the warreeny and harvested the iilk that migrated through there every year.

BOON WURRUNG

The Boon Wurrung were the custodians of their biik but traded with and welcomed people from other parts of the Kulin Nation. They obeyed the laws of Bundjil, who travelled as an eagle, and Waang who travelled as a crow.

One day – many, many years ago – there came a time of chaos and crisis. The Boon Wurrung and the other Kulin nations were in conflict. They argued and fought. They neglected their biik. The native murnong was neglected. The animals were over killed and not always eaten. The gurnbak were caught during their spawning season. The iilk were not harvested.

As this chaos grew the warreeny became angry and began to rise. The wurneet became flooded and eventually the whole flat plain was covered in baany. It threatened to flood their whole barerarerungar.

The people became frightened and went to Bundjil, their creator and spiritual leader. They asked Bundjil to stop the warreeny from rising.

Bundjil was angry with his people, and he told them that they would have to change their ways if they wanted to save their land. The people thought about what they had been doing and made a promise to follow Bundjil.

Bundjil walked out to the warreeny, raised his tjeera and directed the warreeny to stop rising. Bundjil then made the Boon Wurrung promise that they would respect the laws.

The baany never subsided but stayed to create a large bay that the Boon Wurrung called Nairm. Today it is known as Port Phillip Bay. The warreeny took away much of the biik of the Boon Wurrung and much of their barerarerungar was reduced to a narrow strip of coastline.

The Boon Wurrung learnt from their mistakes. They returned to their old values and the laws of Bundjil. They took greater care of the biik of Bundjil and the bubup of Bundjil.

BOON WURRUNG

They met with the other Kulin people and sorted out their differences through sports, debates and dance.

One of the most important laws that Bundjil required to be obeyed was for Boon Wurrung people to always welcome visitors, and to require all visitors to make a promise that they would obey the laws of Bundjil, not hurt the biik of Bundjil and not harm the bubup of Bundjil.

Today, the wurneet that once flowed through this large flat plain still flows under the nairm.

Told by Aunty Carolyn Briggs

Boon Wurrung word list

baany	water	gumbak	fish
bagurrk	woman	guyeem	kangaroo
barerarerungar	country	iilk	eels
barramaeel	emu	murnong	yam daisy
biik	land	nairm	Port Phillip Bay
birrarrung	Yarra River	tarrang biik	woodlands
buath	grass	tjeera	spear
bubup	child	warreeny	sea
Galen-barreeam	east ocean	wurneet	river
guleeny	man		

The Durrung of the Yan-yan

In my lalal's day, there were no supermarkets. The Birrarung Yaluk was their 'supermarket' providing the natural resources for the survival of the Wurundjeri gulinya. The yaluk is like veins in Bliik, winding and turning, bringing to life everything it touches, giving our gulinya fresh baan, duat and bundabun to hunt as tucker. We camped close to yaluk for this reason.

Many years ago in the 'Dreamtime', there was a yan-yan who asked Wirrirrap to give him special skills and power to be a great hunter, to provide tucker and help for Wurundjeri gulinya. Wirrirrap looked into the durrung of the yan-yan and believed him to be sincere, so Wirrirrap granted the yan-yan his wish. The yan-yan became the greatest hunter the gulinya had ever known, even better than his mama and lalal.

As time went on the yan-yan became ngabun-bambunya and thought only of himself, and did not want to share with the Wurundjeri. He became a buladu gaang yan-yan. One day he was in his gurrong yana fishing, where Badger Creek meets the Yarra River along the boundaries of Coranderrk. When he came to a fork in the yaluk, he thought to himself, 'Which turn will I take?' He decided to take the left fork of the yaluk. Then from nowhere buladu ngurndabil and djirringu appeared, and the yaluk became very rough from the murnmut, and tipped the yan-yan into the yaluk. He was so bambunya that he would be swept downstream he asked Wirrirrap for help.

Wirrirrap appeared and said to the yan-yan, 'Just like the fork in the yaluk, as in life, we can choose which way to go. When we go the wrong way, and think only of ourselves, we become ngabun-bambunya. Alternatively, we can take the right fork, be humble and share with the Wurundjeri and remember that every one of us is of value to the world.'

Sounds of Woiwurrung

Vowels

a like the 'u' in but
aa as in cart
e as in bed
ai as in eye
i as in bit
ay as in play

o as in hot
ee as in sleep
u as in put
oor as in core
oi as in oy

Consonants

g as in gag
dh/th said together with tongue pushing on back of top teeth
ny as in new
dj as in jam
ng as in sing

rd/rt said together, while rolling tongue backwards
ngg as in anger
m as in mum
ndj as in danger
n as in thin
l as in lily



Badgers Creek

There was a great clap of ngurndabil. Wirrirrap turned the yan-yan into a dulaiwurrung and said, 'You have become ngabun-bambunya and a buladu gaang yan-yan thinking only of yourself. Like the dulaiwurrung, you can't tell the front from the back. As with the fork in the yaluk, you have to make the decisions for yourself.'

'From now on you can swim the yaluk as a dulaiwurrung to teach you respect for Wurundjeri, to be humble and to keep the culture alive.' That is why the dulaiwurrung looks like it does to this very day.

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Told by Aunty Doreen Garvey-Wandin

Woiwurrung word list

baan	water	gurrong	canoe
bambunya	afraid, frightened	lalal	grandfather
biik	country	mama(n)/mamu(n)	father
birrarrung	Yarra River	murnmut	wind
buladu	great, big	ngabun-bambunya	bold, arrogant 'not afraid'
buladu gaang	Greedy 'big nose'	ngurndabil	thunder
bundabun	tortoise	Wirrirrap	magic man, traditional doctor
djirringu	lightning	yaluk	river
duat	fish	yana	go, going
dulaiwurrung	platypus	yan-yan	young man
durrung	heart		
gulinya	men, people		

The Wiik Wiik who Bia the Bunbunarik

Not far from where Mansfield now is, there lived a mi-anggu wiik wiik, all alone in the baa bap bul.

She was mi-anggu, and used to yagut and marrma wiybo wiyalak and boorniy who yalbilum away from yilam.

In one of the Gulinj yilam some warrit away from her there was a very burndap wiybo wiyalak, so burndap that he was yumaagu yadabiling. Since yumaagu liked him he thought that he would be safe anywhere, so he went from one yilam to another by himself. When he got there bak would Wumindjika him and wongga him pieces of walert to dhanga. But one garrimiin he yagal, and no one knew where he was, until they mang mang the mi-anggu wiik wiik who was always gunga bunbunarik.

In their wurrbun the Gulinj went to Bundjil, the Maaman, and they asked him to durnmin the wiybo wiyalak to them.

Bundjil was very murrup for them and told Gawarn, the Spiny Ant-eater, to go and durnmin him. So Gawarn daamborro down under the mi-anggu wiik wiik's yilam and found the wiyalak, who was not nortgana, but very bandu. And Bundjil said to the Gulinj, 'You must not let wiybo wiyalak yalbilum away from the yilam'. Then he told the bubup, 'Let that be a lesson to you'. He went back to his yilam, which was in the woora woora.

Told by Aunty Lee Healy (Patterson-Edmonds)



Echidna

Taungurung word list

baa bap bul	bush	mi-anggu	hideous, wicked
bak	people	murrup	sorry
bandu	frightened	nortgana	hurt
bia	stole	walert	possum
boorniy	girl	warrit	distant, distance
bubup	child	wiik wiik	old woman
bunbunarik	children	wiybo	little
Bundjil	Eagle, creator	wiylak	boy
burndap	nice	wongga	give
daamborro	burrowed	woora woora	sky
dhanga	eat	Wumindjika	welcome
durnmin	bring back, restore	wurrbun	sadness
garrimiin	day	yadabilling	favourite, darling
Gawarn	Spiny ant-eater	yagal	disappeared
Gulinj	Kulin	yagut	find
gunga	taking	yalbilum	wandered, wander
Maaman	Father (Bundjil)	yilam	camp
mang mang	remember	yumaagu	everyone
marrma	keep		

The sounds of Taungurung

a as in but	u as in put	iy as in eye	ng as in sing
aa as in cart	i as in bit	e as in bed	nj as in new
o as in hot	oor as in core	ii as in sleep	dj as in gem

Why the Marram Has a Moibo and the Wariin Does Not

Marram, the kangaroo and Wariin, the wombat were once great djirrap and shared everything. One garrimiin when wariin made a yilam for himself in a mirring underground and guwambi there in comfort during the muda berrin nights.

One very daaban garrimiin, marram came to his djirrap and asked to be allowed to yilam in the mirring, to dry his yarri by the wiinj. But wariin would not let him wandja in. A djilba ensued, in which marram cut off wariin-birrm moibo with a blow of his gagiin, but as he was running off wariin drove his guyon at the base of his ngarrak where it stuck fast. This is the reason why marram-birrm carries a heavy moibo which sticks straight out behind them, and wariin-birrm has no moibo.

Told by Aunty Lee Healy (Patterson-Edmonds)

Taungurung word list

berrin	Winter	moibo	tail
daaban	wet	muda	cold
djilba	quarrel	ngarrak	spine
djirrap	friend	ngarrak	back
gagiin	axe	wandja	come
garrimiin	day	wariin	wombat
guwambi	sleep	wiinj	fire
guyon	spear	yarri	fur
marram	kangaroo	yilam	shelter, home
mirring	hole		

The sounds of Taungurung

a as in but	u as in put	iy as in eye	ng as in sing
aa as in cart	i as in bit	e as in bed	nj as in new
o as in hot	oor as in core	ii as in sleep	dj as in gem

The First Taungurung Women

Balayang, the Bat, Bundjil's brother, was at a place called Booerrgoen, on the Goulburn Gurnang about twelve miles above stream from Yea. He was amusing himself by thumping the surface of the water with his maanong, and making it splash. As he thumped away, the water became thick, and it thickened until it became mud.

Balayang could no longer see through it, so he took a bough from a darrang and divided the mud with it. He then perceived something in the mud, so he bent the bough into a hook, and put it in the mud. Presently he saw four maanong, then two gawang, and then two marram. He fished them out of the mud, and saw they were two badjurr bootor.

Balayang named one gannawarra, the Black Swan, and the other gurruk, the Native Companion, and he brought them to Bundjil, the Great Kulin, who gave them to the kulin bootor he had made. Bundjil put gooyan into the maanong of the kulin bootor, and ordered them to hunt marram, and to the badjurr bootor he gave gannan, and ordered them to dig for wuleli and barrm. Then he told the kulin bootor and badjurr bootor to live together.

Told by Aunty Lee Healy (Patterson-Edmonds)

Taungurung word list

badjurr bootor	women	gurruk	native companion
barrm	roots (edible)	kulin	man
darrang	tree	kulin bootor	men
gannan	digging stick	maanong	hand
gannawarra	black swan	marram	bodies, kangaroo
gawang	head	warrangwan	hunt
gooyan	spear	wuleli	yam tuber
gurnang	river		

The sounds of Taungurung

a as in but	i as in bit	e as in bed	dj as in gem
aa as in cart	oor as in core	ii as in sleep	y as in yes
o as in hot	iy as in eye	ng as in sing	
u as in put	oo as in cool	nj as in new	

The Two Feuding Volcanoes

A long, long time ago, long before anyone but the Traditional People walked our Country, our lands, rivers, mountains and animals alike, all had magical life. They had personalities, purpose, speech and they could think for themselves.

This is a story of two volcanoes named Tarrengower and Lalgambook.

Tarrengower in the Dja Dja Wurrung means to be big and heavy and indeed he was just that; big, bold, wise and a very proud old volcano who had become very tired throwing out rocks and lava and preferred to sit humbly watching over the plains.

Another volcano called Lalgambook was a young, loud and cheeky volcano that started to challenge old Tarrengower's wisdom and authority, and began grumbling and building up anger towards the old volcano. But Tarrengower, being the wise old volcano that he was, decided he should just try to ignore this cheeky little volcano.

Lalgambook grew even angrier that Tarrengower wasn't acknowledging his threats and started to put on a display of smoke, ash and brimstone to impress the land and animals who were also watching, but this didn't intimidate the wise old Tarrengower. Instead he just laughed at Lalgambook.

Lalgambook became so frustrated that he began to throw large rocks at Tarrengower who grumbled with annoyance at this cheeky volcano and Tarrengower now began to taunt young Lalgambook by telling him he wasn't very strong at all because the rocks couldn't reach him.

Lalgambook exploded with great fury, spurting out lava and smoke high into the sky and hurled gart gart in Tarrengower's direction, but still could not reach him. This caused Lalgambook to completely blow his core!



Mt Franklin

Tarrengower’s anger eased and he just grumbled at this cheeky little volcano who was now just coughing and spluttering with no energy left at all.

All the rocks thrown by Lalgambook at Tarrengower can still be seen today and have formed what is known in the present day as the Guilford Plateau where the Jaara people would perform ceremonies on the Bora grounds also known as Yapene.

Re-told by Justice B Nelson – Dja Dja Wurrung, Jaara

The sounds of Dja Dja Wurrung

a as in kart

e as in egg

Dja Dja Wurrung word list

Tarrengower	big and heavy, also a mountain situated near the township of present day Maldon	Lalgambook	now known as Mt Franklin, near Daylesford
Yapene	dance, also a township outside Guildford called Yapeen	gart gart	many rocks

The Magpie

Maewan nyanbo meerree

Woorrwoorr kommerreen-ik dja wangala wordeegarrong-goolee-a yan-meelpala moorrkal

Parwon-getyaweel ngotaborreeyn ba karrangateeyngayoopanyoon-goopma-ik ba koora meernook woorr-woorr benganak yan bakoopma

Benganak gayoopanyoon-goopma-ik nyeerreem talk-getyaweel ba beetyarra.

Baleet benganak waeema-ik woorr-woorr kombaba.

Benganak goopmala-ik talk-getyaweel Nganyakee ba deerdabeel laa-getyaweel

Benganak beetyarra-ik waeema woorr-woorr werreeyt-ik

Woorr-woorr tyoorrkoorrma werupmering wenering-ik yerram nganboo kardinoyoo

Benganak lola booyt nya yerram ba comugeen yoodorra meerree thorn

Benganak werraa yeng-yeeng

Benganak yeeng-ik yelatneboorang moorrkal werraa-ik ba ngaalbooma-ik woorr-woorr

Matnyoo yerram Parwan wayaperree kardinoyoo benggoeethanang yerra yeng-yeng.

Translated by Uncle David Tournier

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Long time before today...

The sky covered the earth making everyone crawl around in the dark.

The Magpies, being proud and industrious, gathered and worked to raise the sky so everyone could move about freely.

They gathered some long sticks and fighting hard they lifted the sky up.

They placed the long sticks on small and big rocks,
they fought to lift the sky even higher.

The sky split open, showing the beauty of the first sunrise.

They were so overjoyed to see the light and feel the warmth of the sun's heat,
they burst into song.

As they sang, the blanket of darkness broke and drifted away like clouds.

To this day the Magpies greet the sunrise with their joyful song.

Re-told by Uncle David Tournier

The Three Sisters

Maeewan nyanbo meerreeyoo, gelanyee kooleek wainga knettuk getyaweel, benganak merriidjig. Bengonak-a geermnyook bengoordeganak ba benganak koonyaba gayoopanyoon – goopma – getyaweel ba goopmala babab-getyaweel boorndawan.

Kooeemoyl yerram ngamadyeeyt wada-ik bengordeeganak dja bengook koonyaba gooli. Bengook nooleem gooli nyanayeet-yanooneet-ik kooleek wairnga-knettuk. Tarne-gooli ba moonda-goorrk karee-tanang kooleek – wairnga-knettuk nyala ngarrwa ngamadyeeyt. Matnyoo wanga ngamadyeeyt-nhuk dyeerta bengook bana – gamyeban-ik ba yeeng-ik kooleek – wairnga-knettuk bengordeegook workeem-barra.

Kooleek-wairnga-knettuk nyoolam, nyala geermnyook, keela-ik nyoolam warrabil-wadjen. Tarne-gooli ba moonda-goorrk nyanee-ik kea ngamadjeeyt yanee-yoo ba yoorreetyarrapmeelee-nyala.

Matnyoo wanga ngamadyeeyt-nhuk dyeerta ba nyanee peelm kooleek-wairnga-knettuk ba mootyaka kooleek-wairnga-knettuk dyeeeyeewod dya. Ngamadyeet yoorreetyarrapmeelee bengordeegook dja-iyu kooleek-wairnga-knettuk.

Tarne-gooli ba moonda-goorrk kea-ik kanyool gooli dharrawa ngamadyeet. Namela-ik kamababa ngamadyeet, bana-ik ba goopma-ik kooleek-wairnga-knettuk wooloom.

Tarne-gooli ba moonda-goorrk deteth-goopma-ik keetjarra weenay goopma kooleek-wairnga-knettuk.

Nyanee-ik getme benganak keela deerdabeel karreengalabeel-nhuk-Bundjil ba kea weenya .

Keea warrabil-wadjen getme kooleek-wairnga-knettuk nyoolam. Kooleek-wairnga-knettuk tyeeelpa-ik ba thoorn manal borrela-ik bengordeeganak woorroo-o goonalomba-nyal nyala kea nyoolam ba gonarra-nyala-goopma tarne-gooli ba moonda-goorrk Bundjil ngarreemeelee-ik moorroop- nyereeka ba wangala-ik kooleek-wairnga-knettuk kooleek banyool.

Translated by Uncle David Tournier

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Long time before today, there were three sisters, they were very good. They helped their parents – they were good gatherers and always helped with caring for the children.

One day a stranger came to their country; he was not a good man. He was a sorcerer; he wanted the three sisters. The Elders told the three sisters to ignore the stranger. This made the stranger very angry, so he used his magic to sing the three sisters to do his bidding.

The behaviour of the three sisters changed, they became very nasty. They would not help anyone, they spoke very nastily to everyone. So the Elders decided to tell the stranger to go away and never return.

The stranger became angry and decided to steal the three sisters and take them back to his country. The stranger headed back to his country with the three Sisters.

The Elders sent the young warriors after him. They caught up with him, speared him and brought the three sisters back.

The Elders held a meeting to discuss what to do with the girls.

It was decided that they would speak to the Great Creator (Bundjil), and tell him what had happened.

He told them that the three sisters were bad. So the three sisters were beaten and hot coals were put in their mouths, to remind them not to speak badly and to always obey their parents, then Bundjil performed a magic spell and transformed the three sisters into three hills.

The three hills can still be seen today, although one hill is being excavated for red scoria!

.....
Re-told by Uncle David Tournier

The sounds of Wathaurong

a as in cart

ee as in feet

oo as in look

o as in pot

e as in egg

p as in pig

t as in tea

rt tongue is curled back and released into 't'

t made with tongue touching the back of the teeth

ty (yt) combination of 't' and 'y'

k as in kick

m as in milk

n as in noise

rn tongue is curled backwards and released into 'n'

nh 'n' made with tongue touching back of teeth

ny (yn) combination of 'n' and 'y'

ng as in sing

l as in look

rl tongue is curled backwards and released into 'l'

rr as in road

y as in you

w as in water

Ina Yillian



Ina yillian nbangga gungaia tu-tu-la tun-gudya ganggawa woka. Womeriga Biami nha-wal Gumukan Winyan mulamuk coolaman. Biami ngarri Gumuka birra birra ngana nyan-uk mayila. Paabia wurwich winyarrin nunyir birra broongama ngana woka paabia baka-narrak.

Gumuka winyaril yawal burraya yorta naan mayila. Djinagaga paabia marralatjum yawal thurramdjuba galka winyarrin nunyir woka. Conamurra thulla Gumuka yawal burroya yoorunguk yurratha, bayeet yeeta imigo mayila dora gaka. Biami garaba Gumuka Winya yorta naan. Biami yarganidia dora Gane. Gane ngani wy-yeen nukul woka. Gane woda-amoo Biami yargandia bookoot woka. Nhawal dhamnal ganatj gangawa woka. Womeriga Biami lotjpatj dora birayarwool Gumuka-narrak Winya-narrak yanagai Gane broongama nyanuk.

Gumuka bawu turneja punrira nurruga moogoo winyarrin nunyir bait-tun woka. Kalimna boorja choondonga kyema deekula woota yedabila. Biamil yargandia woata munura muingula gorkarra, gangangoor gangangoor wurumaty uta gorkarra gangawa uta Dangala, Yorta Yorta woongle moolaawa malawa uniar.

Translated by Djetcha Zeta Thomson – Yorta Yorta

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

In the time of creation there was a calm over the vast, mist-covered land. Biامي the Creator Spirit saw the old woman, Gumuk Winga, with her empty coolaman. She looked very hungry. Biامي then told the old woman to go and search for some yams. So she then picked up her digging stick and set out across the land with her dog.

The old woman walked and walked a long way away and could not see any yams. As time went on she became very weary, walking slowly with her digging stick dragging along the earth. Day turned to night, she walked far under the moonlit sky, singing softly and hoping for some yams to appear. Biامي waited for the old woman but could not see her anywhere. Biامي called out to Gane, the great rainbow Snake, who was laying asleep beneath the earth. When Gane heard Biامي calling out to him, he lifted his head and made his way to the surface of the earth. He lay there looking out over the dry land when Biامي asked him to go and find the old woman and bring her back safely.

Gane then set off following the marks in the earth left by the old woman's digging stick. His great body moved across the land pushing the earth into hills and valleys, leaving deep crevices in the earth. Beautiful colours from his body spread throughout, covering trees, plants, birds, butterflies and all other creatures.

Then Biامي called out in a loud voice, and thunder cracked as lightning flashed across the sky and rain fell. It rained for days, filling up the deep crevices in the earth that were made from the rainbow snake's body. Then the rain stopped and the mist cleared and the river Dungala was formed. This is the name used by the Yorta Yorta people. Others know it as the Murray River.

Sounds of Yorta Yorta

a as in cart	Note: some words use longer vowels spelt with double letters	p,b as in pig	ny combination of 'n' and 'y', as in onion
i as in pizza		t/d as in tea	
u as in blue		th/dh with tongue touching back of teeth, almost between teeth	rt/rd with tongue rolled to back and top of mouth
e as in bed	ii	tj/dj combination of 't' and 'j'	rn tongue is curled backwards and released in to an 'n'
o as in hot	uu	g/k as in gate or as in kick	rl tongue is curled backwards and released in to an 'l'
	aa	l as in look	rr as in road
	ee (rhymes with air)	m as in milk	w as in water
	oo (alternate spelling or)	n as in noise	y as in you
		ng as in end of sing	
		nh 'n' made with tongue touching back of teeth	

**‘...you have to get back to the
old stories...talking to the Old
People, (what) they passed on...’**

Ivan Couzens

Keerray woorroong

Gunditjmara

Deen Maar



Tarn Weerreeng peenpa keetnan meerteeyt moongay, ngakapa deen maar.

Weerreeng tharn moongay, pakarr meerreeng ba deen maar.

Kalpeerna-k-ya kalpoornity-nyoong pootoong-ee yoowoo-k moorraka-yee.

Ngoolang-I tarn weerreeng tyama-ngeen Pooyeet Pooyeet Tyeepeety-ei wampan kalpeernitj-ngat kana-nyoong ba pangoneeyt-nyoong yunyin Tarn Weerreeng nhoompi Deen Maar nhoolampi wampan weerreeng kanoo moorna-nyoong-ee/yakeenitj-ee.

Ngaken-u-ya ngeeram teena tyama-ngeen weeyn-yee wampan kanoo.

Ngaken-u-ya teena tarn Weerreeng-i-ngooty pootoong waloong teekoornayko moorrakan maara parta-n pangyana-wan waloong moongay kalo pootoong kalpeerna wampan poorray

Translated by Vicki Couzens – Dhauwurd Wurrung and Keeray Woorroong

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

On the coast across from Deen Maar there is a haunted cave called Tarn Weerreeng which has a path between the land and Deen Maar.

When someone dies the body is wrapped in grass and put in the burial place.

When the grass is found at the mouth of Tarn Weerreeng you know that Pooyeet Pooyeet Tyeepeety took the body and its belongings through Tarn Weerreeng to Deen Maar and carried the person's spirit to the clouds.

If maar see a meteor at the same time it is believed that fire has been taken up with it.

If there is fresh grass found near Tarn Weerreeng someone was killed and no one will go near until the grass decays or is removed.

A shared story of the Gunditjmarra Traditional Custodians

* Gunditjmarra comprises of the following language groups – Dhauwurd Wurrung, Woolloowoorroong, Kee woorroong, Koornkopanoot, Peek woorroong, Keerray woorroong, Tyakoort Woorroong and Gadubanud.

Sounds of Dhauwurd Wurrung

a/aa as in car	m as in milk
ai as in eye	n as in nail
e as in bed	ng as in sing
ee as in feet	r as in road
oo/uu as in foot	nh the middle of the tongue at the back of the teeth while making an 'n' sound
u as in but	t as in tea
b/p as in big/pig	dj/tj as in church
k as in kick	
l as in like	

Sounds of Keerray Woorroong

a as in father	l as in like
e as in bed	m as in milk
o as in pot	n as in nine
u as in put	ng as in sing
oo as in foot	r as in red
ee as in feet	rr as in road
b/p as in big or pig	t as in try
d as in deer	ty as in chin yt at end of words
g/k as in goat or kick	

The Creation of Budj Bim

At the start of the Yakinitj, bolitabolita Creator Beings were sent by the Prenheal to muyuban the different features that cross the mirring. The Creator Beings were of giant form and first arrived at a secret sacred location in the Stony Rises country just to the kuurreen of Kerup. Kerup is also known by some clans as Koon Doon.

These bolitabolita Creator Beings took the shape of maara and became the kaiap of a long line of Law maara who had special spiritual and ceremonial powers and responsibilities. The Gunditjmara believe that the descendants of these bolitabolita maara continue to perform their special duties through generations.

Ngathangan paleeya of the original Law maara moved to other parts of the mirring, to the laahlaar kuurn, and the kameetngunnang. The bolitabolita Law maara crouched down and his giant koong transformed to muyuban the peaks of Tappoc and Budj Bim.

When Budj Bim erupted molten lava and kuulorr some 30,000 years ago, the Gunditjmara witnessed the Creator Being reveal himself in the mirring. The scoria stones are his tun gatt.

Told by John Lovett – Gunditjmara

Translated by Vicki Couzens



Mt Eccles

Dhauwurd wurrong word list

bolitabolita	four, fourth	maara	men
Budj Bim	high head Mt Eccles	mirring	land/country
kaiap	one/first	muyuban	make
kameetngunnang	west	ngathangan paleeya	three
Kerup/Koon Doon	Lake Condah	Prenheal	Great Creator Spirit
koong	body	Tappoc	Mt Napier
kuulorr	stone	tun gatt	teeth
kuurreen	south	Yakinitj	Dreaming
laahlaar kuurn	north		

Sounds of Dhauwurd wurrong

a/aa as in car	u as in but	n as in nail	t as in tea
ai as in eye	b/p as in big/pig	ng as in sing	dj/tj as in church
e as in bed	k as in kick	r as in road	
ee as in feet	l as in like	nh the middle of the tongue at the back of the teeth while making an 'n' sound	
oo/uu as in foot	m as in milk		

Derrinallum ba Buninyong

Maleeyeeeto Derrinallum ba Buninyong pooleetya marr

Derrinallum-ngat moorreetyeerr-an

Buninyong ngaki-n Derrinallum-ngat moorreetyeerr ba wana-n teen

Buninyong wana-n yalkoorndan Derrinallum Ngootyoong marree wanyoo
moorreetyeerr

noongala laka-n korr ba yalkoorndan-n Baribial

kalo Buninyong wana-n ngootyoong marree-nyoong weelkyka

Derrinallum Ngatook parng

Buninyong yampeen Derrinallum teen karratpeeten ween patpakal

noongala wayapawanh Baribial

Derrinallum katyat Buninyong ngeenan pa teen pakweeyt ngatook ngakee
makatepa

Derrinallum Buninyong maneen poorta peem moorreetyeerr

Derrinallum leengkeel meeng peem ngootook ngakee makatepa

Marr-arra matay tanu weelkyka meerreeng-u ba wata-u-ngal kalpeerran

Marr-arra kalpeerran-anyeen meerreeng-i pa koong-ngal wata karrang-ngal

Translated by Joel Wright 2011

This story was told using Keerray woorroong sounds and spellings

Mt Elephant

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The fight between Mount Buninyong and Mount Elephant.

Mount Elephant and Mount Buninyong were once men.

Elephant was in possession of a stone axe.

Buninyong saw his axe and wanted it.

Buninyong offered him some gold for it.

Having agreed, they met at what is now Pitfield Diggings for the exchange.

Some time later Buninyong reconsidered, and desired his gold back.

Elephant refused.

Buninyong sent him a fighting message and the challenge was accepted.

They met at Pitfield Diggings.

Elephant buried his spear in Buninyong's side and the hole can be seen to this day.

Elephant received a deadly blow on the head from Buninyong's stone axe.

The gaping hole in elephant's head can also be seen.

The two men, mortally wounded, retired in opposite directions.

Their bodies turned into mountains at the spot where they died.

Sounds of Keerray woorroong

a as in father	oo as in foot	g/k as in goat or kick	ng as in sing	ty as in chin yt at end of words
e as in bed	ee as in feet	l as in like	r as in red	
o as in pot	b/p as in big or pig	m as in milk	rr as in road	
u as in put	d as in deer	n as in nine	t as in try	

Placename Meanings

Mount Buninyong–**Buninyong**–Man lying on his back with raised knees.

Mount Elephant–**Derrinallum**–home of sea swallows or terns frequenting neighbouring marshes.

Kayap Keeleeng

One very dry season when there was ngeeye bareeyt in all the meerreeng and animals were perishing of thirst. Tooleep lakan Kookap. Deelakal could not understand why Bareem was never thirsty. Deelakal knew noong would not tell them so they decided to watch and find out where noong tatan.

Deelakal flew high into moornong. Bareem yanan to a flat marree. Before lifting the marree, Bareem, afraid of being discovered, nakenan the mootalarra but deelakal were so high and kept so steady he thought deelakal moornong.

Bareema lifted the marree and drank from the ngooyt bareeyt running out of the cleft in the marree. He replaced the marree and flew away. The buleetya spies came down and removed the marree and drank and took a bath saying 'keeng ngako ngal!'

Deelakal flapped their weerreetoong with joy and pareeyt rose until it formed a keeleeng. Deelakal then flew all over the parched meerreng, flapping their weerreetoong and forming keeleeng which have been drinking places ever since.

Translated by Wayne Harradine from a Dhauwurd Wurrung and Gunditjmarra story

Keerray woorroong word list

bareem	turkey bustard	mootalarra	birds
bareeyt	water	nakenan	see, look
buleetya	two	ngeeye	our/s
deelakal	they	ngooyt	good, fresh
kayap	one, first	noong	he, his
keeleeng	lake	pareeyt	water
keeng ngako ngal!	we got him!	tatan	drank
kookap	gigantic crane	tooleep	magpie lark
lakan	speak, talk	weerreetoong	wings
marree	stone	wunda	when
meerreeng	earth, country	yanan	went/gone
moornong	sky, clouds		



Australian Bustard (a.k.a Turkey Bustard)

Sounds of Keerray woorroong

a as in father

e as in bed

o as in pot

u as in put

oo as in foot

ee as in feet

b/p as in big or pig

d as in deer

g/k as in goat or kick

l as in like

m as in milk

n as in nine

ng as in sing

r as in red

rr as in road

t as in try

ty as in chin **yt** at end
of words

How the Gunditjmara Got Fire

Malayeeto weeyngunditj waa-ngarra poonteen teen Gariwerd.

Teelakal moorrkapoo pa meeneerr pangteenay waa tyama weeyn ngamarrang ngootyoong.

Koornong leenyoong Yuuloinkeear ngaka ngaka pa wa mayapa meeleer pakan yanta weeynlat kananoong.

Kayap weeynlat yoonkeen meerreeng pa Yuuloinkeear tampeen yumgart pa meerta keelkateen.

Waa warrymang koornong Yuuloinkeear pa noong karreeta wawonga meerreng noong yanta weeynlat pa Tarrakuuk kalo.

Pa leenyoong Tarrakuuk, wampa mana pa pakap weeynlat mangnoorroo watanoo Yuuloinkeear pa thalap takoort teen Meerreeng watkanan noong.

Mangnoorroo watanoo maleeyeeto teena weeyn wanyoo Gunditjmara.

Translated by Yarran Bundle from a Kee woorroong Gunditjmara story

Sounds of Kee woorroong (using Keerray woorroong spelling)

a as in father

ee as in feet

m as in milk

t as in try

e as in bed

b/p as in big or pig

n as in nine

ty as in chin **yt** at end of words

o as in pot

d as in deer

ng as in sing

u as in put

g/k as in goat or kick

r as in red

oo as in foot

l as in like

rr as in road



Red browed Finch (a.k.a Firetail Wren)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A long time ago fire belonged to the crows who lived at Gariwerd, the Grampian Mountains.

They were greedy crows and knew that fire was of great value.

A little bird, Yuuloinkeear, firetail wren, was watching the crows making fun and games with fire-sticks.

One fire-stick fell to the ground and Yuuloinkeear picked it up and flew away.

The crows chased him and Yuuloinkeear soon grew tired. So he passed the fire-stick to Tarrakuuk.

Tarrakuuk, the kestrel hawk, took the fire-stick from Yuuloinkeear and lit all the Country behind him.

From that time there has been fire for all the Gunditjmarra.

Kee woorroong Gunditjmarra

Kuurokeheaar, the Story of the Seven Sisters

Maleeyeetoo, marrang ba pooleeyt maramambul, keertnapée wananda – deengalanaba. Pangat-tja wooka-koo deenpee wooka-koo nhoongalanaba kayap maar, pangat-tja tura-turama-koo.

Waa ngakee maramambul. Yarndaputiya-nyoong kiyan tupu leeyn-yoong Ngeeangarr-a. Pangat Ngeeangarr-a Waa. Pangat wooka ngeerrangoon. Waa warrakeeleek.

Kayap nganoong, maramambul mooteeytook weetka-n yana-n-da ngakee-da thaka-da kiyan-toopoo-da mooteetyook. Waa ngakee-noo deengalanaba. Mooteetyook-mayapa ba koowiyoona kanee mataypaleep-ee ba koopa wanyoo ngeerrangoon.

Ngeerrangoon yamkoot-anda parreen-a-tjeen. Ngeerrangoon-a parreen walar-oo, Waa keernda-tjeen parreen. Ngeeangarr- parrin walar-oo yamkut-nyoong Waa.

Weentagatha-nyoong ween-oo-kana Waa-muyupa ba walatoo ngeeangarr moornong-kanoo.

Wart-kat Marrang ba kayap ngeerrangoon warta ngeeangarr ba waa moornong-kanoo ngakee-da kakayee. Ngeeangarr Sirius-mayapa ba Waa-mayapa Canopus. Wart-kat marrang ba kayap ngeerrangoon Kuurokeheaar-mayapa, the Pleiades.

Sounds of Keerray woorroong

a as in father	ee as in feet	m as in milk	t as in try
e as in bed	b/p as in big or pig	n as in nine	ty as in chin yt at end of words
o as in pot	d as in deer	ng as in sing	
u as in put	g/k as in goat or kick	r as in red	
oo as in foot	l as in like	rr as in road	

Pleiades

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Long ago there were seven young women who were sisters. They were always together. They only wanted to marry one man so they would not be separated.

Waa, the Crow, saw the young women. He fell in love with one whose name was Ngeeanggar, the Eagle. Ngeeanggar was not interested in Waa because he would not marry her sisters as well. Waa was angry.

One day the seven sisters went looking for grubs which they loved to eat. Waa saw them. He changed himself into a grub, and bored a hole in a tree and waited for the sisters.

Before long they found him. Each of the sisters tried to catch him with their wooden hooks. As each sister put their wooden hooks into the hole, Waa the grub, broke the ends. When Ngeeanggar put her hook in Waa let her catch him.

When he was pulled out he turned back into Waa the Crow and carried Ngeeanggar off to the sky.

The six sisters left behind followed Ngeeanggar and Waa into the skies searching for their sister.

Ngeeanggar became the star Sirius and Waa became the star Canopus.

The sisters became Kuurrokeheear, the Pleiades.

Re-told and translated by Vicki Couzens

Pirt Koorrook

Ngulla ngulla ngeear Yarroweitch meerreng-i.

Leenyoong Pirt Koorrook. Thanampool karrang-kil

Weerreek-nyoong karray-nyoong.

Parta-n-da-ooeeya thingalanaba karray ba thaka-n-tja-ooeeya thingalanaba
karray pangat-tja nhunganaba ngooytnganoong. Pirt Koorrook-nyoong
yunggama-k-tja nhunganaba pangatngooyt poorroyn yakeenitj-i.

Translated by Peter and Richard Collopy

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

In Yarroweitch Country there are female devil spirits.

The name of one is Pirt Koorrook who takes the form of a woman,
'as tall as a gum tree'.

Her companion is the dark coloured bandicoot.

If the bandicoot is killed and eaten by the people, they will have bad luck and
Pirt Koorrook will haunt them every night.

Gadubanud Custodians

More on the story of Pirt Koorrook

There is a legend that she carried off a woman from the mouth of the Hopkins River to her home on the top of the Cape Otway Ranges, and compelled her to eat raw possums for six moons.

Various parts of the country are supposed to be haunted by these female devils but none so celebrated for their great size as those frequenting the Cape Otway Ranges.

Sounds of Gadubanud/Keerray woorroong

This story was translated using some Gadubanud and Keerray woorroong, a neighbouring language. There is only a very little recorded Gadubanud at this point in time.

a as in father
e as in bed
i as in feet
o as in pot
oo as on foot
u as in foot
k/g as in kick/goat
l as in look
m as in milk
n as in not
p/b as in pig/big
ny/yn as in onion
ng as in sing

rn 'n' sound made but with the tongue curled back behind the gum ridge tongue
rt 't' sound but with the tip of the tongue curled backwards behind the gum ridge
rr as in road
th as in the
tj as in bridge
ty/yt as in itch
y as in you

**‘...if we don’t learn our language,
then our kids, in future
generations will be like us,
looking for our identity, going
through that identity crisis.’**

Jenny Beer
Wergaia



Kuukuup Wuuchu (the Blue Heron)

Maleeyeeto there was a murt ngeeang. His tribe was camped under a peeal tree near Dunkeld. The murt ngeeang and the other puupuup kaleek had kurkak yuuchuuk to chaknango.

They were chaknangak kan kan baa yuuchuuk.

In the murt ngeeang's tribe, food had to be shared. The murt ngeeang was not tulkiyan. He did not like sharing.

He did not get to chaknango kan kan baa of the fish that he had kurkak. The murt ngeeang took the form of a kuukuup wuuchu.

Kuukuup Wuuchu landed in the peeal. He made the peeal puitkan, puungak all the other Kuulay. The few Kuulay who weren't puunganoot yinnan and told their neighbours.

When they kan kan baa came back to that place, they seen that one, Kuukuup Wuuchu, had chaknango kan kan baa the yuuchuuk. The Kuulay were pirrawuchuup. In pirrprrprrp, they grabbed the murt ngeeang and cursed his ngiyarr to fly in the form of the Kuukuup Wuuchu.

And that is how the Kuukuup Wuuchu came to be and he still flies alone.

Translated by Vicki Couzens – Dhauwurd Wurrung and Keerray Woorroong

Djab wurrung word list

chaknango	eat	pirrawuchuup	angry
chaknangak	eating	pirrprrprrp	revenge
kan kan baa	all	puitkan	fall down
kurkak	catch	puungak	killing
Kuukuup wuuchu	heron, blue heron	puungan	kill
Kuulay	people	puunganuut	killed
maleeyeeto	a long long time ago	puupuup kaleek	family
murt ngeeang	greedy person, 'big mouth'	tulkiyan	happy
ngiyarr	spirit, man's spirit	yinnan	went
peeal	red gum	yuuchuuk	freshwater fish



White-faced heron (a.k.a Blue Heron)

Sounds of Djab wurrung

a as in apple

aa as in father

ay as in hay

ee as in feet

i as in big

u as in hut

o as in go

ui as in quit

uu as in look

ch as in church

k as in kick

l as in like

m as in milk

n as in nut

ng as in sing

p as in pig

t as in tea

w as in water

y as in you

Barra

Malamia wutyu ba yauwirr gaiyap yuminaty. Bapgumilang Barra barringgata.
Gapin Duanu Barra.

Gungin barringgi Barraku Barringgi Gadyin. Bapgumilang Barra barringgata.
Gurtin buatyi dya. Werrka gapang Duanu Barra.

Dyadyin Barra. Wikin. Dyakilang Barraku muwil buatyi. Gungin barringgi
Barraku Gurru. Bapgumilang Barra barringgata burta. Gungin barringgi
Barraku datyuki Gurru.

Bapgumilang Barra barringgata burta. Dyadyilang Barra. Wikin. Dyakilang
Barraku gutyu. Gungin barringgi Barraku Ngalukgutya.

Bapgumilang Barra Barringgata burta. Gungin barringggi Barraku dyakili
datyuk. Babgumilang Barra burta gurrak-gurraki dyata.

Werrkangun nyakiny.

Translated by Kylie Klimpton Kennedy – Wergaia Guli

The sounds of Wergaia

Vowels

i as in beat
e as in bed
a as in bath
u as in boot
ai as in buy

ua as in tour
ui as in Drambui
au as in bough
ie as in hear

Consonants

p/b, m, t/d, n, l, k/g,
w – same sounds as
in English
rt like an American
pronunciation of
heart
ty church
dy judge

ny onion
y yacht
ng sing When you
pronounce a Wergaia
word, stress is placed
on the first syllable,
e.g. barra.

Lake Hindmarsh

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Long ago, man and animals were one. Barra, the red kangaroo, was jumping along a track. Duan, the phascogale or sugar glider possum, began chasing Barra.

Barra's tracks created Barringi Gadyin, the Wimmera River. Barra continued jumping. He arrived at a field of grass. Duan stopped chasing Barra.

So, Barra rested. He was hungry. Barra ate all the grass. This created Gurru, Lake Hindmarsh. Barra continued jumping, slowly. Barra's tracks created datyuki Gurru, the little outlet from Lake Hindmarsh.

Barra continued along, jumping slowly. After a while, Barra rested. He was hungry. He ate the sour quondongs. This created Ngalukgutya, Lake Albacutya.

Again, Barra continued slowly jumping. Barra's tracks created a swampy little outlet. Then Barra jumped slowly through the sandhill country. His tracks were lost in the sandhill country.

No-one sees Barra again.

This story explains the creation of a number of life-giving waterholes, and also why red kangaroos do not live on our Country anymore.

Flood Waters

mandara mengi dirili

duba midagi

gadini gadiwada gane

bilgiri bilgiri waiwilada bilgiri

nana nana nugi negada

lirgi nima gagai leni burbi

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Thunder in dark cloud in sky

It's pouring down rain

Water flows in Murrumbidgee River

Flood flood rising flood

No don't go there drown

Quick here now here this way camp on hill

By Brendan Kennedy – Wadi Wadi/Tati Tati

YITA YITA

How the Kookaburra Got it's Tail

Gun Gun wega widenwil

nuli giagaminu wega garini

Nanju wega widanu giagaminu degada

giaga njauigal garini bermila gagada gun gun

Garini balgada widanu

nga nuni nabu gun gun widanu galgi gauai

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Kookaburra was a laughing bird.

He was always laughing at emu.

When he was laughing his tail always stood up (straight).

One day emu snuck up to catch kookaburra.

Emu hit him on the tail.

and that is why the kookaburras tail sticks down.

By Brendan Kennedy in Mutti Mutti

MUTTI MUTTI

The Eaglehawk and the Crow

Nuni Wani gananda baingu wudaiba leni ba ganimada beni

Wulegil nagada nani nuni gunada ba yirngadhin gibada wudaiba baingui beni

Wuligil yirngadhin dudi werbada wani gananda wudaiba baingu

Wani nengada beni, wuligil walwa beni gauai

Gini nanu wani wurgirim ba wilerma minu

Dadi the beni buiga gauai

Buiga dadi Yanga Punk wara burbi wudubar punk

Wuni winanu Nuni Wani gananda baingu wudaiba leniba ganimada beni.

Wulegil nagada naninuni gunada ba yirngadhin gibada wudaiba baingui beni.

Wuligil yirngadhin 'dudi. werbada wanigananda wudaiba baingu

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Crow stole a child from the camp and hid him up a tree.

The Eaglehawk saw what the crow had done and went and got the boy from the tree.

The Eaglehawk went back to get revenge on the crow for taking the boy.

The Crow was still in the tree, so Eaglehawk burnt the tree down.

This is why the crow is black and has white eyes.

After a while the tree fell down.

It fell across the middle of Yanga Lake to make a hill in the middle of the lake.

Persons who passed away were taken on canoes to this island to be buried.

By Brendan Kennedy – Wadi Wadi/Tati Tati

Lake Yanga

Sounds of Mutti Mutti the language used in the Wadiwadi stories

i as in bit

u as in put

e as in bed

o as in on

a as in father

ng as in singer

ny/yn/nj as in news

rn this sound is made by making an 'n' sound but curling the tongue back behind the gum ridge

dh/th these sounds are made with the tongue – middle at the back of the teeth while making a 'd/t' sound

dj, tj/dj, ty/dy, j/dj as in English 'j'

rd/rt this set of tongue-tip sounds is made by making 'd/t' sound but curling the tongue tip back behind the gum ridge

rl as in early

How the Murray River was Made

Totyerguil was a parrayi paraya. One day he left the Mallee scrub, which was his country, and lar with his kethawil pembengguk close to present-day Swan Hill, Merteruk-pert. Soon his two wives, Mathimuk and Gunewarra, the Black Swans, had a meal ready for him, and while he was tyaka his wathip went collecting wattle-gum, of which they were very fond. When they arrived at a lurthak they saw a huge yawirr basking in the nyawi close to the surface of the katen. The wuthu payingguk parenga back to tell their marn.

Totyerguil puny-will made a yungwity, and when near the kumba yawirr tyalka with all his might, which wirrp it on the warram, the tyarem remaining stuck upright between its shoulders. The yawirr, who was Otchout, the Cod, awoke with a start, and werrkuwerrkuwa towards the nyirring-wil of the lurthak commenced to form a channel by tearing up the tya, and allowing the katen to fill it up, so he could winakuwa from his yawirrek.

Otchout did this so puny-will that Totyerguil was unable to keep pace with him, and soon lost sight of him, although he kept on his trail by following the newly made kapel. At dusk Otchout excavated a long, wide lurthak, where he kumba for the puriny. Totyerguil, however, did not kumba, and coming upon the kumba codfish at daybreak the next perrp, was able to larpa a second tyarem which struck Otchout in a spot immediately behind the first which was still protruding from the middle of his warram. Otchout again parenga off pannga furiously, and once again escaped from his pursuer. That puriny he made another lurthak in which to kumba, and there Totyerguil found him next perrp, and was able to wirrp him with a third tyarem, which lalunga the codfish just behind where the two former weapons were still impaled.

This procedure was repeated over several days, until they reached the neighbourhood where Murray Bridge (in South Australia) has since been built, and there Otchout made a very large and deep lurthak, in which he wirpa. He has since gone to the kirk, where he became the turt Delphinus.

By this time Totyerguil had larpa all his tyarem, which are now the lip projecting from the warram of present day codfish. Not having any more tyarem, and being unable to find Otchout in the deep lurthak, he winakuwa the werrki, and landed upon the nyirring-wil. There he set his yungwity on its end, and stuck his paddle-pole wak upright on the tya. The yungwity became a huge piyal, and the wak a kalpen, both of which were later pointed out to the pembengguk of the tribe when the story of the making of the Murray River by Otchout, the Codfish, was told. Ever since that time yungwity have always been made from piyal mityuk and wak from kalpen.

As told by Ron Murray with permission from his father, Besley Murray, senior Elder, Wamba Wamba.

Ron's Nan, on his mum Lorraine's side (Nan Karpany), also told a version of this story.

Sounds of Wemba Wemba

i as in bit	by making an 'n'	dj, tj/dj, ty/dy j/dj as
u as in put	sound but curling the	in English 'j'
e as in bed	tongue back behind	rd/rt this set of
o as in on	the gum ridge	tongue-tip sounds is
a as in father	dh/th these sounds	made by making 'd/t'
ng as in singer	are made with the	sound but curling the
ny/yn/nj as in news	tongue – middle	tongue tip back
rn this sound is made	at the back of the	behind the gum ridge
	teeth while making	rl as in early
	a 'd/t' sound	

Wemba Wemba word list

kalpen	Murray Pine (branches)	perrp	morning
kapel	river	piyal	gum tree
katen	water	puny-will	quickly, rapidly
kethawil pembengguk	family	puriny	night
kirk	sky	Totyerguil	mighty hunter
kumba	rest, sleeping	turt	star
lalunga	struck	tya	ground
lar	camped	tyaka	eat, eating
larpa	to throw	tyalka	threw a spear
lurthak	large water-hole	tyarem	a spear
marn	father	wak	paddle-pole
Mathimuk & Gunewarra	Totyerguil's two wives, the Black Swans	warram	back
merteruk-pert	Swan Hill	wathip	Totyerguil's two sons
mityuk	bark	werrki	chase
nyawi	sun	werrkuwerrkuwa	rushing
nyirring-wil	towards the banks, upon the bank	winakuwa	escape, abandoned
otchout	the Cod	wirpa	hid
pannga	dig, digging	wirrp	struck
paraya	hunter	wuthu payingguk	two boys
parenga	ran	yawirr	fish
parenga	run, ran off	yawirrek	enemy
parrayi	mighty	yungwity	canoe
pembengguk	children		

Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) was established in 1994 to address the issues of language loss and is the state body responsible for coordinating Community Language Programs throughout Victoria. VACL is focused on retrieving, recording and researching Aboriginal languages and providing a central resource on Victorian Aboriginal Languages.

In 2009–2010 Creative Victoria worked with VACL to publish *Indigenous Creation Stories of the Kulin Nation*. *Indigenous Creation Stories of the Kulin Nation* was a collaborative project with Community Language Program Workers from Wathaurong, Taungering, Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung language groups contributing stories, including language of their particular Country. In one instance, an entire story was told in Wathaurong language. In others select words were translated.

The booklet was launched February 2010 to commemorate the opening of the Wheeler Centre and to celebrate Melbourne's designation by UNESCO as a City of Literature in 2008. Demand for the publication was widespread and the publication quickly ran out.

Responding to such interest and demand, Creative Victoria approached VACL in 2010 to undertake a similar project involving all - or as many as possible - language groups across Victoria. There were approximately a further 34–35 groups with languages in varying states of recovery.

Supported by Creative Victoria VACL undertook a series of language development workshops with many of these communities to share stories and language, and prepare content for publication in the current volume *Nyernila – Listen Continuously: Aboriginal Creation Stories of Victoria*.

These stories reflect the very active process of language reclamation in these communities across the whole state. Some communities have developed extensive vocabularies and entire stories have been recorded in language. Other communities are beginning the hard work, recovering one word at a time and these words are interspersed with English. It is important to note that Aboriginal and English translation do not correspond word for word, but rather the overall idea or concept relayed in Aboriginal storytelling is approximated using English language.

Melbourne's designation by UNESCO as a City of Literature acknowledges the rich history of storytelling which dates back 40,000 years. That history continues today with these very important steps to reclaim and write down some of the first stories about Victoria.

NYERNILA --- LISTEN CONTINUOUSLY



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