



28 June 2017

## A new bird app takes flight

*Part-parti Mirring-yi* (Birds in Country) is a new app featuring Aboriginal bird knowledge of the languages/dialects of South West Victoria. Although these languages are no longer spoken, language revival is underway through education activities in schools and communities in the region, delivered by the local Laka Gunditj Language Program, <http://www.vacang.org.au/projects/gunditjmara.html>.

This app has been created as a tool for learning about language, culture and the natural environment. It is clear that woodland birds were used by Aboriginal people of the region for food, as well as their feathers being used for ornamentation and decoration. Woodland birds feature in local astronomy and mythology, and their calls, presence or behaviours indicated weather conditions, good or bad news and embodied cultural and spiritual power. All of the language groups in the region have woodland birds as significant totems, or moieties. Many Aboriginal people in the region continue to associate meteorological events, death, danger, shape-shifting and unexplained phenomena with birds and their behaviour.

In addition to the app, the Glenelg Hopkins Woodland Bird Booklet has been updated to include Aboriginal bird knowledge from a range of language groups across the region, including Jardwadjali, Djab Wurrung, Bundanditj, Wadawurrung and the South West Aboriginal languages.

Denis Rose, Gunditjmara Traditional Owner and Senior Manager at Gunditj Mirring states: 'The inclusion of our information in this booklet and app provides an insight into Aboriginal people's knowledge and relationship with woodland birds that still continues today. It also highlights the broader significance of woodland birds, which in turn helps improve their conservation outlook into the future.'

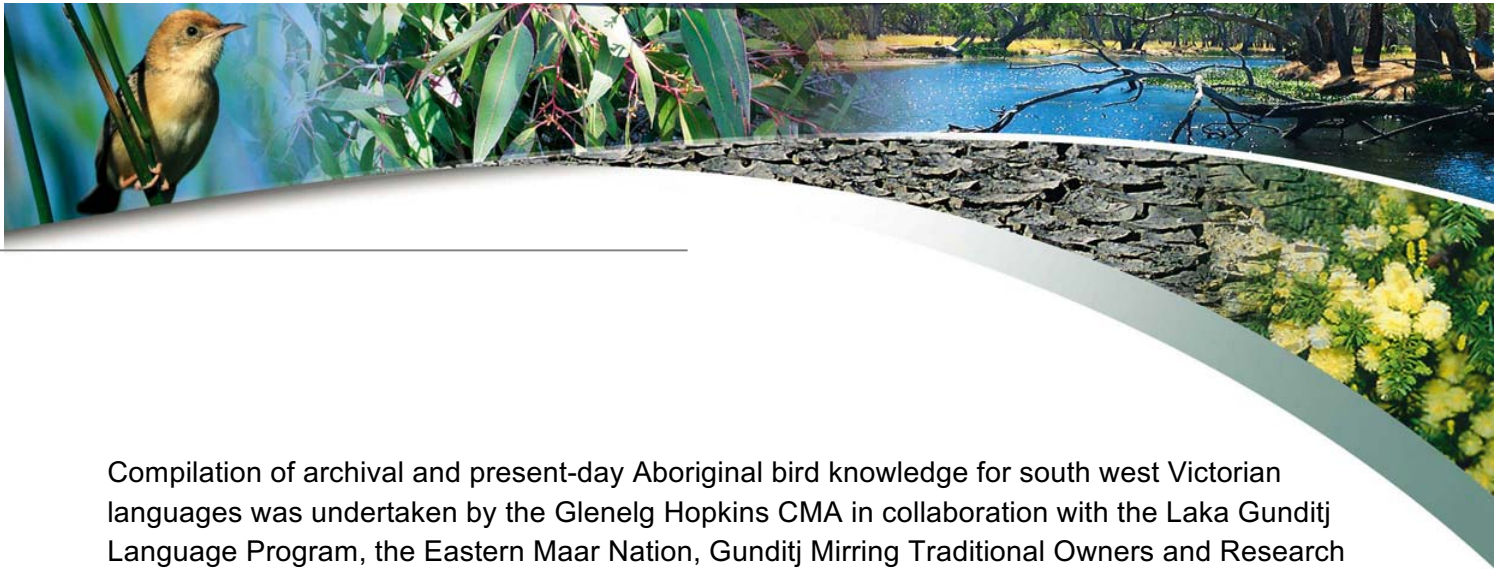
The app and booklet were launched on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June at Heywood and Districts Secondary College (HDSC), which offers a Gunditjmara Language Program for Year 7, 8 and 9 students. Stephanie Tashkoff, Language Program Coordinator at HDSC, explains: 'The Language Program has a very positive impact both at the community level and in student learning, self-esteem and identity building. The creation of resources such as the app and booklet that can be used in our program supports students to develop a greater understanding and appreciation for local language, and helps them make connections between the history and culture of where they live'.

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Compilation of archival and present-day Aboriginal bird knowledge for south west Victorian languages was undertaken by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA in collaboration with the Laka Gunditj Language Program, the Eastern Maar Nation, Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners and Research Unit for Indigenous Language (RUIL) at The University of Melbourne. Thanks to the following Traditional Owner groups and organisations who gave permission to publish Aboriginal knowledge of woodland birds and participated in reviewing and recording relevant local information - Barengi Gadjin Aboriginal Land Council, Bunganditj Language Reclamation Committee, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Budj Bim Ranger group (Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation) and Wadawurrung.

The app can be downloaded here:

For iPhones: <https://itunes.apple.com/cn/app/part-parti-mirring-yi/id1218642005?l=en&mt=8>

For Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.jila.birds.sw.vic&hl=en>

A pdf of the Woodland Bird Booklet can be downloaded from the Glenelg Hopkins CMA website.

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