

Glenelg Hopkins CMA fact sheet

Traditional language of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape

Connection to history

Indigenous language includes some of the oldest spoken language on Earth. Traditional Owners have identified and used place names for locations for thousands of years, passed on through generations by traditions, songs and stories.

It is estimated that since European settlement, 60-70% of place names in Australia originate or have been adapted from Aboriginal language.

The importance of language

Language has been used for thousands of years to connect people and Country. For the Gunditjmarra of the World Heritage listed Budj Bim Cultural Landscape in western Victoria, the retention of language is of great importance as it provides a connection to land, culture, ancestors and Country.

There are over 700 different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island languages across Australia. For the Gunditjmarra of western Victoria, the Dhauwurd Wurrung language is used.

Traditional language is now being acknowledged in the wider community with the everyday use of Aboriginal place names, supporting local heritage, Traditional Owners and their connection to Country.

Increasing the awareness, understanding and use of indigenous language is being led by including both the Traditional Owner and English names on signage for places, landmarks, animals, and key phrases.



Place names

The everyday use of traditional place names and current terminology is changing with greater understanding of the cultural significance of these places.

For example, the name Uluru (Ayres Rock) is now commonly used to identify the iconic Australian landmark around the world.

Indigenous words and language of the Gunditjmara in the Dhauwurd Wurrung language of Western Victoria

Budj Bim (*Mt Eccles*)
Tae Rak (*Lake Condah*)
Killara (*Darlot Creek*)
Palawarra (*Fitzroy River*)
Bocara (*Glenelg River*)
Gariwerd (*Grampians*)
Deen Maar (*Lady Julia Percy Island*)

Ngata (*hello*)
Ngatanwarr (*welcome*)
Tu-Ngootoo (*thank you*)
Wurruk (*goodbye/ until next time*)



Ngatanwarr wartee pa kakay
teen Gunditjmara mirring
Welcome brothers and sisters
to Gunditjmara Country



Partnerships to continue learning

Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (GMTOAC) have been working collaboratively on the Budj Bim Connections Flagship Waterway Project since 2016.

This project is now in the implementation stage and includes on-ground works to protect and restore important waterway and environmental values, as well as finding ways to engage with the community to raise awareness of the range of cultural values associated with the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

Further information

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References: First Languages Australia – www.firstlanguages.org.au
GMTOAC | www.gunditjmirring.com | ABC News – To learn your country, start by learning its Aboriginal names - ABC News