Martu Kakayi Merit-Bi
Welcome to
Limestone Country

While in *Berrin*/Mount Gambier, you will be standing upon Boandik Country, part of the Bunganditj-speaking Nation.

The Bunganditj-speaking Nation spreads from near Kingston SE, up towards Bordertown and Keith, across to Naracoorte and south to the western side of the Glenelg River. It includes the First Nations mobs and dialect groups Boandik, Meintangk, Pinechunga, Wichunchunga, Potarwutj, Ngarkat, and Southern Tanganekald.

On the following pages you will find three of the creation stories that belong to the Bunganditj Nations linked to sites that can be visited during your stay. There are also other sites listed which are easily accessible or well-worth a short drive. This is a region with immense cultural significance and environmental diversity and we hope that you are able to get out and enjoy the natural beauty that this region offers.

Figure 1: Crater Lakes Precinct including four volcanic craters referred to in the creation Story 'How the Volcanoes Were Formed'

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Crater Lakes Precinct and *Parreen*/Mount Schank

The Crater Lakes Precinct sits within the *Berrin*/Mount Gambier township and offers a range of short and longer walks, as well as the *Ketla Malpi*/Valley Lake playground and Conservation Park. *Parreen*/Mount Schank, a 20-minute drive towards *Ngaranga*/Port MacDonnell, offers a longer walk around the upper edge of the crater, and for those who like a challenge, a walk down to volcano base.

Figure 2: The southern edge of the crater, showing the resting place of Craitbul and his family, Ngereng Balam, and the location of Centenary Tower.

These sites, *Berrin*/Mount Gambier, and the surrounding region have been created and altered by volcanic activity. The Bunganditj Nation have passed on the creation story of giant ancestors, Craitbul and his family, for thousands of years.

> The journey of Craitbul, his wife, and their two sons started at *Beleter*/Mount Muirhead. Here they used their digging sticks to create a giant oven so that they could be warm, cook their food, and live in peace. The call 'whoo boom' of the protector bird, *Pulan*/Australasian Bittern, warned Craitbul and his family of the presence of an evil spirit, *Tennatenona*, causing them to move to *Parreen*/Mount Schank. Here they made their home and another giant oven, only for *Pulan* to call out again. The family moved inland away from the sea and from the evil spirit.
>
> They made their next home and oven at *Warwar*/Blue Lake, only to have their fire put out by water rising from the bottom. They moved three more times, creating giant ovens at each site. First, *Ketla Malpi*/Valley Lake, then *Kroweratwari*/Browne Lake, and finally, *Yatton Loo*/Leg of Mutton Lake. Each time water rising from the bottom of the oven would put out their fire.
>
> They moved one last time to their final home and resting place, *Ngereng Balam*/ Eaglehawk Nest. Here they had views of *Berrin* and the surrounding region, which was now covered with water and reeds.

Scan here to hear the Bunganditj terms for the crater sites, as well as other terms used in the story *'How the Volcanoes Were Formed'.*

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Figure 3: Parreen/Mount Schank from above showing the walking trails around the edge of the crater and down to the base.

Not only does this creation story show a Connection to Country spanning over 20,000 years, it shows the resilience and adaptability of our First Nations ancestors to the significant environmental changes brought about by volcanic activity and sea level rise. Geological testing has shown the same sequence of activity as that of the oven creation, with activity spanning 20,000 years starting at Beleter and ending at Yatton Loo about 4,000 years ago.

When you visit the Crater Lakes Precinct and feel up to doing the steep hill walk to Centenary Tower, please remember that this is a sacred site and the resting place of our creator ancestors. The views over the plains surrounding *Berrin*/Mount Gambier are now significantly different to what Craitbul, his family, and generations of Bunganditj Peoples saw. It is now mostly empty of water and wetlands due to the South East Drainage Network, which drained and still empties freshwater from the region out to sea, helping to intentionally create the prime agricultural plains the region is known for.

Figure 4: The world-renown Warwar/Blue Lake in turquoise blue. This colour is only seen during the warmer months.

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Honan Native Forest Reserve

A short 20-minute drive towards Millicent and Glencoe is the Honan Mint Trail, a 6km circuit trail within the Honan Native Forest Reserve. Here you can walk atop the sandy soils of the remnant stringybark and grass tree forest into the denser clay soils of the swamp gum and tea trees, with access to a short wetland boardwalk. The trails are home to a diverse range of plants, orchids, and fungi, and a perfect spot to bird watch.

This site is of cultural significance as the remnant habitat that you will see here is described in two of our creation stories. It is also the site that many of our local primary school students participate in the First Nations Walking the Seasons educational program. One of the creation stories features *Mar* the sulfur-crested cockatoo in *'How Fire Was Obtained*'.

> *Mar*, the sulfur-crested cockatoo held the secret of fire under the yellow crest on his head. Set within *mra-murn*/stringybark and *kinyera*/grass tree scrub, Elders called a *murrapena*/big meeting to try and find *Mar's* secret.
>
> *Priti*/Rufous Bristlebird, excellent at staying hidden in the undergrowth, was the first to sneak up on *Mar.* He watched in disbelief as *Mar* took a flame from beneath his yellow crest to start a fire with dry grass and bark. *Tatkana*/Red-breasted Robin, also good at hiding in the undergrowth, was the next to see the flame. He tried to collect some to take back to the others, but discovered that it was incredibly painful to touch and his chest was burned a bright red.
>
> Next, *Tikok*/Black Kite, was asked by the Elders to approach and use their skills in picking up and carrying sticks to try and bring the fire back to the main camp safely. They placed the end of a stick in the fire and carried it away when it caught alight. As they fled, parts of the burning stick dropped off and landed on the ground. Country was dry and had not been cared for using cool burning, so the fire spread quickly through the scrub.
>
> An enraged *Mar* went to confront the Elders at the main camp and saw that *Tatkana* had been burned and went to fight him. *Kuwatang*/Kookaburra tried to protect *Tatkana*, was hit with a *buamba*/fighting stick, and bears a mark under his wing where he was injured. *Kantabul*/Whale, was the next person to try and help fight *Mar*, but was speared and ran to the ocean. He still spouts water from the wound today. *Mar* knew that the others now had his secret fire so flew to the highest tree. He still sits in the trees scolding and raging.
>
> From that day forward, the Bunganditj-speaking Nations were able to stay warm and cook their food with fire. They knew that it lived in the *kinyera*/grass tree, and if it ever went out, could be rekindled by twisting one flower spike into another.

Scan here to hear the Bunganditj terms for the birds and plants, as well as other terms used in the story *'How Fire Was Obtained'.*

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While on this walk, we encourage you to imagine the majority of the landscape of this region covered in these habitat types, with nearly 45% of the landscape covered in water and reeds during the winter seasons. Some of the *mra-murn* and *kinyera* that is present in and surrounding the Honan Native Forest Reserve was here prior to colonisation of the region.

Figure 5: Stringybark/mra-murn and Grass tree/kinyera habitat that can be seen along the Honan Mint Trail in the Honan Native Forest Reserve.

Figure 6: Mar, the sulfur-crested cockatoo who hid fire under his crest.

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Ngaranga/Port MacDonnell

This small township about a 30-minute drive from Berrin/Mount Gambier is the home of the Southern Rock Lobster, rugged coastline, and the petrified forest. With a lovely jetty and playground as you enter the township, sandy beaches to the east, and rugged limestone coastline to the west, *Ngaranga*/Port MacDonnell offers a beachside outing for everyone.

The creation story linked to the petrified forest and coastal formations of *Ngaranga*/Port MacDonnell is another indicator of the long connection that the Bunganditj-speaking Nations have had to this Country. This story tells of another giant ancestor and describes the original habitat that covered the land.

There was once some land close to the coast which was covered in lush forest. All kinds of trees grew there; wattles, banksias, she-oaks, tea trees, and gum trees. The rich carpet of beautiful flowers, orchids, sundews, and grasses covered the ground. The wattles, with their fluffy, yellow flowers and nutritious seeds, also oozed a delicious sap called *kara-natjart*/ wattle gum.

A man of great height was the owner and carer of the forest. He was feared for his anger and many were too terrified to walk onto his land. One hot summer's day, whilst taking a walk through his land, he saw a basket full of *kara-natjart* at the base of a wattle tree. His anger rose, and in his rage, with a voice like thunder, he cried, "Who is stealing my food?"

Looking up, he saw a person concealed amongst the branches. In a loud voice he commanded, "Come down here, right now!" The person obeyed, climbed to the ground, and trembled with fear. The man was so angry that he could not contain it.

Filled with rage, he seated himself on the grass. He extended his right leg towards *Kiniyang*/Cape Northumberland and his left leg towards Green Point. He raised his arms above his head, and in a giant voice called to the sea "Come to me!"

The sea obeyed and moved towards the man. The water covered the land and drowned the beautiful forest. The thief could not swim, so was also drowned.

The sea never returned to its original spot and formed the present coast near *Ngaranga*/Port MacDonnell. The man was never able to walk amongst his beautiful forest again. The stumps of the biggest trees can still be seen to this day when the tide is low.

Scan here to hear the Bunganditj terms used in the Ngaranga/Port MacDonnell creation story, as well other Bunganditj terms used throughout this document.

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Although the petrified forest is actually composed of limestone deposits and rock formations, the creation story gives an overview of the sea level rise that the Bunganditj Peoples were here to observe. *Kiniyang*/Cape Northumberland is the southernmost point of South Australia and offers amazing views of the rugged coastline. The petrified forest, with a walk nearby, can only be observed at low tide.

Figure 7: Kiniyang/Cape Northumberland, the southernmost point of the South Australian mainland.

Clarke Park and Germein Reserve, Port MacDonnell

Sit and picnic amongst the endemic Dingley Dell gum at Clarke Park or drive a little further to go for a walk through Dingley Dell gum remnant scrub and swampland via Germein Reserve. There are five walking trails, some with boardwalks, that can be accessed, all enabling observation of what much of the lower-lying region would have looked like pre-colonisation. Water, reeds, tea trees, frogs, tadpoles, wallabies, and birdlife are all on the list of things to see.

https://www.discoverlimestonecoast.com.au/places/germein-reserve

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Other Locations to Visit

Balumbul/Umpherston Sinkhole

Situated within *Berrin*/Mount Gambier, this site is wonderful to visit during the day to take in the vertical garden. Visit at dusk or early evening for the opportunity to feed the resident possums. Take along some cut pieces of carrot, apple, or other vegetables to hand feed them!
https://visitmountgambier.com.au/travel-type/sinkholes/

Figure 8: Balumbul/Umpherston Sinkhole is a naturally formed sinkhole, with gardens at its base accessible via stairs.

Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre

Local indoor and outdoor lap pool, indoor splash pad and warm water pool, and gym facilities situated within *Berrin*/Mount Gambier.
https://www.wulanda.com.au/

Ketla Malpi/Valley Lake Conservation Park

The Conservation Park contains an all-abilities and wheelchair accessible walking path within the Crater Lakes Precinct, a short drive from the centre of town. A beautiful local site to observe native plant species, birdlife, and wildlife.
https://visitmountgambier.com.au/travel/valley-lake-conservation-park/

Figure 9: The entry to Ketla Malpi/Valley Lake Conservation Park.

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Telford Scrub Conservation Park

Another site to be able to observe some of the remnant habitat types of the Lower Limestone coast region. Two trails are available, the Forest Canopy Walk (1 hour return, 1.6km), and the Stringybark Forest Hike (2.5 hours return, 5km).
https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/telford-scrub-conservation-park#see-and-do

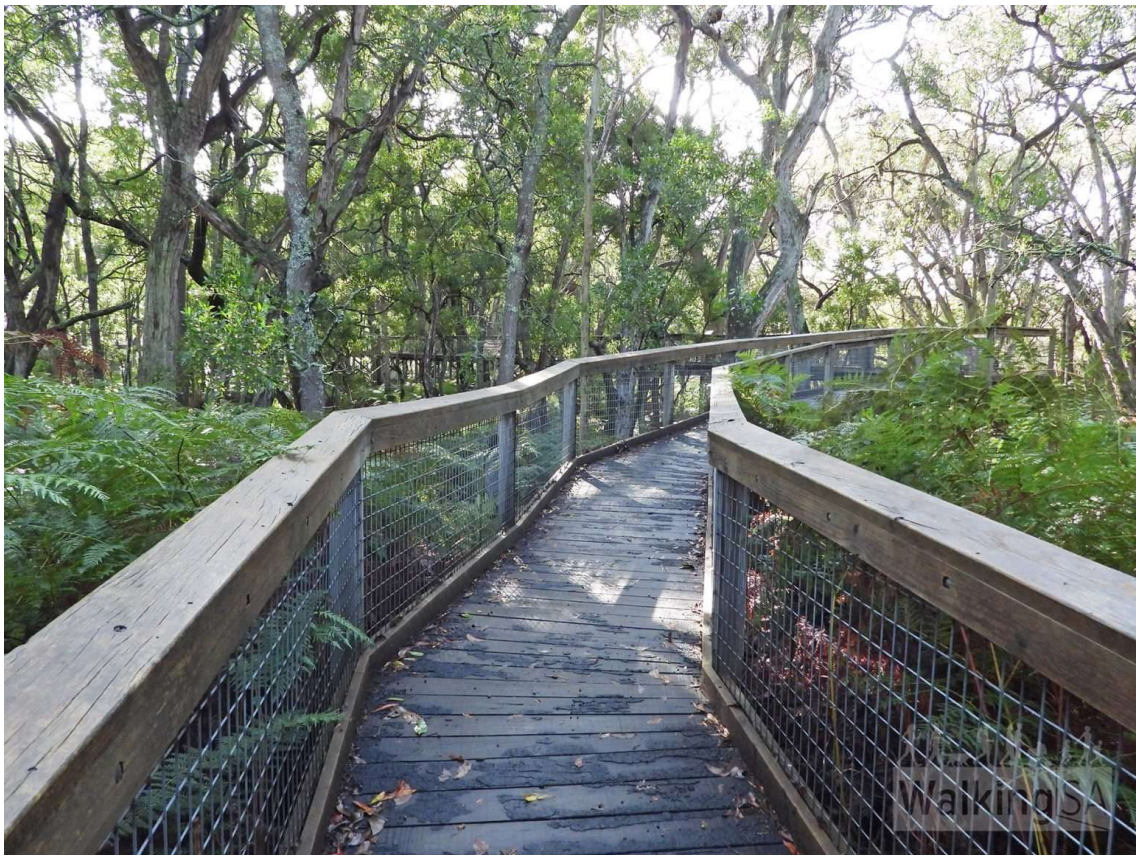

Figure 10: Forest canopy walk, one of two walks located at Telford Scrub Conservation Park.

Pina.ngula/Penola (LIT: Tree home)

Gateway to the Coonawarra (*Kunawara*/black swan) Wine region. Many of the local wineries have cellar doors open along the highway, the majority of which are within a one-hour drive from *Berrin*/Mount Gambier.

Nelson, Victoria

A 30-minute drive from *Berrin*/Mount Gambier, across the Victorian border, is Nelson; where the Glenelg River meets the sea. Here you will be within a short walk or drive to see both long sandy beaches and exposed limestone river banks. Nelson is the gateway to the Lower Glenelg National Park where there are short or long walks as part of the great Southern Walk, as well as ample camping sites.
https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/lower-glenelg-national-park

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Ewens Ponds Conservation Park

The Ewens Ponds Conservation Park contains spring-fed limestone ponds, which can be seen after a 20-minute drive. These ponds can be explored by snorkelling the channels which join three ponds. The crystal-clear water allows plant species to grow at rare depths. Bookings for snorkelling are essential. A wetsuit is advised as water temperatures are approximately 12°C all year.
https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/ewens-ponds-conservation-park

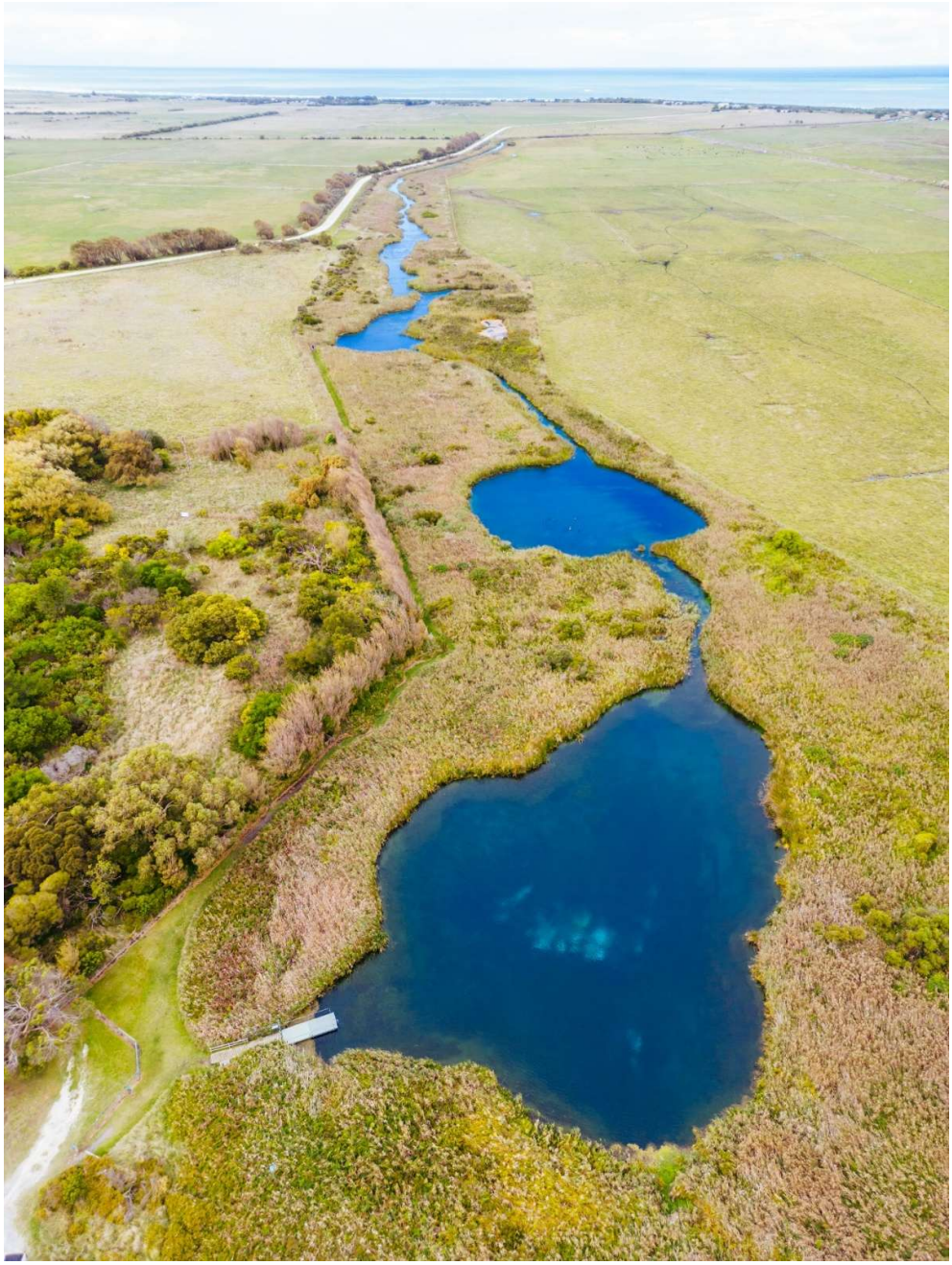

Figure 11: Aerial view of Ewens Ponds, showing the three ponds linked by channels.

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Site Locations

Balumbul/Umpherston Sinkhole	https://maps.app.goo.gl/1Pe2LJ4hrSLtWoRm7
Warwar/Blue Lake	https://maps.app.goo.gl/KC5oyndmtBxvxtsB6
Centenary Tower/ Craitbul's resting place	https://maps.app.goo.gl/9AgMJAJ1Ya852uDW6
Valley Lake Conservation Park and Playground	https://maps.app.goo.gl/YJFh3Mv5tK3qMKx79
Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre	https://maps.app.goo.gl/X8q3sLpMr18dKhyDA
Honan Mint Trail, Honan Native Forest Reserve	https://maps.app.goo.gl/zKvJNarGR9CJwsiz6
Telford Scrub Conservation Park	https://maps.app.goo.gl/73ihL72Ne2i7X5La9
Penola	https://maps.app.goo.gl/vUs5efYvQvSe2NCM6
Ewens Ponds Conservation Park	https://maps.app.goo.gl/vUNUWJQCCrV81f586
Port MacDonnell	https://maps.app.goo.gl/pvnntHa3gcs88KAa8
Clarke Park, Port MacDonnell	https://maps.app.goo.gl/mrK5iA7gLgFKdToC8
Germein Reserve, Port MacDonnell	https://maps.app.goo.gl/aZy5Gi7HtCdikKd59
Germein Reserve walking trail car park	https://maps.app.goo.gl/YNPfM8YXbYJi9AcB9
Petrified Forest car park and access to walking trail	https://maps.app.goo.gl/jNZgWWMaNvTVteCJA
Cape Northumberland	https://maps.app.goo.gl/GUdepZVmiFWnqC2d8
Nelson	https://maps.app.goo.gl/WEbCgmQxeuqZDdiR7

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