

THE LOWANDJERI BULLUK BUNURONG

Lowandjeri Bulluk traditional land takes in the catchment of Anderson's Inlet, the Tarwin River, and Waratah Bay; it also included Wilsons Promontory, Cape Liptrap, the Glennies Group and the Anser Group of Islands. The Lowandjeri Bulluk get their name from a Koolin creation being whose name was Lowan. Lowan was said to rest at Warmoom.

The Lowandjeri Bulluk were most likely the first Aboriginal people in Victoria to make contact with European mariners and explorers, unfortunately this contact was to be all bad for the Lowandjeri Bulluk.

The Lowandjeri had for millennia, maintained amicable relations with the Gurnai from East Gippsland through trade, ceremony and a balanced population to defend their customary and hereditary rights. The impact of early sealers and whalers on the Lowandjeri Bulluk population through abductions and murder was devastating, and by the 1830's the Lowandjeri Bulluk were unable to defend themselves against the Gurnai's superior numbers. By the 1840's, the last few surviving families of Lowandjeri Bulluk made their way to a very young Melbourne to be among the other Koolin tribes assembled there.

During the warmer months of the year the Lowandjeri Bulluk would visit ceremonial grounds at places like Anderson's Inlet, Cape Liptrap and Wilsons Promontory to name a few. While at these locations, they would access the many coastal resources at their disposal, such as crayfish, shellfish, fish, seal and the dependable mutton bird. To balance their diet they would gather seed for flour and collect vegetables such as yams and orchid bulbs, while the children ate bush fruits such as the wild raspberry and the kangaroo apple.

As warmth gave way to early morning fogs, the Lowandjeri knew it was time to begin preparing possum and kangaroo skins to be made into cloaks and rugs for the coming winter. Unlike other Bunurong clans the Lowandjeri Bulluk didn't have to prepare cloaks or rugs for trade, instead they traded greenstone from an ancient quarry on Lowandjeri land. Greenstone is a highly prized stone for the making of stone axes; the stone had the right balance of hardness, weight and an ability to maintain a sharp edge.

As the season changed so did the Lowandjeri, as winter drew nearer the Lowandjeri would begin to move inland to live off the abundant game. They would ambush Emus and Bush Turkeys (Australian Bustard, now extinct locally), hunt kangaroos, net birds and snare small game such as bandicoot's and potoroo's, others would harvest the tubers of the water ribbons and the piths from the tree ferns, while the children collected wattle gum or searched for wild honey for something a little sweet to eat.

THE BUNURONG PEOPLE

Written by Steve Compton - Co-ordinator of the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

The Bunurong People are the Indigenous People from south eastern Victoria. Their traditional land extends from the Werribee River in the north-west, down to Wilson's Promontory in the south east, taking the catchments of old Carrum swamp, Westernport Bay and the Tarwin River, and including Momington Peninsula, Phillip Island and French Island.

Bunurong People are part of a language group or nation know as Koolin. Bunurong People prefer to be known as Koolin rather than Koori, which is a word from a different language.

The Bass Coast Shire is within the clan estate of the Yalloc Bulluk Bunurong and the Lowandjeri Bulluk Bunurong.



'Grinding Bowl from Lower Bunyip River made of Basalt. Used to grind ochre and seed.



Pebble Chopper from San Remo. Used for mining ochre or breaking bone.

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Greenstone tomahawk from north-western port. Used for chopping wood. Imported from Mt William north of Melbourne.