



# Suggestion 64

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and  
Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

19 pages

**Melanie Chan**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 17 November 2017 4:20 PM  
**To:** FedRedistribution - VIC  
**Subject:** Submission  
**Attachments:** AEC McMillan Electorate re-naming submission GLaWAC and BLC.pdf

Hi,

Please find attached the Electorate re-naming submission.

We have submitted this through the AEC website portal also.

Thank you

Kind Regards,  
Ruth

**Ruth Fitzclarence**  
**Marketing and Communications Coordinator**  
**Working days - Monday to Thursday**



Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)  
27 Scriveners Road, Kalimna West VIC 3909  
Website: [www.gunaikurnai.org](http://www.gunaikurnai.org) RNTBC (ICN 4768) | ABN 43 709 397 769  
T: 03 5152 5100 | F: 03 5152 1666 | M: 0467 003 433 | E: [comms@glawac.com.au](mailto:comms@glawac.com.au)

I acknowledge the Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which I live and work. I pay respect to Elders past and present. I commit to working respectfully to honour their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to this country. I recognise the role and value of culture in our community.

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## Submission

### Name:

Australian Electoral Commission

GPO Box 768

Melbourne VIC 3001

### Date:

Friday 17 November 2017

### Subject:

The boundary redistribution and renaming of the Federal Electorate of McMillan

### Purpose:

To provide a recommendation and the rationale for changing the current Federal Electorate name of McMillan to Bunjileene-Purrine.

Applicant	The Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC)	
Organisation	Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) ICN 4766 27 Scriveners Road, Kalimna West, Victoria 3909	Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) ICN 3630 16\395 Nepean Hwy, Frankston, Victoria 3199
Contact	Roger Fenwick- Chief Executive Officer	Dan Turnbull- Chief Executive Officer
Email	ceo@glawac.com.au	manager@bunuronglc.org.au
Website	www.gunaikurnai.org	www.bunuronglc.org

### Background:

The Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) represents Traditional Owners from the Brataualung, Brayakaulung, Brabralung, Krauatungalung and Tatungalung family clans, who were recognised in the Native Title Consent Determination, made under the new Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010, the first such agreement under that Act.

Our community, is made up of clan members and people who associate more closely with Gunai or Kurnai, are continuing to interrogate and discuss language. It is important to note that GLaWAC represents all of these voices. GLAWAC is the Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) for the Gunaikurnai

people and claim area, as outlined in the agreement, providing joint management of 10 parks and reserves within the State. GLaWAC is the Registered Aboriginal Party for the Gunaikurnai claim area, as decided by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council under the Aboriginal Heritage Act, 2006. Please see attached map. GLaWAC has a membership of more than 600 Traditional Owners.

The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council has appointed the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) as a registered Aboriginal party (RAP). From 19 July 2017, BLCAC will have cultural heritage responsibilities under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 over its RAP appointed area. Please see attached map. The Council has deferred consideration of RAP applications over areas outside of the appointed area to enable discussions with neighbouring groups who also claim traditional links to those areas. This is consistent with Council's practice of encouraging all RAP applicants to discuss their RAP applications with neighbouring groups with a view to resolving competing interests and overlapping applications.

### Argument:

[Remove a name connected to the cultural genocide of Aboriginal people](#)

As Aboriginal peoples strive towards self-determination and increasing recognition as the first people of this country, we believe it is now appropriate to consider renaming the electorate of McMillan in Gippsland. One of Gippsland's federal electorates is named "McMillan" after the European explorer who founded the province and was involved in massacres of Gippsland Aborigines. (Refer attachment)

The reading of and interpretation of history is a right of all of our community. It is however a well-established fact that many of the Aboriginal people in Gippsland were effected significantly by massacres, dispossession and impact of breaking cultural rights and way of life.

These actions occurred under the leadership of a range of colonial settlers including Mr McMillan which are then reinforced through monuments and current naming protocols.

Maintaining a name that recognises a person who was actively involved in the dispossessions and worse, we believe should know cease.

### [Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal ancestors publically](#)

Bunjileene was a tribal chief of the Gunaikurnai Aboriginal people of the area. During the time of his life, European settlement was starting to occur on his lands. A purported kidnapping of a white woman by Aboriginal people in the area became the basis of why Bunjileene was captured and imprisoned. During this time many of the massacres of the Gippsland area were fuelled by this supposed kidnapping of the white woman. Bunjileene and his family were taken off country and incarcerated. Bunjileene died in prison November

Purrine was the head clansman of the Lowanjerri or Yowengerra tribes of the Bunurong people.

The stories depicted above are of real Aboriginal ancestors that capture the essence of the impact that European colonisation had on Aboriginal people and their culture.

In a world that Australians believe in multicultural and equal rights we believe society will benefit from being able to learn from and support our Aboriginal peoples and their children in reconnecting to their culture and to have open, effective and meaningful conversations in our society.

It is very important the name represents Aboriginal ancestors and is jointly agreed by the key registered Aboriginal Parties for the electorate area.

The parties believe strongly that a name based on a location wouldn't properly represent the whole area and it is felt names of important ancestors are most appropriate.

The parties have agreed to provide a hyphenated name to appropriately capture the spirit of cooperation and shared histories.

### Consultation

Bass Coast and South Coast Reconciliation submission- separately submitted.

East Gippsland Local Aboriginal Networks submission- Please see attachment

Aboriginal community representatives

Supporting documents- RAP boundary maps, McMillan Electorate Division map and reference material- Please see attachments

### Recommendations:

We respectfully nominate the following name 'Bunjileene- Purrine' to replace the Federal Electorate name currently known as 'McMillan'.

It should be noted that the guidelines for naming federal electoral divisions have been adhered to. The recommendation of using an Aboriginal name is the first priority of the Aboriginal community.

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# Gippsland Settlers and the Kurnai Dead

 LATROBE VALLEY EVOLUTION · SUNDAY, 31 JANUARY 2016

## **Patrick Morgan**

### **Quadrant Magazine Volume XLVIII Number 10 - *October 2004***

ONE OF GIPPSLAND'S federal electorates is named "McMillan" after the European explorer who founded the province. A local reconciliation group recently asked the Electoral Commission to change the name of the electorate, alleging Angus McMillan was involved in massacres of Gippsland Aborigines. Known as the Kurnai, Gippsland Aborigines numbered about 4000 before European settlement - Gippsland was more densely populated than many other areas because of its fertile climate. The Kurnai were a relatively isolated group, hostile to outsiders both black and white. They became one of the best documented Aboriginal groups, due to the pioneering recording work of the anthropologist Alfred Howitt, who lived in Gippsland.

Gippsland was the last part of the south-east corner of Australia to be settled by Europeans, mainly Highland Scots led by Angus McMillan who arrived in 1840. A series of clashes, if not massacres, occurred in the first decade of European occupation, allegedly caused by a Highland brigade led by McMillan, as the Kurnai were driven east and north into the hills away from the central plain, the lakes and shores, which the whites coveted. Their numbers declined dramatically over three decades.

The first serious research on these events was done by Peter Gardner in the 1970s and 1980s. Brought up in Melbourne, Gardner, having attended Monash University during its radical

period, believed Gippsland Aborigines reacted to the European settlement as guerillas along Viet Cong lines. He moved to teach in north-east Gippsland near Omeo, and over time assimilated himself into his local community as a footy coach, miner, bookseller and historical researcher.

Gardner's technique in assessing evidence of possible massacres was to list eight types of evidence: primary sources, secondary sources, folk history, Aboriginal folk history, suggestive place names (Butchers Creek, Slaughterhouse Gully), bone finds, murder-retaliation scenarios, and the topography of massacre sites. Vagueness and contradictions naturally occur in many early accounts, but Gardner argued that the more types of evidence for one possible event, and the more examples within each category, the more likely a massacre occurred. He pointed to a similarity in the topography of possible killing sites - many were places on rivers, inlets and lakes where Kurnai could be trapped in water. He published his findings in *Gippsland Massacres* in 1983, with a revised and enlarged edition a decade later. In addition Phillip Pepper, a Gippsland Aborigine, published with Tess D'Araugo *The Kurnai of Gippsland* (1985), which revealed further information on early incidents.

Four major massacres and some lesser ones have been claimed for Gippsland. The first major clash was in the Warrigal Creek area near Woodside in south Gippsland in 1843. There were a series of preliminary retaliations. Protector of Aborigines George Augustus Robinson was at Port Albert a few weeks after these events and wrote in his official report: "some depraved white men had in a fit of drunkenness shot at and killed some friendly natives". Next, as a revenge killing the local Kurnai murdered Ranald Macalister, nephew of Lachlan Macalister, the sponsor of the Highland Scots explorations into Gippsland and a powerful figure. The pioneers were roused to a fury by this murder and determined to punish the Kurnai, which they did nearby at Warrigal Creek. Robinson wrote in his notes: "next morning Mr McAllister

was coming into Port & was killed by bl. the cries of the bls. when ... shot were distressing they have never been to the Port since". There may have been one large attack, or a number of smaller ones. An informant told Assistant Protector of Aborigines William Thomas in 1845 that "after Mr. McAllisters murder great slaughter of the blacks took place and that on his brothers [Mr Buntine's] station a cartload of Blks bones might be gath.rd up".

A number of secondary sources exist which give the same general picture, though details vary; among them is the account of George Dunderdale, who collected local stories and published them in *The Book of the Bush* in 1898:

The blacks were found encamped near a waterhole at Gammon Creek, and those who were shot were thrown into it, to the number, it was said, of about sixty men, women, and children; but this was probably an exaggeration.

William Hoddinott, son of the Warrigal Creek squatter at the time, published an account of the killing in the *Gap* magazine of 1925 - he knew some of the local Aborigines who survived the onslaught. In the early twentieth century Aboriginal bones and fractured skulls were found in sand near the site.

BONEY POINT is near where the Avon River disgorges into Lake Wellington. Rev. Hagenauer was looking for a mission site there for Aborigines in early 1860s. Another missionary, Rev. Bulmer, wrote: "The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer found a place called Boney Point, a place at which there had been some aboriginals killed - hence the name." Robinson on his travels near the Avon River recorded in 1844: "I saw many human bones and skulls." A large number of Aboriginal skulls were later found there, but it could have been a normal blacks'

burial ground. As with Warrigal Creek, stories of a massacre there in the early days persisted. In his dairy of 1872 James Morrison records that an early Gippsland squatter:

related to me the circumstances attending a pitiful battle between the blacks and the whites on the sea shore, in which the latter were defeated with such loss that their bones were left to bleach upon the sands, the site of that fearful outrage being called "Boney Point" to this day.

T.G.H., writing on Gippsland history in the Gippsland Times of April 15, 1907, explained that Boney Point was an outstation of Raymond's Strathfieldsaye run. In the early days shepherds found a hut-keeper killed and sheep with their legs broken:

next morning a party left there [the head-station] for the spot ... A curtain is best drawn over what followed, but certain it is that such sharp treatment was meted out that from that time their constant interference with stock ceased.

Another massacre has been located at Butchers Creek near Metung. The account has come down from Judge Box, a resident of Metung from 1873, who learnt the story from Colin McLaren, one of McMillan's stockmen. Judge Box passed it on to F.C. Bury of Metung, who recorded it in 1954. A Premier of Victoria, Allan I McLean, from a Highland Scots pioneering family, gave an account of the same incident while speaking at Nyerimilang on the Gippsland Lakes in 1907:

Another massacre of the blacks was started at Newlands backwater close to Paynesville. They had been very aggressive and the whites set upon their camp, drove them round through where Bairnsdale was now, swimming the backwater, the Nicholson and the Tambo, and rounded them up at the head of the little creek where Judge Box had his country house.

There they killed every man woman & child, and the place was known to this day as "Butcher's creek".

Commissioner of Crown Lands Charles Tyers arrived in Gippsland in early 1844, and was soon himself surprisingly involved in an affray. On February 11, 1844, he notes in his diary:

I issued orders to both the border police and the blacks not to fire except in self defence - but to rush upon them and take them by surprise. When approaching the scrub however in line - one of the party fired and was followed by the whole. The natives being taken by surprise fled though the scrub - leaving everything behind them.

Some time later a boating party on the lakes, which included Tyers, was searching for a spot to land to gather dry sticks. Dunderdale records:

when it [the boat] neared the land the air was filled with a stench so horrible that Mr. Tyers at once put the boat about, and went away in another direction. Next day he visited the spot with his police, and he found that the dead wood covered a large pile of corpses of the natives shot by his own black troopers, and he directed them to make it a holocaust.

A fourth massacre occurred during the notorious hunt for the supposedly lost white woman, thought to be held by blacks but never found. Expeditions organised by the authorities, and a private one led by Warman and de Villiers, were sent out to find her, and in the course of the pursuit the Kurnai were harried and driven away from settlement areas. Warman in his journal records that Mr de Villiers' party "came across a great many skulls and bones, which were the remains of Warrigals who had been shot". Later he notes:

as long as such persons as Messrs W. Dana and Walsh are in command of the native police nothing can be done to stop their extermination for the native blacks are the most cruel blood thirsty wretches alive, and nothing gives them so much pleasure as shooting and tomahawking the defenceless savages.

The worst killing during the hunt happened on a tributary of the Snowy River between today's Orbost and Marlo. Native Police were involved - some were Western Port blacks, traditional enemies of the Kurnai. Commissioner Tyers reported: "At least fifty [Aborigines] were killed by the native police and other aborigines attached to the parties in search of a white woman." Police Inspector John Sadlier later found in early Native Police files a note: "The commandant and party to go to Gippsland to investigate the reported slaughter of blacks."

Smaller less documented affrays took place at Stratford and Maffra early on, at John Campbell's Glencoe station (about which many, though contradictory, accounts exist), and later at east Gippsland sites at Skull Creek and Slaughterhouse Gully, and at Orbost after the killing of the cook Dan Dempsey.

ON THE MASSACRES Gippsland does have a very important primary source. The Gippsland squatter Henry Meyrick wrote in a letter home to his relatives in England in 1846:

The blacks are very quiet here now, poor wretches. No wild beast of the forest was ever hunted down with such unsparing perseverance as they are. Men, women and children are shot whenever they can be met with ... I have protested against it at every station I have been in Gippsland, in the strongest language, but these things are kept very secret as the penalty would certainly be hanging ... For myself, if I caught a black actually killing my sheep, I would

shoot him with as little remorse as I would a wild dog, but no consideration on earth would induce me to ride into a camp and fire on them indiscriminately, as is the custom whenever the smoke is seen. They [the Aborigines] will very shortly be extinct. It is impossible to say how many have been shot, but I am convinced that not less than 450 have been murdered altogether.

Meyrick mentions that when his brother Maurice was out on a hunt, he "refused to fire on them ... to the intense indignation of the party, who returned leaving them unmolested". Meyrick's estimate of 450 dead may (or may not) be too high, but his views have great weight, as he was from the squatter class, could speak freely to those in England, and admitted to the same base attitudes in himself.

Kurnai numbers declined dramatically, but, as elsewhere in Australia, other causes took their toll: illnesses (mainly respiratory), lack of marrying partners and of children, disorientation, and despondency as traditional ways declined. Mission stations at Ramahyuk and Lake Tyers in the 1860s gathered up many of the remaining Kurnai. The Half Caste Act of 1888 further broke up families. Lake Tyers took many remaining Victorian Aborigines after 1900, and received the first land grant to Aborigines in 1971. Numbers have now recovered to something approaching the original ones.

Evidence found in more recent years has tended to confirm the broad outlines of Gardner's work. An acquaintance of McMillan, Caroline Dexter, who lived at Stratford in the 1850s, wrote in 1858 that McMillan "was compelled in his early struggles to destroy numbers of more treacherous natives". A number of articles in the Gippsland Times allude to early killings. Governor Gipps in Sydney was insistent that the squatter Taylor of Lindenow, on

whose property Skull Creek was situated, be removed from the run as he had in the past been a notorious killer of Aborigines in the Western District.

When Gardner's findings were first published, some local commentators denied that any massacres had taken place. I came to agree in general with the results of Gardner's research. A later criticism of Gardner was that he overemphasised major clashes when there may have been a series of smaller ones, and that he played down other factors in the demise of the Kurnai. In addition Gardner is not a dispassionate researcher: his book on McMillan *Our Founding Murdering Father* (1987) shows him trying to prove a preconceived thesis - that everything McMillan did was bad.

I agree with the view expressed in the late Thea Astley's novel *A Kindness Cup*, based on a massacre in Queensland: we should tell the truth about the past, but not moralise about it, nor feel personally guilty. I am surprised that the "stolen generation" has given rise to such exaggerated claims of genocide and calls for an apology, when the massacres were a much more serious blot on our record, though not "a legacy of unutterable shame". There is a link between the two episodes. The so-called half-caste acts of the 1880s were intended to alleviate the situation after the disasters of the early days when numbers were falling alarmingly and disorientation was widespread. It was felt that full-bloods would best survive by separation and isolation on mission stations, and half-castes by assimilation into the larger community, but the regulations themselves became a cause of further disintegration.

Patrick Morgan's regional history *The Settling of Gippsland* won the Victorian Community and Local History Award in 1998. A footnoted version of this article is available from the Quadrant office.

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Christina Phillips-Veirke, AprilGrattan Despot-Mullett, Rachel Hood Mullett and 12 others like this.

Chronological

29 shares

2 comments



**Alicia Adams** Latrobe Valley Anonymous, thank you for sharing this -and other- stories on the background of our area. Having lived in Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley all my life, I feel that it is important that the history of the area is shared and remembered.

Thank you, kindly

2 · 31 January at 02:10

[View 1 more reply](#)



**Latrobe Valley Evolution** These monuments to a mass murderer need to be removed.



4 · 31 January at 02:31



**Marianne Meyer** All monuments from these men anywhere need to go.....

1 · 1 February at 06:00



**Latrobe Valley Evolution** Including changing streets and electorates named after them.

4 February at 00:21

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East Gippsland Local Aboriginal Networks  
C/O Aboriginal Victoria  
574 Main Street  
Bairnsdale, VIC 3875  
Ph: (03) 5152 0631

15<sup>th</sup> November, 2017

To Whom it May Concern,

**Re:SUPPORT FOR THE BOUNDARY REDISTRIBUTION AND RENAMING OF THE McMillan ELECTORATE**

We write in support of Gunai/Kurnai Land & Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporations joint application to the Australian Electoral Commission to rename the McMillan Federal Electorate.

The East Gippsland Local Aboriginal Networks (LANs) were established in 2007. East Gippsland LAN's bring Aboriginal participants from surrounding communities of Orbost/Cann River, Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers and Bairnsdale together who have indicated their desire to support their local community. LANs exist within local Aboriginal communities, as a vibrant part of the whole community. Their purpose is to *connect, prioritise, implement* and *evaluate* with other local community partners and stakeholders.

The LANs bring Aboriginal people together at the local level to set priorities, develop community plans, improve social cohesion and empower Aboriginal Victorians to participate in civic and community life.

In the past the East Gippsland Aboriginal community and Elders have expressed their support for changes in their community that work towards Aboriginal people through equity and having opportunities to the same equality of life as our counterparts experience, one which is free from discrimination and racism.

Consultations across the East Gippsland area through LANs, have heard from participants the want and need for change and that true history should be implemented into the curriculum and taught in Schools, available for the whole community. Every Australian has the right to a trueful history, including an understanding of the journey that all Australians have had since European settlement to the present day.

True history that includes education around the dispossession, oppression, segregation and massacres throughout the Gippsland area. Everyone owns the right to our Australian history, however first the truth needs to be told, including shameful atrocities that occurred in early colonialism days. Only then can we as community people live peacefully and the Aboriginal people can commence their healing journey. Public monuments and renaming of significant things such as Electorate names will be a small gesture but one of significant change. There are many positive outcomes in community and society in general that can come from such a positive change and that can have an impact on addressing what has been identified by LAN participants as "Gaps" in the community.

Those "Gaps" have been endorsed as priorities to address within the *Victorian Local Aboriginal Networks – Five Year Plan 2016-2020*; [dpc.vic.gov.au/lanplan](http://dpc.vic.gov.au/lanplan) are;

- *Strengthening Culture*
- *Economic Participation*
- *Support for Young People*
- *Building a Stronger LAN*
- *Community Planning & Partnerships and;*
- *Working with Local Government.*

We fully support the application for the name change of the McMillan electorate, we hope that the application to change the name is successful & look forward to hearing the outcome.

Yours Sincerely

**Scott King**

  
Chair Person Bairnsdale LAN

East Gippsland Local Aboriginal Networks (LANs)



# UPDATE

Monday 24 July 2017

## DECISION REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF BUNURONG LAND COUNCIL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION AS A REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY

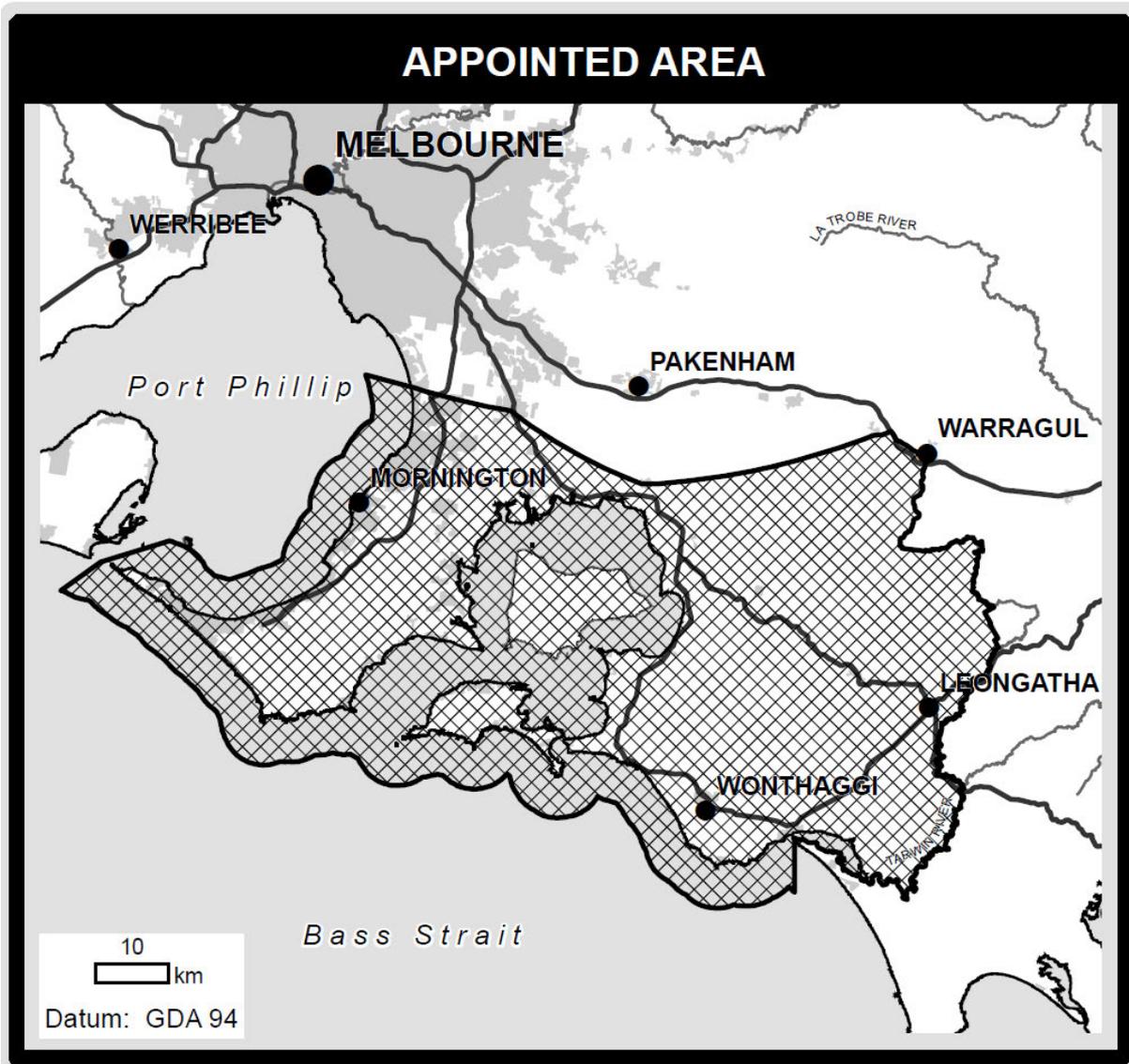
The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council has appointed the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) as a registered Aboriginal party (RAP).

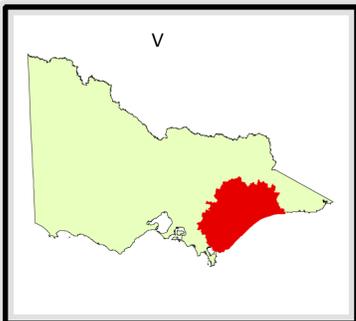
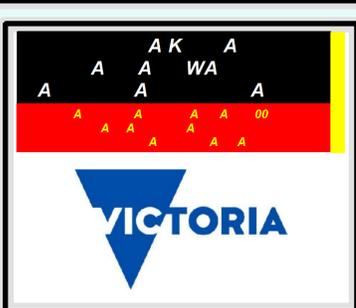
The entire area for which BLCAC is now registered as a RAP is shown on the attached map.

From 19 July 2017, BLCAC will have cultural heritage responsibilities under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* over its RAP appointed area.

The Council has deferred consideration of BLCAC's RAP application over areas outside of the appointed area to enable BLCAC to hold discussions with neighbouring groups who also claim traditional links to those areas. This is consistent with Council's practice of encouraging all RAP applicants to discuss their RAP applications with neighbouring groups with a view to resolving competing interests and overlapping applications.

Date of decision: 19 July 2017





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The legend section contains several symbols: a blue square, a purple square, a yellow dot, a dashed line, a solid line, and a red line. Below the legend is a north arrow pointing upwards, labeled with "N". To the right of the north arrow is the letter "V" above the number "9". At the bottom of the legend section is a scale bar with markings for "0", "0", and "00".