

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP
Minister for Skills and TAFE
Minister for Regional Development



Friday, 21 June 2024

STAGE SET FOR EAST GIPPSLAND'S WANGUN AMPHITHEATRE

East Gippsland now has a new amphitheatre where First People can come together and share knowledge, stories and culture.

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development Michaela Settle today joined Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples Christine Couzens to open the Wangun Amphitheatre in Kalimna, with more than \$1.5 million in funding from the Labor Government backing the project.

Built on Gunaikurnai Country and managed by the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), the amphitheatre has space for up to 100 people to take part in Gunaikurnai dance, fire and smoke practices.

The outdoor amphitheatre also paves the way for non-Aboriginal Victorians to learn about Aboriginal land management through storytelling and knowledge sharing. It provides a modern location for Victorian communities to come together and forge new connections, including the 3,000 Gunaikurnai people living in Gippsland.

The amphitheatre was supported through the Regional Development portfolio and the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program, which provides grants for Aboriginal organisations to build, renovate or expand facilities, supporting Aboriginal Victorians to lead self-determined and culturally rich lives.

Wangun means 'boomerang' in the Gunaikurnai language and this is reflected in the shape of the amphitheatre's roof design. Each of the five sails at the opposite end of the roof represent the Gunaikurnai clans Brataualung, Brayakaulung, Brabralung, Tatungalung and Krauatungalung as the traditional custodians of Gippsland.

GLaWAC – which represents and supports East Gippsland's Gunaikurnai people – has recently been working with the Labor Government and Destination Gippsland to deliver the Dark Skies project which draws connections between stargazing and Traditional Owner storytelling across Gippsland.

This investment is part of the Labor Government's record \$45 billion investment in projects and programs supporting regional Victoria to be an even better place to live, work and visit.

For more information visit rdv.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Gayle Tierney

"The Wangun Amphitheatre provides an important place for First People in East Gippsland to come together – that will strengthen the community and support generations to come."

Quote attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Natalie Hutchins

"Sharing knowledge and stories is an essential part of ensuring that our Aboriginal history continues to be taught and understood by all Victorians."

Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development Michaela Settle

"We've worked in partnership with GLaWAC to make this important project a reality for the East Gippsland community."

Media contact: Lloyd Skinner 0457 138 806 | Lloyd.Skinner@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples Christine Couzens

"The new amphitheatre is a place where people will come together, celebrate, and practice culture. That's the heart of a strong community."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

"The Wangun Amphitheatre will be a vibrant cultural hub where the Gunaikurnai community can proudly share their rich traditions and stories and enable non-Indigenous Victorians to gain a deeper understanding of Gunaikurnai culture."

Quote attributable to at Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation General Manager Grattan Mullett

"Community needs to have a culturally appropriate place to gather, heal, yarn, celebrate, teach, and share cultural knowledge and stories. These practices support and strengthen our cultural identity and spirituality."