



Bonye Bu'ru News

Bunya Peoples' Aboriginal Corporation and the
Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers Newsletter
Reconnecting Country and Culture

Logo artwork by Maurice Mickelo



Bunya Peoples' Community Gathering



Artwork: 'The Bunya Story' by
Maurice Mickelo

1pm Saturday 21st - 12pm Sunday 22nd Feb 2015

Bunya Mountains Accommodation Centre, Dandabah, Bunya Mountains



Come and celebrate Aboriginal cultural revival in the Bunyas!

Saturday the 21st Feb:

- Welcome and smoking ceremony
- Traditional Aboriginal Dancers
- Workshops led by Aboriginal Elders and artists, including: Weaving; Didgeridoo; Spear making; Dance; Language; Painting and more!
- Bunya nuts and Kup Muri Dinner
- Fire side yarns and films

Sunday the 22nd Feb, in conjunction with the Bunya Mountains Markets:

- Welcome ceremony
- Bunya Tours with the Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers
- Art and info stalls
- Closing ceremony

Browse and buy local arts and crafts at the markets!

Bring water, insect repellent, something to sit on, and clothing for unpredictable weather

Book your accommodation now! Camping permits available through Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. A range of accommodation can be booked through the Bunya Mountains Accommodation Centre and 'The Bunyas' at Dandabah.

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February 2015 Issue

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Russell Park interpretations signs

Six interpretation signs have been installed by the Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers (BMMR) within Russell Park. The signs describe the Aboriginal cultural values of the Bunya Mountains including Aboriginal fire management practices and the grassland balds; and the use of plant resources such as the bunya nut and the Gimbee (Gimpee) stinging tree (see cultural plant use article in this issue).

The project was funded by the Australian Government's Indigenous Heritage Program. The Burnett Mary Regional Group managed the contract and the project in partnership with the Bunya Peoples' Aboriginal Corporation and Western Downs Regional Council. Take a trip to the Bunyas and check out the new signs in Russell Park!



Interpretive sign in The Russell Park picnic area.

Building a new track with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS)

In November and December 2014, the Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers (BMMR) assisted QPWS in building a new track on the Tim Sheas walking trail in the Bunya Mountains National Park. This was a high priority task for QPWS as the old track had become a safety hazard. Work on the track was carried out because of a couple of old bunya pines had died on the track. The new section of the track diverted walkers away from the area at risk of the bunya pines falling to ground.

This task was a great opportunity for the BMMR team to refresh their skills and increase their knowledge in track building and design. Things that were considered with the track design were visitors' safety; erosion control; and the impact on flora and fauna.

Bringing Fire Back to the Bunyas

On Wednesday the 19th of November 2014, the Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers hosted a fantastic group for the Bringing Fire Back to the Bunyas workshop, held at 'Lyrics' in the Bunyas. The group was diverse. There were Aboriginal land managers and fire practitioners, fire ecology researchers, natural resource management practitioners, and local landholders representing organisations and research institutions from across New South Wales and Southern Queensland. The commonality with all participants was that everyone there had a strong interest in the use of fire as a tool to look after country.



Bunya Mountains Murri Ranger Coordinator Shelly Hansen presenting to the group

Presenters included Kelvin Quinn (Head Ranger in the Bunyas) from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service; Maurice Mickelo (Bunya Mountains Cultural Ranger); Shelly Hansen (Bunya Mountains Murri Ranger Coordinator); and Oliver Costello (Firesticks Program). There was great discussion drawn from a breadth of experience in the room. Working on Country Ranger Coordinator Shane Ivey from the Ngulingah Rangers in Northern NSW attended to share his experience with Aboriginal fire management. There were participants from the NSW Department of Environment and Heritage fire ecology projects. Representation from Natural Resource Management Regions, Local Government and local landholders all contributed to an informative workshop.

The key outcomes from the workshop include the establishment of a local partners' fire planning group including: BMMR, QPWS, Western Downs Regional Council, Local landholders, BMRG, and Condamine Alliance. A research reference group was also agreed upon as well as commitments to continue engaging with all the attendees and their organisations. **Watch this space as Aboriginal fire management continues to develop in the Bunya Mountains and beyond!**

Cultural Plant Use

Gimbee (pronounced gim'pee): Giant Stinging Tree: *Dendrocnide excelsa*



Note the fine stinging hairs on the leaves and stem

The Gimbee tree is a highly venomous tree found throughout the Bunya Mountains in rainforest clearings, along creek-lines and small tracks. The tree can grow to a height of 35 meters, and is characterised by the large heart shaped leaves with serrated edges and buttress roots in larger trees.

The fine silicon hairs that cover the leaves, stems and fruit can cause excruciating pain when touched. An interesting fact about the Gimbee tree is that only introduced species have a problem with being stung. Native animals and insects do not suffer the same reaction when they come in contact with the hairs.

Aboriginal peoples' use of plants is incredibly resourceful. The stinging leaves of the Gimbee tree were used to relieve the symptoms of rheumatism (aching joints) via a process called 'urtification'. This involved applying the stinging leaves to the skin to trick the nervous system into overlooking the deeper pain of the rheumatism. Similar uses of stinging nettle have been practiced in Europe.

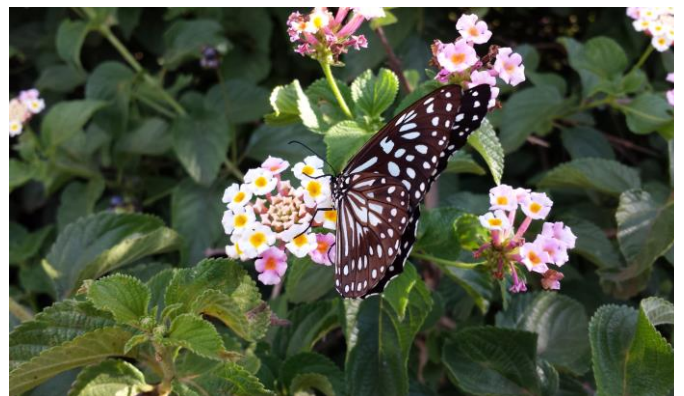
Fishing lines and nets were made with the inside layers of fibrous bark. This bark was also chewed to create a mop-like tool for gathering honey from native bee nests. Another use of the inner layer of bark was to make cloth for baby's blankets by beating it to make is soft and supple.

Butterflies in the Bunyas



Blue Tiger Butterfly

It has been a wonderful season for butterflies in the Bunya Mountains and the local area. The Blue Tiger Butterfly has been one of the varieties the Murri Rangers have observed while in the field. The Blue Tiger butterfly can be seen year round, however they are mostly abundant from October until May. They are a moderately fast flier and settle frequently, often visiting flowers. During hot weather great numbers can be found resting in shady areas. Males and females are very similar in size and color. The males have a scent pouch sex mark on one of the main veins of each hind wing.



Mimburi's Bunya Dreaming Festival

BPAC and the Murri Rangers would like to congratulate Mimburi Upper Mary Aboriginal Association on their successful Bunya Dreaming festival in the Sunshine Coast hinterlands. The Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers who attended the event had a great time connecting with mob through the bunya.