

'Bunjil Shelter'

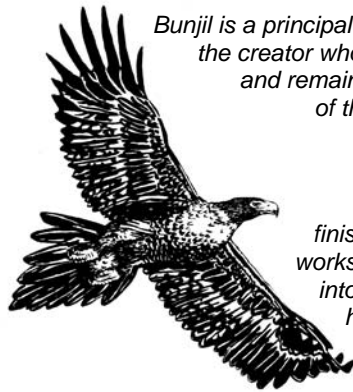
Black Range Scenic Reserve, Stawell

Visitor Guide



Dalkaiana Wartaty/ Nga Keenat /Welcome

"Bunjil Shelter sits within the Gariwerd, a cultural landscape that supports our people both physically and spiritually. Bunjil created our land, our people, the plants and animals, our religion and the laws by which we live. He is the leading figure in our spiritual life, essential in teaching our young people the importance of our laws and beliefs," Levi Lovett, local custodian, Parks Victoria.



Bunjil is a principal legendary hero, the creator who provides for all and remains as a protector of the natural world, his people and their beliefs.

When Bunjil finished his creation works he transformed into an eagle, flying high into the sky, where he still lives today.

The Bunjil Creation story is presented in splendid detail at Brambuk's Gariwerd Dreaming Theatre, in Halls Gap.

Traditional Owners from the Gariwerd area, Wimmera region and south-west Victoria have links to this site. Their aspirations have been sought to guide, shape and inform decisions about its future.

The Traditional Owners responsible for the protection of this site have allowed continued public access.

Visiting this special place

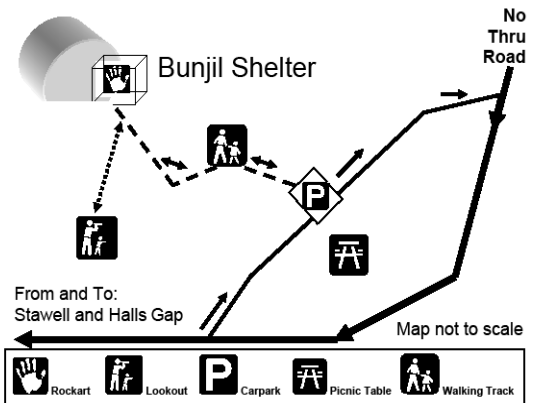
Bunjil Shelter is located in the Black Range Scenic Reserve near Stawell and this is the only rockart painting of Bunjil known. It is widely regarded as one of the most significant cultural sites in south eastern Australia.

"Bunjil does no harm; I think he does well."

These words were spoken by John Connolly, of the Jardwadjali people a little north of here, and recorded by A.W. Howitt. In 1884 Connolly added that Bunjil was a man, and was the father of all his people.

He gave Howitt a description of the painting and its location here in the Black Range. The record of his conversation came to light in 1991, confirming earlier records and rumours of the significance of this site.

Bunjil appears in many of the creation stories of the Aboriginal people of south eastern Australia and is known by different names across this area.



Access is sign-posted off the Stawell-Pomonal Road. A return track, of about 200 metres in total length, leads via steps to the painting. It is located in a small alcove or 'shelter' at the base of a large granite boulder. A steel-mesh fence protects the painting. The reserve was burnt by wildfire in January 2006 and continues to recover.

While you are visiting, you are asked to be responsible and respect this special place.



Further Information:

Brambuk - The National Park and Cultural Centre

Open Daily
9.00am to 5.00pm
Free Entry
Grampians Road,
Halls Gap, 3381
www.brambuk.com.au

Visitor Information Centres in the local vicinity; Ararat, Halls Gap and Stawell.

Caring for the environment:

No camping.
Keep dogs on leads.

No off-road driving/riding.
All riders/drivers must be licensed and vehicles registered and roadworthy.

Please take your rubbish home with you for recycling or disposal.

Fires:

You may light a fire provided that it is not a day of

Total Fire Ban and that:

- the fire is contained in an existing fireplace provided,
- is never left unattended,
- is completely out before you leave.

Remember that gas barbecues and portable stoves are prohibited on days of **Total Fire Ban.**

Black Range Scenic Reserve is in the **North West Fire Ban District**

A rich cultural landscape

Through their rich culture, Indigenous Australians have been intrinsically connected to this continent – including here.

As you walk towards the painting of Bunjil you can look out across the plains and mountain ranges of Gariwerd's Indigenous people which includes descendants of the Djab Wurrung and Jardwadjali people.

Traditionally the lakes, swamps and fertile plains of Gariwerd provided these people with a rich and varied diet of kangaroo, emu, fish, reptiles, yabbies, waterbirds, eggs, vegetables and fruit. Groups of 20-50 people would move throughout the area seasonally to avoid depleting food stocks.

The relatively easy collection of food left plenty of time for recreation, spiritual ceremonies, and education. Young men and boys were taught skills and the law by older men; their fathers, uncles and elders. Similarly young women and girls were given knowledge over many years by the elder women of the clan.

The traditional lifestyle came to an abrupt end with the arrival of European squatters in the early 1800s. One of them, C.R. Hall of Halls Gap, wrote of the Djab Wurrung in the early 1840s that:

"...their kangaroos and emus were driven away by the flocks and herds of the settler's, (giving some justification for their reprisals against an invading enemy, stimulating a sort of guerrilla warfare."

Lifestyles were drastically changed with 'whitefella' diseases and forced relocation onto well meaning missions. Forbidden to use their traditional language, religion and diet, the intricate knowledge of Country, its language and practices, was fractured and splintered to form a new era in Australia's long human history.

The Painting

The painting has been protected by a grill since the 1960s. The exact 'white-years age' of the original painting of Bunjil is not known. Examination of pigment samples in the red colouring and the white outlines of Bunjil and his two dingos tell us they were painted using traditional clay ochres.

In 1911 parts of the body of Bunjil and the second dingo (dog) were over-painted with European whitewash, and the tail of the first dog was marked with red lead paint. Graffiti that appeared in more recent years continues to be removed. The dingos in the painting are Bunjils' helpers.

Renewal and Caring for Country

Today, many of the traditions and places that are significant to Indigenous people are not just historically important but are part of our dynamic, living contemporary culture.

Parks Victoria recognises the Traditional Owners of the area, their cultural connections to Country, and acknowledges these people, their renewal of connections and desire to help manage this land.

Wildlife and wildflowers

If you are lucky Wedge-tailed Eagles may also be present; a symbol of Bunjil, who watches from high overhead.

Black Range Scenic Reserve is one of many reserves that form a patchwork of habitats protected and surviving as islands in the rich cultural and agricultural landscape that is the Wimmera.

While many native animals are at home here, most are shy or nocturnal and not easily seen. Native birds are more readily seen. Watch for the mouse-sized Superb Fairy-wren. The brilliant-blue male is often in the company of brown females and young.



Springtime wildflowers and other plants more easily recognised include greenhood orchids, flame heath and this succulent purple-flowering pigface or noon-flower.



Noon-flower or pigface- a traditional foodplant

Explore Gariwerd's rich inheritance

One legacy to the world of the rich human history of Gariwerd is a profusion of rockart sites within and near what is now the Grampians National Park – found mainly on the walls of rock overhangs and shelters that overlook these traditional homelands.

A number of these rockart sites are open to the public. For further information about Bunjil, guided cultural walks, talks and tours call into Brambuk the National Park and Cultural Centre in Halls Gap.