

The Joondalup region is part of Mooro country and is an important place for indigenous people. The following stories and the other information in this brochure have been included, with the elders' permission, to enable the wider community to gain an appreciation of the indigenous connection to our land. The story of the spirit women, Charnok Woman, is particularly important to Joondalup.

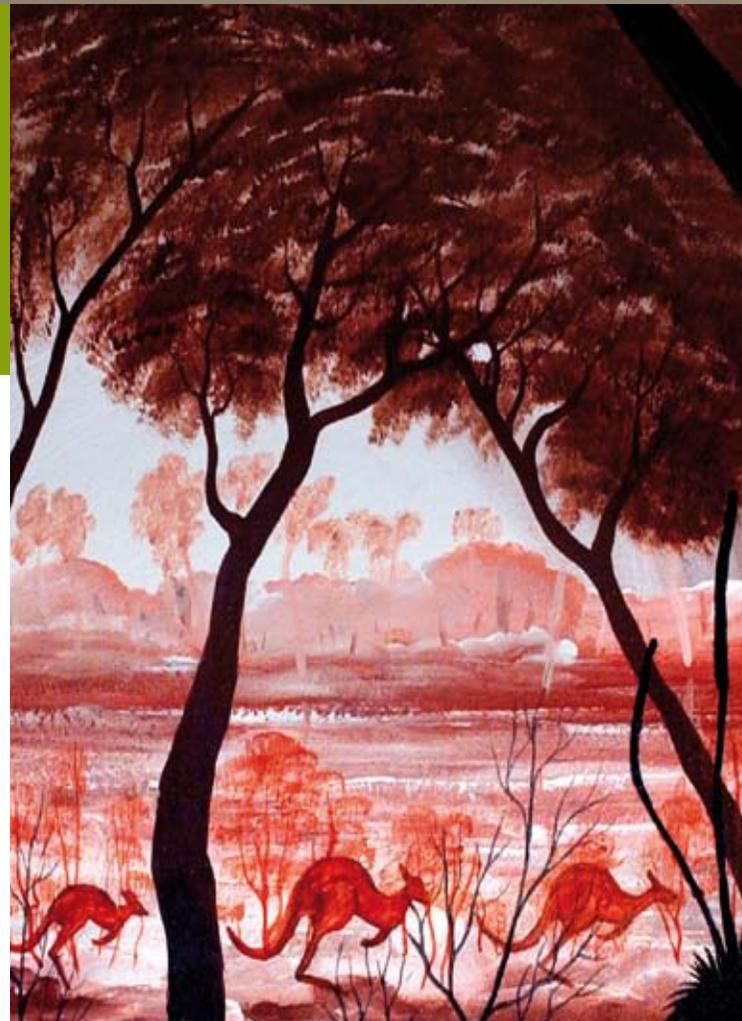
Charnok Woman

Back in the dreamtime there was a tall spirit man and a tall spirit woman called Charnok People. The Charnok woman had long white hair down to her back. In the darkness of the dreamtime, the spirit woman saw a small pair of eyes looking up at her. She picked up this little being. It was a spirit child. She did not want to part with this child so she placed it in her long white hair and the child held on tight. As she travelled she collected more and more of these spirit children. As she crossed a large valley that the Waugal created, which we now know as the Swan River, she left her footprint. We know this place today as Blackwall Reach.

The spirit woman continued north as the male Waugal created the lakes toward the north... Collecting more and more spirit children as she travelled... She realised what she was doing was wrong and had to place the spirit children back. She remembered the spirit man collecting the children and eating them. She had to stop him so she headed south where she last saw him...

On her way she came across spirit children that hadn't been collected and they began to cry for the children in her hair... They turned themselves into Koolbardie the magpie and picked the children from her hair. When the children hit the ground they turned to stone... she headed south leaving a trail of stone behind her leading to the largest stone (Kartakitch), Wave Rock, where she stepped onto the stone and was lifted into the sky. Her hair is the Milky Way and the stars in the sky represent those children she collected.

She knew she could never return to the land as her punishment. If you go to Lake Joondalup during a full moon, it is said that you can see her long white hair reflecting from the stars above. So this place is called Joondalup (place of the long white hair.) The lake is often referred to as the water that glistens.



Joondalup Mooro Boodjar

The two paintings chosen for this publication are by Toogarr Morrison. Toogarr is an artist and historian of the Bibbulmun nation. Toogarr has kindly given permission for the City of Joondalup to use his artwork.

The paintings depict a Nyoongar family and kangaroos beside "the lake that glistens".

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Alternative formats are available on request

Joondalup Mooro Boodjar

Indigenous Culture within Mooro Country

LOCATION MAP



LOCK McNEILL

YONDERUP LAKE

PIPIDINNY SWAMP

BEONADDY SWAMP



Food Sources

Coastal Areas

Abalones were collected in great numbers off the reefs at Marmion, Mullaloo, Ocean Reef and Burns Beach. Pointed stone tools were used to lever the shells off the reefs.

Fish were speared in the shallows, often by children who were learning how to catch fish.

Crayfish were gathered from the reef in the late afternoons.

Shellfish were gathered in large numbers and cooked on the beach at Mullaloo. Some of the shell middens still remain along the coast buried under the sand dunes at Mullaloo.

The elderly aboriginal men used to sit by the ocean and chant with their tapping sticks. Hearing the loud noise made by the tapping sticks, the dolphins (keela) would come rushing toward the beach. The mullet (quella) would shower out onto the beach sand to get out of the way.

Lakeside areas – Joondalup and Goollelal

Ducks, swans and swamp hens were hunted by various methods in large numbers. People would hide in the reeds besides the lake and throw boomerangs at the passing ducks.

The freshwater turtles (yarrigan) were also gathered in large numbers. The tortoise eggs were dug up and eaten.

Bird eggs were gathered from nesting sites and eaten.

Freshwater crayfish (marron) were collected from Lake Joondalup and Goollelal and cooked whole on the hot coals.

Many of the reeds (yanjet) that grow along the lakes and waterways were pulled out and eaten. The reeds had a white shoot on the end which was eaten and tasted a bit like a coconut.

Kangaroos were speared and eaten. The skins were tanned with redgum resin and used as blankets. The bones from the legs of the kangaroo were used for sewing the skins together and making Kangaroo skin bags. The sinew from the kangaroo leg and tail were used as the thread to sew with.

The Legend of the two lost boys

At Mindarie Keys there was a waterhole. The two boys were taken to this waterhole by two tribal elders from the desert where they would learn their law. The boys were told to drink from the waterhole because the water was fresh and clean. The boys heard a loud rumbling noise coming from over the sand dunes. When the tribal elders went off to hunt, the boys decided to venture over the sand dunes and find out what the noise was. To their surprise they saw the biggest body of water that anyone could ever wish to see. Getting thirstier the boys had a sip of the water but spat it out because it was salty. They thought the water might taste better further out, so they swam out into this large body of water. Waagul the rainbow serpent swallowed up the boys. He circled around near the beach trying to find a place to put them and finally spat them out over the country side. It is believed the boys turned into two Tuart trees.

COOGEE SWAMP

The cave next to this lake was shown to the early explorers by the Mooro people. It was used as a sheltered place to camp.



Lifestyle and survival

HUNTING USING BOOMERANGS The people would hide in the reeds (yanjet) by the lake's edge. Ducks would be swimming around in the lake. The returning boomerang was thrown over the top of all the ducks. The ducks would see the shadow of the boomerang and think it was a hawk or eagle and all lift up off the water and group together in the air. As the ducks circled the lake, whenever they passed the people hiding in the reeds they would be attacked with the larger hunting boomerangs. If large numbers of ducks were required there would be more groups of people hiding in various locations around the lake.

WATER (KEP) was found in many of the freshwater springs along the coast and inland. Many of the lakes were freshwater.

FIRE (KARLA) was the next most important necessity after water. Fire was used when hunting as well as cooking.

To hunt with fire the Mooro people would determine the wind speed and direction before setting a patch of bush on fire. The animals that were needed for food simply fled from the fire and were captured once they were startled and in the open.

Patches of bush were also set on fire after the Mooro had finished using the area to ensure that plant life would regenerate to its full potential for the next time the people travelled through.

Cooking with fire was a simple process. Kangaroos were cooked whole under the fire in a dug out crevice. Ducks and turtles were cooked on the hot ashes of the fire. Fish were wrapped in a paper bark before cooked under the hot ashes of the fire.

THE GRASS TREE (BALGA)

was chopped open and the pulp was removed and eaten in large amounts as a medicine for people that had upset stomachs, or when no other food source was available. Resin was also collected to make a glue to make stone tools.

The glue consisted of 50% resin, 25% charcoal and 25% dried kangaroo droppings.

The three ingredients were crushed into a powder and melted onto the handle of the tool.



NOWERGUP LAKE

Archaeological evidence exists to show this was a campground used by the Mooro people. It is place where the giant goanna (crocodile) died. The blood and marrow from the crocodile formed the lake and gave it special healing powers. People with bone problems would drink from the lake to be cured.

THE ZAMIA PALM (DJIRIDJI)

is a cycad which grows locally. They have large seed pods full of red seeds (bayou) which were collected, but not eaten straight away due to toxins in the plant. To leech the poison out of the seeds a reed bag was made. The kernels from the seeds were placed in these reed bags and put under running water for three to four weeks. Once the toxins were gone the kernels were ground into a paste like dough and cooked under the hot ashes of the fire. A small grove of Zamia Palms still exists on the western shore of Lake Joondalup.

NEERABUP LAKE

Archaeologists have estimated that people used the cave near this lake up to 6000 years ago for shelter.



MINDARIE KEYS

"Mindarie" in the local language means the fronds from the grass tree. Mindarie Keys is the place where the story of the two lost boys took place. People used to camp here because of the freshwater springs.



MARIGINIUP LAKE

JANDABUP LAKE

BENNYOWLEE GRAVE SITE

The area on the corner of Ocean Reef Road and Joondalup Drive is the site of the grave of Bennyowlee who was an Aboriginal prophet and senior Juat tribesman of the Nyoongar people. Bennyowlee dreamt that the aboriginal culture would go into a decline with the arrival of the Europeans, but that it would continue and eventually flourish again. A plaque has been erected in the general area and the land surrounding this memorial is being restored so that it can once again be used as a dance site.

LAKE JOONDALUP

Lake Joondalup was a great hunting ground for water birds and turtles. Many great feasts took place on its banks. It is a very spiritual place due to its connection with the dreamtime. In the dream time a spirit woman travelled through this region. When she stepped into the swamp she left her footprint which is now the lake; she also left some strands of her hair here. Legend has it that on a full moon she comes out of the lake and appears to be standing on the water.

Caves on the western shore of the lake were used as shelters for the people visiting the area.

GNANGARA LAKE

METTAMS POOL, MARMION, MULLALOO, OCEAN REEF

Abalone and other shellfish were gathered here in large numbers off the nearby reefs.

BONORIN HILL

Bonorin Hill was used as a lookout for the people camped in the area. It is located in Edgewater in the vicinity of Crest Court and has special significance for Indigenous people today.

GOOLLELAL LAKE

This area was used as a campground and hunting grounds. The Native Experimental Farm was set up here by Reverend John Smithies in 1844. Nyoongar children were used as a labour force to farm the area.



Kangaroo

Mamang

Why the Whales beach themselves (Mamang)

Back in the dreamtime many spirits were placed around the land.

After the dreamtime many of these spirits still remain in the land.

When the sea level rose around 10,000 years ago it trapped many of these spirits under the sea. The only way these spirits can return to the land is through the whales. It is said that whenever a whale calf is born one of these spirits attach themselves to the whale calf. The whale will take the spirit on a journey for up to eighty or ninety years around the ocean before returning to the Western Australian coast. The whale will naturally want to beach itself. The scientific explanation is that the sonars from submarines and ships disrupt their travel. Before these technologies were around the whales were beaching themselves. The Nyoongar people know that they beach themselves to return the spirit being carried by the whale back into the land where it belongs. The Nyoongar men knew when the whales were coming in and would prepare a ceremonial knife called a daap. When the whale washed up on the shore the daap was used to cut the whale open and when the blood from the whale ran into the land the people would be satisfied that the spirit had been returned.

Karda

The Legend of the Crocodile or Giant Goanna

Crocodile and Shark would sometimes meet with Whale when he travelled to the warmer waters in the North. The three would then catch fish together. One day as they were swimming to the cooler waters of the south, Shark told Crocodile that he was getting more than his share of the fish. Crocodile said that it wasn't true. This made Shark very angry. The two began to have a big fight out in the Wardandi (a part of the ocean). Yonga (kangaroo) and Bibyur (scrub turkey) were there to see the fight. Yonga and Bibyur are the two rocks at Two Rocks.

They watched Shark tear skin off Crocodile. The skin is the waves that flap over the rocks when the sea is high. Shark then began to tear bits of flesh from Crocodile. The chunks of flesh are the reefs around Two Rocks.

In the end Shark was so angry that he tore Crocodile's tail right off in two big chunks. These chunks are Rottnest Island and Garden Island. Without his tail, Crocodile could not swim. So he started walking down the coastline. When he got to Derbal-Yarragan (the entrance of the Swan River at Fremantle), he tried to go up the river to rest. But Waugal, the Rainbow Serpent, said he could not go in and told him to get going back up the coast.

From there Waugal watched Crocodile until he got back to Two Rocks where all the animals were gathered together. Waugal told Crocodile that he must meet with Yonga and Bibyur. They decided that Crocodile had to travel back to a big cave at Neerabup where a special berry grew. This was to be Crocodile's food. Bibyur then gave Crocodile his feathered cloak to keep him warm on his journey.

On his way Crocodile rested several times. In some of his resting places he dropped bits of blood and meat and white skin. The blood and meat formed lakes and swamps while the white skin formed limestone outcrops. At one stage Crocodile rested in a big gully. There he formed Lake Nowergup. The blood and marrow from the crocodile gave this lake special healing powers and Nyoongar people with bone problems would visit Lake Nowergup to drink from the lake and be cured. The animals said he should go so he changed into Emu. He ate the berries that he was told to eat. The berry seeds passed through him and made new berry plants. He was happy because he was useful to the people. When emus eat this berry, the acid in their stomachs eats through the hard casing of the berry seed and allows the shoot to come through. The only other way this plant can germinate is after a fire.

Research by Peter Hancock, in his book "The Crocodile that Wasn't", indicates that the crocodile was most likely a giant goanna or extinct megafauna.

Word Meanings

Mooro	Nyoongar people who lived between Fremantle and Moore River
Yellagonga	The leader of the Mooro people at the time of settlement
Joondalup Mamang	Place of the long white hair / Water that glistens
Daap	Whale
Daap	Stone knife
Karda	Large lizard/Goanna
Waugal	The Rainbow serpent
Dwert	Dingo or dog
Mindarie	Fronds from the grass tree (Balga) used for bedding
Waddarn	The ocean or sea
Nytting	Cold time of dreamtime
Kep	Water
Karla	Fire
Marron	Freshwater crayfish
Yarrigan	Turtle
Yanjet	Type of reed that grows along the lakes
Quella	Mullet type of fish
Djiridji	Zamia palm
Bayou	Zamia seed which was treated and eaten
Boodjar	Land or country

Six Seasons

Birak (December to January)

Most of the time was spent by the coast as the weather was warm. Seafood was mainly eaten during these months.

Bunuru (February to March)

Everyone gathered around the lakes and food was plentiful. Frogs, reptiles and the shoots from the yanjet reed were eaten. This is the season when the people would have gathered in the Joondalup region.

Djerin (April to May)

The people travelled down to the river, burning the land they had just come from to ensure food was plentiful the next time they were there. Great feasts of mullet (quella) and zamia seeds took place on the banks of the Swan. The omega three oil ensured everyone was fattened up to last the winter.

Makaru (June to July)

These months were spent up in the hills protected from the south-west winds. Larger animals such as kangaroos and possums were hunted during these months.

Djilba (August to September)

During this season anything that was underground was eaten. Foods such as bush potatoes, bush onions and other tubers and root systems were eaten during these months.

Kambarang (October to November)

This was the season for birds such as ducks, swans and turkeys which lived around the swamp plains.

The Nyoongar people would live along the chain of lakes and the beach during the warmer months of the year. During the winter they moved to the protection of the hills to escape the freezing winter winds.

It is said that the water is always in the lakes due to the presence of the Waugal. The lakes are not separate. The Nyoongar people say that they are all one water created by the Waagal in the dreamtime.