



## **MEDIA RELEASE – 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2017**

### **Mount Buffalo exchange a great success**

Traditional Owners from the Gunaikurnai and Taungurung clans met in the Alpine peatlands at Mount Buffalo on 27 and 28 March.

The meeting, between the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Council (GLaWAC) and the Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (TCAC) was a significant step towards understanding the environment from a cultural perspective and sharing knowledge.

Natural Resource Management team members from GLaWAC and TCAC attended the knowledge exchange. The sharing of technical skills and knowledge about the peatlands environment was a great step towards strengthening the NRM teams for both corporations.

*GLaWAC Acting CEO, Ms Joanne Brunt said “We saw this meeting as a fantastic opportunity for knowledge and skill exchange for the neighbouring clans of Gunaikurnai and Taungurung. We look forward to having many more successful exchanges.”*

Mount Buffalo, represents part of a highly fragmented ecological communities across the Great Divide. An important community is the Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens (also known as Alpine Peatlands), which can only grow in a niche environment under a unique set of conditions with the right soil type, position in the landscape, climate and water supply.

Caring for the unique environment involves the eradication of introduced species through a controlled method of weed control using GPS marking.

*Taungurung CEO, Mr Marcus Stewart “The Taungurung staff are experienced in working on the unique peatland environment. Through caring for country we see the value of these meetings to continue to develop our partnership with the Gunaikurnai team.”*

Mount Baw Baw in Gunaikurnai country, is also home to a community of Alpine Peatlands. The Peatlands at Mount Baw Baw are significant to the Gunaikurnai as it is one of the few environments of its type in Gunaikurnai country.

The peatlands in the Mt Baw Baw Alpine region are in better condition than most others and are home to a rich and diverse range of species including the Alpine Tree Frog, Baw Baw Frog, Alpine Water Skink and Alpine Bog Skink.

Organisations involved in the project include GLaWAC, TCAC, East Gippsland-Catchment Management Authority (CMA), West Gippsland (CMA), North East (CMA) and Parks Victoria.

This project is supported by The Victorian Alpine Peatland Protection Program which is an initiative jointly funded through Parks Victoria, the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme (via the North East, West Gippsland and East Gippsland Catchment Management Authorities).

Photos to accompany the media release.

1. Nigel Pearce- using the best practice method for weed eradication
2. Richard Thomas, Luke Brock and Wayne- discussing the differences between native vegetation and weeds.
3. Wayne, Shorty, Nigel and Bronson- preparing the Job Safety Analysis (JSA).
4. Shane Monk, Richard Thomas and Francesco- discussing the need for using a GPS tracker for weed monitoring.
5. All staff listening to Wayne from Parks VIC giving the history on the peatlands environment.



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