

CMA board culturally aware

The East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA) board, together with senior executives from both the EGCMA and East Gippsland Water, attended a Gunaikurnai cultural awareness tour recently.

The tour was led by Grattan Mullett, cultural hub manager for the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC). The group heard about the important role the rivers and Gippsland Lakes environment played in the survival

of Aboriginal people and how the resources were used and shared among the clans.

They visited the canoe tree at Howitt Park, Bairnsdale, and heard how canoes were made by Gunaikurnai people in their use of the rivers for food and transport.

Grattan explained the process used to build canoes, including removing the bark from the trees in spring when the sap would be flowing, and how the bark would be treated over fire to shape and cure the canoe.

The group heard how the Mitchell River, Gippsland Lakes and surrounding wetlands were a productive place, providing plenty of food, water and shelter for the Gunaikurnai clans. They then visited the Bluff at Eagle Point, overlooking the Silt Jetties and Jones Bay.

The group finished the tour at the Paynesville foreshore, where they met with the GLaWAC on country crew, who are currently undertaking weed control works along the escarp-

ment to Sunset Cove.

EGCMA chief executive officer, Graeme Dear, said the event was extremely informative and much appreciated by all participants.

"Grattan does a great job explaining the importance of the places we visited. For many thousands of years, the importance of healthy rivers and lakes was evident to the traditional custodians, who depended on them to survive. There is much we can learn from their stewardship," Mr Dear said.



Grattan Mullett explains the importance of the rivers and lakes for the survival of Gunaikurnai people, as the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority cultural tour visited the Howitt Park scarred tree, the bluff at Eagle Point and Paynesville. (PS)



Members of the EGCMA board and the managing director of East Gippsland Water, Bruce Hammond (the fourth from left), also visited the Paynesville foreshore to see work undertaken by the GLaWAC On Country crew. (PS)