**Chris Clark -** Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for your patience as we just brought our members all together and sorted out a couple of technical glitches, that the rest of the session proceeds as normally. My name is Chris Clark, I'm the Curriculum Manager for Health and Physical Education at the VCAA, and in a moment I'm going to introduce our other panel members who will be joining us and contributing to today's session. A big warm welcome and a big thank you for those that are joining live and those that may engage with this professional learning at a later date. For many of you, this is the culmination of 12 months, essentially, of professional learning to prepare ourselves to engage with the revised course. And for some people, that process has probably started in some schools already, and we're really grateful for the time that you are taking to ensure that you can provide the best possible experience for your students in VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies.

What I'm going to do now is I'm going to play a short video. What, the sound won't come through, but I think it's important. You'll notice, you'll see the, the transcription of the video, and those that may already be familiar with the video, or you might actually be able to, if you've got very good eyesight, be able to see the title of the video at the top of the screen and quickly access that in YouTube, but you won't hear the sound come through, but you will be able to follow with the...

**Narrator** - Today is a moment in history. Today, we take Treaty further than we've ever seen in this country and these shores. We've laid the foundations. We've worked out a fair and inclusive framework. Today, we're announcing agreement on the Treaty Negotiation Framework and the Self-Determined Fund. On the the significant things I felt as an Assembly member was the way we incorporate L-O-R-E into the framework. There's so many clan groups across the state and it is quite significant. That's what makes this framework stick out more than the other ones we've done before. The framework sets out the rules and the processes for negotiating treaties between the state and the First Peoples. To guarantees an open and inclusive Treaty process where all First Peoples will have the opportunity to register for Treaty negotiations. And it's because if a number of things, but in particular, it's because of the members who stand behind me today. Their leadership, their robustness through the peak of a pandemic, they have never let anything get in the way of the conversations and the aspirations of their community. Now we have the opportunity to sign the agreement. Today is history making stuff, and we all should be proud of this extraordinary and transformative piece of work that's going to improve the lives of Aboriginal people for generations to come.

**Chris Clark** - So I, on behalf of those who are joining us today, would like to pay my respects and acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the countries throughout Victoria that we're learning from, or working from, or living on. Today, I'm coming from the lands of the Wathaurong people, and I would like to acknowledge our traditional custodians and pay respect to ongoing living cultures of First Peoples and very much thank and recognise those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who might be joining us on the call today.

I've played that video, which obviously looks at the Treaty Negotiation Framework and Self-Determination Fund, the commencement of that process back in October of 2022. And very much acknowledged that Victorian Traditional Owners maintain that their sovereignty has never been seeded and have called for a treaty process that delivers self-determination for Victoria's First Peoples. And the treaty is the embodiment of Aboriginal self-determination. And it's really significant that the Treaty Negotiation Framework, here in Victoria, and sets out the ground rules for negotiating treaties to ensure a self, a fair treaty process. And that will commence in 2024. And this professional learning session this evening provides the context for what meaningful partnerships with Traditional Landowners look like.

And you'll shortly be introduced to the Parks Victoria Managing Country Together Framework, and, importantly, the role it plays in sharing decision making, authority, supporting Aboriginal Self-Determination and partnerships directly with Traditional Owners. So, today, and as I look to provide some introductions to our panel members, and today we're joined, firstly, by Josh Ambrosy, who is a Subject Specialist who has worked really closely in the revision of this study and the development of professional learning resources. And then, most importantly, we are so grateful that we are joined today by members of, from Parks Victoria, and particularly the Managing Country Together division and the planning around that.

We are joined today by Maria Pizzi, Director of Managing Country Together, Josh Chikuse, Senior Manager of Park Management and Planning, Nick Loschiavo, Senior Precinct Planner, and we've also got on the call Jordan Charters from Parks Victoria as well, who's been instrumental in, in helping establish the connections today in this professional learning. So, just really the way in which tonight's session's going to work is I'm going to provide a brief overview of the purpose of tonight's session, a little bit about where we've come to with our professional learning, and then we're going to then hand over to our members from Parks Victoria, who will introduce and share with you the detail around Managing Country Together Framework and, importantly, provide some avenues and some guidance around opportunities to engage with that framework and what it means for our VCE OES study.

So, naturally, as we know, this study has long had a strong connectivity to Indigenous Australians' knowledge, culture, and history. And that's only been strengthened in the revision of our study. And, importantly, tonight's session is about enhancing teacher capacity with regards to interpreting the key knowledge and key skills associated with Indigenous Australians' knowledge, culture, and history, but also provide that advice on how teachers might engage with Traditional Owners' perspectives related to outdoor environmental experiences, custodianship management and sustainability, and that's the implementation piece. And really it's about professional learning, closing that gap between the interpretation of what's intended in the study and what our students are receiving at a classroom level. And, ultimately, hopefully this session helps increase your confidence in being able to deliver content related to this area.

So, I have been through that overview. Tonight, at any stage, we've got some questions that the Parks Victoria team will address tonight, and some of those questions have come from those that have contributed to them prior to tonight's session, but also some frequently asked questions that our Parks team are going to provide some insight. If you've got additional questions on top of what's going to be shared, please use the Q&A function, and throughout tonight's session, particularly Josh Ambrosy and I will monitor that and be able to, where possible, maybe ask the team those questions live or maybe take them away offline and provide that guidance for you. So just an overview of where we are centering our focus for this evening. The dot point there comes from the aim of our revised study, and obviously it really sets the scene for then the establishment of our Cross Study Specification, and that Cross Study Specification is a new element of the study, but it certainly places, at the centre, the development of Indigenous Australians' knowledge, culture, and history, and that's certainly been strengthened through the revised study, and particularly around contemporary relationships with outdoor environments and via those knowledge systems and traditional management techniques, which is at the heart of Parks Victoria's work.

The Cross Study Specifications are a set of key concepts and skills that underpin the focus of the study from units one to unit four, so it's no surprise that one of those Cross Study Specifications us Indigenous Australians' knowledge, culture, and history. It does refer to protocols in that Cross Study Specification, and this slide, here, is just to point teachers to a resource that VAEAI has produced and in conjunction with Department of Education through the Marrung Aboriginal Education plan and the Victorian Koorie Community Preferred Model of Education.

So, this document is one that is a great starting point for when any teachers are considering the way in which they're going to engage in a culturally sensitive way in dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' histories, cultures, and understandings. It's important to note that in these protocols that the term "Koorie" is used inclusively and refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria. It's the accepted term that the Department of Education and VAEAI use throughout education documentation.

However, as this slide indicates, it's really important that that term is not necessarily a term that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be familiar with, and it's so important when we are making those connections with our traditional landowners and custodians, that we acknowledge that and really take the time to learn and understand what our local groups may prefer to be referred to. In terms of painting a picture of where this sits, so this slide is designed to show, at the top, our Cross Study Specification, but then the specific content pieces throughout Units One to Four. So, it actually is illustrating that this key knowledge is present in each of those units. The left hand side is our intended content that students are to be taught, learnt and assessed against. The right hand side is, the pieces of the puzzle and the role we play in being able to enact that knowledge with our students. So, obviously starts with the study design, then our professional learning, which obviously has been taking place over the last 12 months.

And then, finally, and this work has been ever present, particularly over the last six to nine months with our peak bodies and subject associations and networks who have been working on developing resources that support that granular delivery of the study. So we are now talking about, at that lesson level, ways in which certain elements of the course, those supporting resources of how that could be delivered, our sample assessment items, a lot of that work I know is reaching a conclusion stage with the publication of different resources, and it's really important that, obviously, we acknowledge the role that those organisations play in helping support teachers deliver the study. This, again, I've probably referred to it now several times, but we're now at that final stage.

This is the last of our webinars on a process of professional learning that has really been throughout this year, and, again, just a reminder, those that might be picking this up at a late stage, please engage with the VCE OES study page where all of those resources are housed, including the on-demand videos, including the webinars, and, shortly, there'll be a web link to the webinar that we ran last week as well, which was just really recapping what we've been doing. Just, this slide really connects to what I was just referring to before about the role in which we all play.

So, tonight really is about providing that support to teachers in relation to content delivery, but then, it is really important that teachers then, obviously, they'll have those resources and outlets that they reach out to and connect with to deliver some of this content more at a granular level, and obviously the VCAA is absolutely here to support that in terms of whether you've got questions of how or who you might connect with and engage with regards to the delivery of some of the content from throughout the course. Luckily, tonight, Parks Victoria are going to direct you to a number of resources that'll be really useful with regard to this content. But just more generally, please at any stage reach out because we can help direct you and guide you to those resources that can help deliver that content at that granular level.

Just, finally, there are two elements, and Josh is going to jump in and speak to some of this in a moment, but this slide is quite important because it is very recent, as in we've made this amendment literally just yesterday. It will appear on our study page in the study design itself to reflect this change. We have also developed a frequently asked question, that will also support this change as well, but it's, before I just, and it's quite self-explanatory, but it's really important to remember that in our work in preparing to support, obviously, in our ongoing role of supporting teachers, we have highlighted, or had highlighted, to us a small nuance here where we can improve clarity around what we're intending teachers to deliver in this area.

It's important through your work next year, if you have any areas or questions that come up, please pass those through because the Frequently Asked Question document is a live rolling document. We can update some of those questions as you're enacting this work in the classroom. Specifically, with regards to this, what we have done is the first key knowledge point in Unit Three, Area Study Two, we've added Registered Aboriginal Parties to the end of that key knowledge point and clarified the scope of the expected knowledge to be delivered when considering Indigenous custodianship of outdoor environments.

So, just specifically, if you are studying an area, or teaching through an area that does not have a recognised Aboriginal party or a Land and Water Council, what the scope of this key knowledge requires from you is still to teach the role of these groups and how the establishment of a Land and Water Council or a Registered Aboriginal Party may influence your chosen outdoor environment into the future. We felt that the scope would've included this organically through your teaching, but we wanted it to be clearer and we wanted to be quite explicit with that. Josh, is there anything that you wanted to add to that point given the level of support that you provided with regards to this?

**Josh Ambrosy** - No, Chris, no, I think you've summed it up really nicely that it's just a clarification that this was probably always intended within that dot point, it's just making that explicitly clear so that everybody is on the same page. And I suppose one of the things to note is that the study design is what is also going to drive external assessment. So, just bearing in mind, it's got the term "Land and Water Council" and "Registered Aboriginal Parties," which means that effectively the role of that processes of formal recognition must be taught.

So, as you've just said, even if you've chosen an outdoor environment that does not yet have a Registered Aboriginal Party, you must still teach it, and students must understand how that process of a group becoming a RAP may influence that outdoor environment further. And I'm sure some of the content that our colleagues from Parks will be touching on this afternoon will include that. Just also another nuance from that dot point is that because there is an established acronym, there is an acceptable thing throughout the study design that any established acronym, a student is able to use that in a response and it will be accepted in lieu of them writing it out of the first instance. It's probably a good thing from a teaching perspective that you'd be training your students, or encouraging your students to always write out at first instance so that they don't accidentally do it to the name of a group that they're using for conflict or something else, and expect an examiner to understand that acronym. So, it's always good to probably write it out, but because it's in the study design, it's basically acceptable to use the abbreviation in this case as well.

**Chris Clark** - Josh, I'll roll straight into this next slide that I'll get you to speak to as well and then we'll then we'll throw to our team at Parks Victoria.

**Josh Ambrosy** - Beautiful, thanks so much, Chris. So, one of the things that you may or may not have noticed in the study design is that there is a bit of, I suppose, crossover, but it's probably better to see it as scaffolding between 2.1 and 4.2, in particular that we, in both dot points, we'll be needing to teach Indigenous peoples' land management strategies. So, the strategies are in both, there is a couple of different points that I want to just bring up today before we hand over to the Parks team, to help you frame sort of what the difference in that is. Obviously, scaffolding in Unit Two is a great strategy to be helping to prepare your students for Unit Four, but in addition there are sort of some specifics to this dot point.

So, in 2.1.2, the dot point requires you to not only teach the strategies, which is actually articulating the skill, but also to teach perspectives and understandings that Indigenous people might bring towards that strategy. And in particular, what I would encourage you to do if you haven't seen it before, is to look at the keynote presentation from John Quay at this year's Outdoors Victoria Conference. So, John Quay was the Brian Nettleton lecture, and John actually talks really honestly about his experience and I think that it'll resonate with many people who are potentially on this call who are about to embark on further teaching as a potentially non-Indigenous person, and how he's sort of gone through approaching that teaching, himself, at a university level. But one of the things that John, I think, spells out really clearly is this idea of sort of perspectives and understandings and how being, doing, and knowing potentially an inseparable sort of construct for Indigenous people, and those are potentially terms that if I was teaching unit two next year, I would certainly be starting to encourage my students to use it and to understand and understand how this notion of being, doing, and knowing is driving the land management strategies.

And, obviously, within Unit Two, and this is a conversation, Chris, and I had the other day, you have a little bit more scope as a teacher because you are effectively driving the assessment. You know, so if you had a class that was really going to get into this idea and want to potentially think about, you know, these notions of sort of how is knowledge and being sort of perceived, or how is knowledge and being constructed from both a an Indigenous people's perspective and potentially a non-Indigenous people's perspective, it could offer an opportunity for some really rich conversations. Then coming to 4.2.1, very much then going to need you to teach explicit examples, and that's certainly, or how we can find explicit examples within the Parks Victoria resources, which there are many, is certainly a focus of the later part of this webinar today. But in terms of what would a student need to know for 4.2.1, they need to be able to respond to within this outdoor environment, visited or studied, this is a strategy that Indigenous peoples could use as a management strategy. There's also a higher order task, or a higher order verb or key skill that's associated with that 4.2 dot point as well. Thanks, Chris.

**Chris Clark** - Thanks, Josh. So, I'm going to pass over to Maria, who's going to take us through the Managing Country Together Framework, and then following that, engage in some discussion with her colleagues and address some of those questions. Thanks a lot, Maria.

**Maria Pizzi** - Thank you, Chris, and thanks, Josh, and thanks everyone for joining us today. I'm going to start too by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we're meeting and talking wherever we are in this place we call Victoria, now. We're on Aboriginal land and I would like to acknowledge Traditional Owners, their ancestors, elders past and present. And I'd like to thank Traditional Owners for their care of country that started thousands of generations ago and continues to the current moment. I'm on Wurundjeri, Wadawurrung county, but wherever we are, we're on Aboriginal land.

My job today is to take you through the Managing Country Together Framework that is endorsed by Parks Victoria's board and tell you a little bit about how we came to develop it, why we came to develop it, how we use it, and then I'm going to pass on to Josh Chikuse and Nick Loschiavo who are going to talk about a specific example of land management in Gariwerd, or the Grampians, the Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan. So, that's the plan. After that we will take questions. We also have developed a series of resources, some links, to publicly available documents that you might find of use as you teach this course, and if there are other things that come up as we talk, as we go through the discussion, we can add those to that resource list for you.

So, you'll see on the, on the little slide in front of you that the Managing Country Together Framework is dated at 2019, but we started work on it in about 2017, and it built on more than a decade worth of engagement between Parks Victoria and Traditional Owners across Victoria as we started to understand more and more that the parks and reserves that we manage as special places are, in fact, core components of Aboriginal cultural landscapes that extend beyond the part of land, the parcel of land, that we've got responsibility for.

We saw, too, that Victoria, on both sides of politics, has adopted an understanding of Traditional Owner rights and responsibilities to country and are recognising, and as both sides of politics as Victorian government, are recognising that there's a transition to activating those rights and responsibilities in Victorian law, L-A-W. You would've, you heard in that video, Michael Bell talk about L-O-R-E, and what we are seeing is that Traditional Owner "Lore," L-O-R-E, is being enfolded into Victorian Stake Law increasingly, so that was something that we started to reflect on as part of building the framework. We wanted to position that Parks Victoria as an agency to be a good partner in managing land, and particularly, managing parks. We wanted an approach that was strategic and principled and would give us a consistent way forward. We wanted to align with broader policies that are in place across government that apply to the Department of Education as well as to us, and, here, I'm talking about the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework, the Victorian Self-Determination Reform Framework.

We also, ourselves, wanted to align with international standards that are set in the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous Persons. So, they were the things that we brought together to try and develop a high level logic that linked us to visions and outcomes and indicators and gave us a consistent approach to Traditional Owner engagement, which is extremely important to success for us, because we work at a state-wide level, and would allow us to communicate to the public where our commitments were coming from and also to allow us, ultimately, to measure where we were going through this framework.

So, there are three focus areas that are guided by the Managing Country Together Framework. I'm mostly going to talk about engagement with Traditional Owners, but I'll just touch briefly on the other two that are noted there on your, on the slide you can see. The first one is better "Protecting," sorry, well, it's the second dot point and it's better protecting Aboriginal cultural values across the parks estate. We have an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Plan that is available on the website that tells us what we mean by being better at protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values. And we have recently published a report on how we are going against that Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Plan. The name of the plan is "Girtgan Kurtba Ngulmbiu Gway-un," Gunaikurnai language for "All Take First Step," and that's because this plan is the first time Parks Victoria has articulated an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Plan for ourselves, and so we knew we were building as we went.

So, all of that's available for you on the website. The other component, the other key area that is interlinked with that engagement piece is supporting Aboriginal people to flourish in the park management sector. We deliberately called it a park management sector because we know we are not the only people managing parks anymore. Round about 20% of the parks estate is now managed jointly with Traditional Owners. And where we are pointing to is a sector that allows Aboriginal people to move effortlessly between Traditional Owner corporations and Parks Victoria as suits their ambitions and priorities. We're definitely not there yet, but that's where we're hoping to get, and the Aboriginal Employment and Wellbeing Plan sets out the actions that we're going to take to get there.

Again, that's available on the website, so I know some of you will be working with students who are interested in careers in the park management sector and that might be a document you might want to refer to as well. You'll see here that we've set out the 10 principles for engaging with Traditional Owners that are outlined in the framework, and there's a lot of discussion about those in the framework, which I'm not going to go through 'cause we've got pretty constrained time. I'm going to just mention a couple of things right now. One is that, is about terminology. You will have noticed, I've been talking about "Traditional Owners" a lot, here, rather than Koories or land and water councils and so on, and we use that terminology in Parks Victoria as a way of recognising that we are working specifically with a particular cohort of persons who have rights and responsibilities to Manage Country, and that's the people we are referring to we talk about Traditional Owners. Some Traditional Owners prefer "Traditional Custodians."

We've gone with Traditional Owners 'cause that's more often used in the state government frameworks that we draw on. Recently, and I think it's largely through to the movement towards treaty, I've noticed that Victorian Aboriginal people are using "First Nations persons" as a way of talking about Traditional Owners from all over Australia who may be living in Victoria. If, for example, a Torres Strait Islander person who lives in Victoria is not an Aboriginal person and is also not a Traditional Owner of this place, but they are definitely First Nations Persons and that's, you know, Chris was talking before about how it's important to understand and to consider the terminology we use in different circumstances. You'll see, when you read the framework, if you haven't already, we occasionally use "Indigenous Person/Peoples" as well, and that's often because we're withdrawing from the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous Persons.

So, in that context we use that terminology. It's not that any of them are wrong, it's just that they apply more specifically in particular situations. So, all of that is encompassed in those 10 principles that we've set out there and that are explored more for formally in the framework. I'm going to talk more specifically about the engagement and partnering with Traditional Owners. And it's important there to talk about the three frameworks for formally recognising Traditional Owners that exist in Victoria. Now, Parks Victoria doesn't have any role in those formal recognition pathways.

Our job is to implement the recognition as it is delivered by those pathways. I want to start though by saying that Traditional Owners' rights and responsibilities are recognised by those frameworks, they are not created by those frameworks. The rights and responsibilities actually come from their place as Traditional Owners. So, I was just saying that the Traditional Owner rights and responsibilities pre-exist those recognition pathways. What the recognition pathways do is bring Traditional Owner "Lore," L-O-R-E, into Victorian "Law," L-A-W, so that their rights are activated based on those formal pathways. Where there is no formal pathway, there are still people asserting Traditional Owner rights and responsibilities and we engage with those people as Parks Victoria, we just do it in a different way.

So, the three pathways are the Native Title Act, the Traditional Owner Settlement Act, and the Aboriginal Heritage Act. The Aboriginal Heritage Act creates the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council and the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council appoints Registered Aboriginal Parties. Registered Aboriginal Parties, or "RAPs," acknowledged in the legislation as the primary source of advice and knowledge on matters related to Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places in the area for which they are registered. So, if you are working in place, they are the primary source of advice around place. We work with RAPs quite a lot in terms of the protection of cultural heritage and understanding the cultural heritage of the parks and reserves within the area for which they've been registered. Native Title... Native Title is a federal court process, and there are some Traditional Owner corporations that have achieved recognition through Native Title. A lot of the land and waters Aboriginal corporations connected up through the Native Title pathways, and some of them have been recognised and they have had formal determinations that Native Title exists in these places.

So, the most recent one was the Wotjobaluk people's... Actually, it was Eastern Maar, the first, the most recent one was Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation that had a Native Title determination in January 2023. The third pathway is the Traditional Owner Settlement Act, and the Traditional Owner Settlement Act was created as the Victorian government's preferred way of recognising Traditional Owners who have Native Title style rights. That pathway leads to Recognition and Settlement Agreements or "RSAs," as we often call them in Parks Victoria, 'cause we love an acronym, but the formal title is Recognition and Settlement Agreements, and the most recent one of those was for the Wotjobaluk peoples in Western Victoria.

So, it is a complex space, there's some fantastic fact sheets that you can get through First People State Relations website, and we'll give you that as part of the resource pack we give you so that you understand the different layers of rights that are activated as Traditional Owners work through those processes. But it's really, as I say, really important to note that their rights and responsibilities to country are only recognised through these formal pathways.

They still exist regardless of whether the Traditional Owners have chosen to use those pathways or not, and we still partner, we still have relationships, we still have engagements with Traditional Owners whether those partnerships are in place or not. The case example that Josh and Nick are going to take you through relates Gariwerd, for example, or the Grampians. The only formal recognition that's in place there is there is an Indigenous Land Use Agreement under the Native Title Act, and that identifies three corporations who represent the Traditional Owners who are asserting rights over Gariwerd.

So, the Indigenous Land Use Agreement is signed by the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation, representing Gunditjmara, the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, representing the Eastern Maar Peoples, and Barengi Gadgin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation representing the Wotjobaluk Peoples. So, in that situation, there is no Registered Aboriginal Party, there is no Recognition and Settlement Agreement, there is no formal joint management, but we have still found a way to engage and partner with those Traditional Owner corporations through taking up the foundation that is given to us by the Indigenous Land Use... The ILUA, Indigenous Land Agreement. You'll see there's a prompt there to remind me to mention treaty and truth-telling processes before I hand over to Josh and Nick. The reason that's there is not because we know what Parks Victoria's responsibilities will be under truth-telling and treaty processes, but just note that all of us, as Victorians, are going to have responsibilities to participate in these processes to one extent or another.

And we, at Parks Victoria, are thinking and seeking to prepare as best we can to be good partners for all the opportunities that are going to come with treaty and truth-telling, although the way forward is still emergent. We know that we can expect broader opportunities to engage with Traditional Owners and to understand how we, as an agency, can progress their priorities and activate the rights that they and responsibilities that they have to country. So, on that note, I'm going to pass on to the case study and to my colleagues, Josh and Nick, who are going to take it from here.

**Josh Chikuse** - Hopefully everyone can hear me. Tech issues, but hopefully that's okay. Firstly, I just want to start off by paying my respect for the land we're all gathering to here today. Also want to pay respect to Traditional Owners of past, present and future, but also want to pay my respect to Traditional Owners to the land we are talking about, which is a Gariwerd landscape as well. So, I guess what Maria has taken you through is the frameworks to which Parks throughout works under, and also the policies that we seek to apply. I guess the case study that I'm going to talk about is how we then apply all the frameworks that, and policies and guidance that Maria has talked about in a planning sense. And, I guess, Parks Victoria's responsibility is around ensuring that, you know, the parks that we are, delegated to manage are in a better state in the future and protected as well, so one of the things that we normally have to do is do planning, you know, like anything else in business, you have to plan for what the future is for those parks, and then once the plans are in place, then you can operationalize those plans and activate any ideas and strategies that you've set to put in place.

So, I guess, in this particular landscape, the Gariwerd landscape, I guess there was existing management plans that existed. We had the Grampians Management Plan that existed from 2003 and we had the Big Range Management Plan that existed from 1998. But I guess, as you can see, 2003 and 1998 is a very long time ago, that things have moved on since then, and in management and things in practises also changed. Clearly the things that Maria has talked about is definitely something that wasn't there in 2003 and 1999, so if you were to look at that management plan, you can see the way we articulated and how we want to manage the parks then is really outdated because it doesn't recognise the rights of Traditional Owners, it doesn't recognise where we at in around expressing culture, it doesn't get to where we are around understanding how we actually build knowledge, traditional knowledge, into the practise that we want to do to manage our parks as well.

So, you know, one of the things that why the plan came about was it was time, that we needed to review the plan but also, you know, to Maria's point, we were already in discussions with Traditional Owners and Indigenous also discussions going about the future of that landscape, so, obviously, they were seeking to get Native Title claim. I guess, at that point in time, with an aspiration that this area becomes joint management in the future, but discussion we were having that point is, okay, there are some immediate strategies and issues that we need to address, whilst Traditional Owners negotiate government about those outcomes, so there was a role for Parks to play to review the current strategy and directions in this landscape. So that's, again, one of the triggers to why we wanted to do this plan.

So, to Maria's point, you know, we negotiated traditions about doing the plan but also coming together in terms of what we're seeking to achieve in doing this plan. I guess the other thing as well as to why we, need to do the plan is, current park management practises have moved on as well, so, in terms of how we manage the landscape through fire has changed, how we seek to work with our partners and neighbours has changed, how we seek to protect some of those natural values has changed, and we've also built a lot of knowledge around, cultural values and how we need to do so. There was a definite need to update the plan like any other part of the landscape. So that's one of the things that we will be looking at and why the plan had to be done.

Obviously, there were some immediate things that Maria talked about that that triggered us to immediate, to prioritise the plan that we definitely needed to work with our Traditional Owners front and centre because the way Maria has talked about, the Manage Together Framework is what we used in applying now, in particular, so it's totally a different way of how we, normally would've done planning a long time ago, in terms of how we approached this one, we negotiated with Traditional Owners about what they wanted, but at the centre of it is around shared decision making around the strategic directions of the plan with the vision that in the future this park sets a foundation for joint management as well.

So, one of the things we agreed was to set up a governance, Planning Governance Project, which would have shared decision making with Traditional Owners about the future of the park, but what we also understood, that we heard from Traditional Owners of the park, we didn't want the traditional way of doing planning. We wanted to express this plan in a different way and this is where the Cultural Landscape Concept came through. Parks Victoria, itself, has been moved away from doing single park management plans. We moved to a landscape approach to multi-park approaches how we do it, so it sort of aligns pretty well with how traditional way of looking at landscape, so I guess the cultural landscape is the foundation to which we are looking to develop this plan as well, and set for the future. Maria's already talked about the different arrangement we would normally put in place to work with Traditional Owners.

So, for this plan we also acknowledge that, and what we heard from some Traditional Owners was, again, because of the... of history and colonialism, there was a disconnection with connection, of culture in the landscape. So, it was a priority for us to provide a platform to Traditional Owners from different parts of the state and to come together and gather and talk about the plan as well, and so at Parks Victoria in asking here about what their vision is. So, in us planning for this, we actually fasted a platform for Indigenous to come in and tell us what their vision is for this park, which is different to what we normally do. And I guess what we do also did was to set a, different pathway where we gave them the platform but also hear from them separate to normal communities as well. I guess, for us, it was a big learning for us as all because by creating a platform, you get that opportunity to hear and listen.

Normally, the way government does its process is you, it's like you do and Engage Vic and you never hear a nibble. So, by us having Traditional Owners of country listening for people of the time, allow us to also learn and listen, really listen, but also, what we also found out is us, there was a role to play for us to educate our community as well. So, what we heard, initially, when we started the planning was actually, most of the community saying, "Well, I don't know about this culture you're talking about. "How do I know; how do I get educated?" So, with the permission of Traditional Owners we also embarked on undertaking a culture values report, where Traditional Owners were able to share that information and that information was also shared with the community. So, there's a separate report that we did with Traditional Owners that also supports the management plan, but also it's in the Traditional Owners' voices about what's provided for them.

So, it's not government saying, but it's also them saying that, but also what we then took is take those priorities into the management plan and strategic directions for the plan. Obviously, there are always conflicts in doing a plan because change is not easy. When you do your plan you think about the future, you don't think about, you know, what's happening tomorrow, but you think about the 10-15 year lifespan of the plan and what we saw against this, there were some activities that were changing over time, because of the growth in activity. So, we saw some of the changes that we saw in the planning, that climbing and camping were some of the activities we saw that way they were changing over time and they needed a different approach to how you want to manage that activity within this landscape.

So, we created a framework to which, we work with Traditional Owners and we did a lot of field work with Traditional Owners to gather more knowledge about what's important because it was also important to show, but also important for the community about why that change might come and what's triggered that change. So, there was a lot of own country visits, Traditional Owners, over a period of time where they gathered information that informed the plan as well. So, again, it's something different that normally when you're doing a plan, you use current information. But, for us, for this planning process, we also had to embark on a lot of foot work with Traditional Owners so that we gathered new information for them to understand as well. Yeah, in terms of what are the outcomes of the managing plan, it was, we wanted to express this landscape as a new cultural landscape and we had a lot of stories that now set the foundations for this landscape around the cultural landscape. And one of those things is around, you know, ensuring there's a reconnection of culture in this landscape. Also, ensuring that we celebrate some of the culture.

So, Gariwerd is one of the places that's got the densest rock art in Victoria, and possibly in Australia, and there was a need to us to protect that as well, and also celebrate that as well. So, there's a lot of work that's still ongoing in protecting rock art in this landscape with the Traditional Owners, but also educating the community about the important rich history that exists in this area as well. But, also, as part of that is to recognise the history of these landscapes, obviously, you know, colonialism changed things, but we're seeking to reconnect and heal country and that has been important to show us that we heal country together with community as well. So, part of that is returning of some key important cultural species in this landscape is something that the plan also talks about. I'll probably pause there. Maria, I'm not sure if you want to add more, but I could go on forever, but those are the key highlights.

**Maria Pizzi** - I don't know if Nick wants to add anything, but I'm happy to pass on to the questions if you,

**Nick Loschiavo** - No, I don't have anything to add to that. I'll leave that with Josh.

**Maria Pizzi** - Okay, perhaps we go to the next slide and start talking about reflecting on, and you, Josh, and you were one of the key drivers of the process and how would you say it was, the experience was different to previous, perhaps more traditional ways of management planning? Nick, I know you've got some experience in this field, maybe not in Gariwerd, but in elsewhere, that you might want to draw on too.

**Josh Chikuse** - Thanks, Maria. I think, you know, I'll start off and hand over to Nick. I guess, the reflections for myself, it was an enriching experience. It allowed us to... rip up our normal procedure of doing planning, but I think the key for us is to find space for listening and finding space to do things differently. That is definitely what I learned from the process, and we've actually taken on board most of those things to our new planning processes in other parts of the state. So, I think they set the benchmark, in sense of how we want to work differently with Traditional Owners, but also it set some expectations about us, as Parks Victoria, in terms of what we need to continue commit to ensure that some of the principles can be committed to as well. So, we have to do things differently and we need to recognise that.

**Nick Loschiavo** - I might just add to that, as you said, Maria, I haven't had a lot to do with the Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan, but I have worked on the Buchan Caves Concept Plan. I'd like to acknowledge as Traditional Owners of the lands from which we're all meeting here tonight, and understand the knowledge that they've had for the two and a half, 3,000 generations, and how important it is for us to acknowledge and take a moment to think about that in the context of where we're meeting tonight around knowledge and education and how privileged we are, I am, to present to educators here tonight, knowing that... this knowledge to be carried on and it's through you. And in that context I've had, I've worked on... the Buchan Caves Concept Plan, and one of the key drivers of that, as Josh was talking, around engagement with Traditional Owners.

But I had the privilege of being in a meeting with elders where there was just... the amount of knowledge and the character and the humour in their expression about where they were on Country, how they wanted to see this concept plan be developed, and the important things. And what they were saying as elders was the important things for us are our young people. And that went a long way to shape the approach that we took to renew, I guess, after the fires through that part of the world, a consideration of how that space was to look after such a long time of colonial domination. And it's in this Gippsland, Gunaikurnai Country, and... some of the project, well there's some of the projects that we work on from both perspectives of management plans and master plans, or concept plans, is around this engagement with the Traditional Owners of that country and understanding. And from my perspective, I work as a landscape architect, but seeing landscape as country and what change that means for me in terms of country and seeing systems in place, a landscape, features, vegetation, animals, people, weather, and those sorts of things and how that interconnectedness happens.

So, yeah, just add to the sort of work that we produce from Parks Victoria and the role and responsibility we have to engage and listen to Traditional Owners.

**Maria Pizzi** - Thanks, Nick, I think that's been really helpful because it kind of drops down into the second question, there, which is how we incorporate in our different roles, Traditional Owner perspectives and priorities when we're exercising our responsibilities in terms of planning and decision making. So, I think you've given some flesh to that. Josh, I know you do that too, in terms of how you try to foreground Traditional Owner perspectives and inform the work you do with Traditional Owner priorities. Is there anything you wanted to add?

**Josh Chikuse** - Thanks, Maria, what I see happening to a lot of people as an ahhhh moment, is that the case, as government agents, as people, there is a way we do things, that we're entrenched to do things, that we're entrenched to think that, I guess, you know, when you do listen to Traditional Owners and have that privilege to listen Traditional Owners about their perspective, it gives you a different way of thinking in a way of approaching things, and because most government people have, set decisions, set outcomes, it's always an ahhhh moment for most people, like, "Oh, this is what I didn't want to hear." So, I think having that coming with an open mind and also coming with an open space to listen, because once people think they've listened, they want to make a decision today, well, that's not really how it normally works. You know, sometimes you need to listen for a period of time. So I think for us, you know, in decision making and shared decision making with Traditional Owners, although you want to make that shared decision, but it's not, it also takes time for both parties to understand each other and also make sure that, I guess, in you doing your work, you put time aside to listen and not actually try and make decisions. So, I think that's what would be the biggest learning that, you know, when you do a work, you need to make sure you plan for listening and do that well.

**Maria Pizzi** - I think that focus on listening and creating the time and space to listen and to listen with open ears, so you're listening to understand, not to insert your point of view, I couldn't agree with you more. That is the foundation of doing it, doing it successfully. And it's a bit, it can be a strange experience for Traditional Owners, because as you say, often that isn't the way they've been approached in the past, including in the past by Parks Victoria. So, it can take some time to, to kind of go through people's doubts on that topic and convince them that actually we are there to listen. And once you get there, it does change the way you see the place you're talking about. But you've got to invest to achieve that. I'm sure you've had that same experience, Nick.

**Nick Loschiavo** - Absolutely. And one of the key things that I know through the projects that I've led is to engage with Traditional Owners at the very outset, at the writing of a brief for a project. Ask them what their role, their responsibility, do they want the project to proceed. So, have them partnered at the very outset of a process so that they can inform, advise, take on board, Afford me the opportunity to take ownership of this piece of design work on Country. So, it's really important in that context, and I know one Traditional Owner, one presentation said to me that I've taken on board, or since then, "Listen twice, speak once." And, you know, it just, it goes to that listening. There's just that wealth of knowledge and the way it's imparted is just fabulous to listen to from my perspective.

**Maria Pizzi** - Yeah, I, again, completely in agreement. One of the things that we also need to own up to, at least in the role I have, is that sometimes we can't go as far as Traditional Owners want us to. So, there'll be limitations that we have through legislation, or through time, or through resources, or through whatever else is getting in our way, and I've learned that part of being in good relationships with Traditional Owners is in owning up to those limitations when they arise and being clear about what is possible and what's not. It can be a bit awkward or embarrassing, or some, of course, I'd love to do more, nine times out of 10, but part of my job requires me sometimes to say, "This is as far as I can go, this is what I've got on offer, "these are the things in my way." So, it might not sound like a way of incorporating Traditional Owner priorities and perspectives, but it is something I need to do to be sensitive to those priorities and perspectives and make sure my role is, is being accountable to those priorities and perspectives.

**Josh Chikuse** - And I think, Maria, I guess, you know, I guess one thing that I've loved that your team have done is, I guess, you know, the report you talked about that you have published a report to show transparency about what Parks Victoria is doing. I guess what's important is to show progress in some ways, and I think that's the role, although, your point is we manage to do everything tomorrow, but as soon as we can demonstrate the progress that we're doing now and where things will change, and I think like, you know, I look at the period I've been with Parks Victoria, things have changed, but not at the pace to which to just one, but things are moving in the right direction-

**Maria Pizzi** - Yeah.

**Josh Chikuse** - In some ways, and I think being transparent about that is really important.

**Maria Pizzi** - Yep, yeah, I agree. We'll move on to the next point, which is how we aim to... be influenced in our decisions by things like Country Plans, the Tradition Owner Fire Management Strategy, and other things, other state-wide documents that are in place.

**Josh Chikuse** - Thanks, Maria. I think it is really, really important, I guess, you know, to use Traditional Owner voice to inform how you do your work and how decisions for land management need to be made. It is really, really important. I think some Traditional Owners have the privilege to have come to plans and some are still in that space to do so. And I think, you know, for us, the Country Plans gives us an opportunity to hear Traditional Owners in their own words about what they want to seek and achieve for Country. And, but also it doesn't stop, I guess, you know, the Country Plans are there, is documented, but I think what we've heard a lot is do not assume winning a Country Plan is the end all for how you do your work. We still need to have conversations with Traditional Owners about how we interpret those Country Plans to the parks and land that we manage. So, Country Plans give us an overall direction om how Traditional Owners see Country, but also I guess we do have specific plans like the Fire Cultural Burning Strategy, which also talks specifically techniques and approaches to which to just seek us, want us to use and manage in fire as well. I think, again, if you look 10, 20 years ago, Country Planning wasn't a thing that government and us practise/acknowledge, but it is something that's really truly acknowledged now in terms of how we want to heal Country, 'cause it's definitely a different way to look in Country and heal Country.

So, I think it's how we bring about the traditional knowledge into the practise that we do, and the Traditional Owners more and more now are publishing information that they're happy to share with the community and Country Plans and fosters one of those documents that we need to apply and listen to but does not stop us from also having conversations is really important because, I guess, like anything else, you know, policies and words can be misused and can be, you know, assumed to mean something. So, it's really important to also have those conversations about the intent of those plans with Traditional Owners as well.

**Maria Pizzi** - Yeah, exactly. And, it's not that these documents, which are available publicly and the resource list will include links to those documents, those documents are kind of a place to start these conversations and it's important to read them because they begin the conversation well for all of us because it, you know, they, we have some language, we have some descriptions of the priorities that matter to Traditional Owners, and it can hopefully avoid Traditional Owners having to start with the basic education of us as land managers into their perspectives on Country. So, we come to the conversation with a little bit of preparation in our own minds that we are starting to get ready to talk about Country rather than talking about natural resources, which is the way non-Aboriginal people talk about, about Country sometimes, for example, and when Traditional Owners talk about Country, they'll be talking about the use of fire and about water. They'll be talking about this, they'll be potentially thinking about sky country, as well as sea country, as well as terrestrial land.

And so, if we do the reading beforehand, we are primed for a better conversation. But as Josh says, nothing replaces... the knowledge and the opportunity that comes from being on Country and listening to Traditional Owners. I think, I put an example, Maria, where there are some instances where some people read Country Plans and they expect that they know everything. So, if it's a start it doesn't mean you fully understand the Country Plan and allows you to have a conversation because I've seen some people assume that because they exist, they don't need to talk to you, so also they fully understand what they need are, so.

**Maria Pizzi** - Yeah, exactly. Yep, I've seen people do that with the state-wide strategies as well, and the state-wide strategies are really clear in saying this is a beginning then Traditional Owners in their own country will want to make more specific decisions and plans related to their use of fire on their country. So, yeah, it's a both end situation. Mindful of time, I'm going to move to the next question, which is about how Parks Victoria supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to work for Parks Victoria as an agency, and that's the Aboriginal Employment and Wellbeing Plan. Parks Victoria's board has set an ambitious target for employment of Aboriginal people within our organisation. We want to achieve a seven percent employment. Our current employment is around about four percent of the overall workforce being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Many of those colleagues are working on Parks, but some are working in corporate areas, some are working at district manager level.

So, we need to do more of that. Again, I'm not saying we are where we want to be, but our intention is to create opportunities across the organisation so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be welcomed and supported to, and to thrive within Parks Victoria. One of the measures that we use is something we call a Designated Aboriginal Position. And so, with those Designated Aboriginal Positions, we are saying only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can apply for those roles. And we, in creating those positions, we're trying to find positions where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and ways of seeing the world are going to... offer us, as an organisation, a much better way forward than with, and perhaps a non-Aboriginal person might be in that role. This speaks to our intention of prioritising Traditional Owner knowledge and prioritising our ability to engage and work with Traditional Owners.

And it stands to reason that Aboriginal people have more, sort of, have more skill and acumen around engagement, cultural heritage protection, understanding country, then non-Aboriginal people might have as, you know, in the same sort of context. That's not always true, but as a generality, they're the sort of indicators that would move us to create a position as a Designated Aboriginal Position. In the directorate I lead, which is Managing Country Together, most of our positions are either Designated Aboriginal Positions or Identified Positions. When they're identified, what we say is we would, prefer to have an Aboriginal candidate, but knowing the context of the work we're trying to deliver, there may be that we're not, our salary's not going to attract that sort of that, an Aboriginal person with the skills we are looking for, or there may be other limitations that mean that we need to expand the scope.

So, in the scope of recruitment for that role. So, hopefully that answers that question. But as I say, the Aboriginal Employment and Wellbeing Plan's got lots more information you can... you can find. And I think I've kind of, in talking about that, I've sort of answered the General Career Opportunities as well. We would, we have got opportunities across the organisation, we would love to create more, and particularly, say in areas that are off Park, because we know that there are plenty of Aboriginal people who are looking for career opportunities in say, education and comms and engagement sort of work, some of the other areas that we have corporate functions in, administrative, financial, HR, there's lots of other ways that Parks Victoria could benefit from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

So, we are looking at all of those things. We have a very small programme in Northern Victoria that is about supporting students through pathways that where they finish their education and develop a vocational qualification as well. But that's kind of like a bit of a pilot programme that's running in the north that we haven't replicated elsewhere. We will look to explore it more, but some of that's sort of resource dependent, so I don't want to make too many promises at this point in time. The last question in the panel discussion is a suggestion about best ways to approach Traditional Owners if schools want to learn more and what resources are around.

So, again, we will give you a list of resources that will point you to some of these Traditional Owners state-wide strategies that embed the priorities and perspectives of Traditional Owners when it comes to land management. More and more of those are being developed as we start. I think the first one was the Fire Strategy, but there's "Water is Life," is a document that VIC has produced that's around Traditional Owner priorities and perspectives in regards to water. There's one around botanics, like food. There's a game management strategy. These are all at state-wide level and these are all publicly available and all will help you. There we are, thank you, Chris. They'll all help you get a bit of an insight into Traditional Owner knowledges and perspectives and priorities. We will include in the resources references to the Koorie Heritage Trust, which is a state-wide based organisation that provides information and advice and some training in regards to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more broadly, and will point you in the direction of Traditional Owners.

And the other place is Bunjilaka. Bunjilaka is a part of Museums Victoria. They've got a lot of resources for schools and students. And so, we've got a resource link to them as well. I think the biggest piece of advice, though, is the advice that Josh and Nick have already underlined, which is, listen, make time to listen, and listen twice and then listen again. I think that's probably the best, the best advice for how to engage.

**Chris Clark** - Thanks so much, Maria and to Josh and to Nick. It's so pertinent that you finished on that point. And I wrote that down as something that really jumped out in terms of planning for listening and listening for understanding, and I think that's critical, and we are so grateful that you have provided these resources, which underline, again, that it may not be appropriate or available, that there may not be that connection that some teachers in certain areas might be able to make those human connections, maybe not in the timeline that they would ideally like or need to be able to deliver elements of the study. But I think if it's viewed in a longer term manner in making that time to make the connection, to listen, then there may be that opportunity to really develop that authentic and genuine connection that might have those, that reciprocal benefit for the school, the teacher and the Traditional Owners as well. But in lieu of that, we're so grateful, and I'm speaking on behalf of the teachers here, of the resources that you've provided.

And just to be clear for those on the call, when we provide the slide deck for tonight, and the recording, what Maria's been referring to, which is shown on the screen, here, but there is a supplementary document that Parks Victoria have been kind enough to prepare, which will have the list of web links of some of what's here and a couple of other links that Maria mentioned, and that will be provided to teachers when the recording and the slide deck are available, probably in the next week or so, and then we will make that document available through the Study Page as well. I'm just looking at the Q&A and there's nothing there that needs attention at the moment. Josh Ambrosy, is there any comments or questions that you wanted to put forward on behalf of people on the call to our parks team to finish up with?

**Josh Ambrosy** - No, just my sincere thanks on behalf of all the teachers here to Maria, Josh, and Nick for your fantastic insights, and certainly I think that we can all appreciate with this greater focus in our study design on Indigenous Peoples' perspectives, relationships and also through that Traditional Owners... Management Strategies. It's certainly a challenge, and one of the big challenges, I think, for teachers is that it is an area that is going to need that investment, that investment in listening, that investment in time and that investment in working towards having these understandings themselves to be able to contextualise it for their students.

So, I suppose it's fantastic to see so many resources there available because it's really going to help people to frame their own curriculum to the countries they're on and to be paying respect to those countries through teaching relevant information to the countries and information that Indigenous People and Traditional Owners have actually wanted to share and put out into the public domain. And I think Nick mentioned some of the, the fact there is more information coming out, and certainly that's something that we can tap into. It's one of those, challenges for this study design. For many teachers, it would be amazing to have Traditional Owners wanting to walk on Country with our students, but we need to also acknowledge that in some areas that may not be possible, in some schools that may not be possible from a resourcing perspective as well.

So, we need to ensure that as teachers, whether teachers who are Indigenous people or non-Indigenous people, that we're doing our best job to teach this content in a way that is empathetic and to teaching in a way that is actually acknowledging Country in itself.

**Chris Clark** - Thanks, Josh. The other person that, very much thanks to Jordan, who's on the call as well, who's been, as I said, off the top, has been instrumental in helping organise our session for this evening, and particularly the resources that are going to be made available. So, we're right on 5:30, so a big thanks again. I think, I hope people agree this has been really beneficial, and I think, importantly, provided a lot of rich material for us all to go away and reflect on. I think, importantly, it doesn't give all of the answers to, of how you might walk straight into a classroom and teach this tomorrow, and I think that's the best part that really does challenge us to really engage with this work, really reflect on it and think about it. And if we do do that, then it really will be, obviously, us, as educators will be more, that'll benefit us as individuals, but most importantly, obviously, the students will benefit very much from us taking the time to do that.

So, big thanks. And, yeah, we'll, as I said, we'll get this material out to you as quickly as possible. Thanks for all of your work this year with our students and to ready yourselves for next year, and have, yeah, a really enjoyable and safe break with your families. So, thank you very much.

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