

WOMIN JEKA!

— the Woiwurrung words for ‘Welcome’



Smoking Ceremony

The GAWA WURUNDJERI RESOURCE TRAIL offers you a *burra burra yan*, a bush walk of discovery through Wurundjeri country. Rich in natural resources, this land sustained the Wurundjeri people for more than 40,000 years because their lore ensured sustainable care of the country.

Imagine this place before white settlers arrived: the land looked different because fire-stick farming methods encouraged open grassland between the trees.

Wurundjeri men, women and children would have camped right here on Watsons Creek.

Imagine that time, when everything you might need was provided by the land. Wurundjeri lore and all knowledge were taught through stories and observation.

So as you take this *burra burra yan* go respectfully. You are a visitor here, welcomed by the Wurundjeri, and you have a responsibility to care for this place.

The Gawa Wurundjeri Resource Trail is managed by Nillumbik Reconciliation Group Inc on behalf of Nillumbik Shire Council and Parks Victoria

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa

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- Dean Stewart
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- Design by Deadly Design.



THE WURUNDJERI TANDERRUM “Welcome to Country”

The *Tanderrum* was a most significant Wurundjeri ceremony. It protected and provided hospitality to visiting tribes when they met for trade, ceremony and dispute resolution.

The *Ngurungaeta* (spokesman for the Elders) would instruct the *Wirrigirri* (messenger) to convey invitations on a message stick.

The Wurundjeri would form a large circle, men on one side and women on the other. Visiting Elders were invited into the circle.

They were given water and local vegetation, which symbolised permission to use all resources on Wurundjeri land, and reed spears were snapped assuring the safety of the visitors.

Leaves were placed on burning coals to produce smoke – those who passed through it were symbolically cleansed and this reinforced their respect for Wurundjeri culture and lore.

The Wurundjeri people still practise the *Tanderrum* today to welcome you onto their country. In return they ask you to respect their people, culture and all that is in their land.

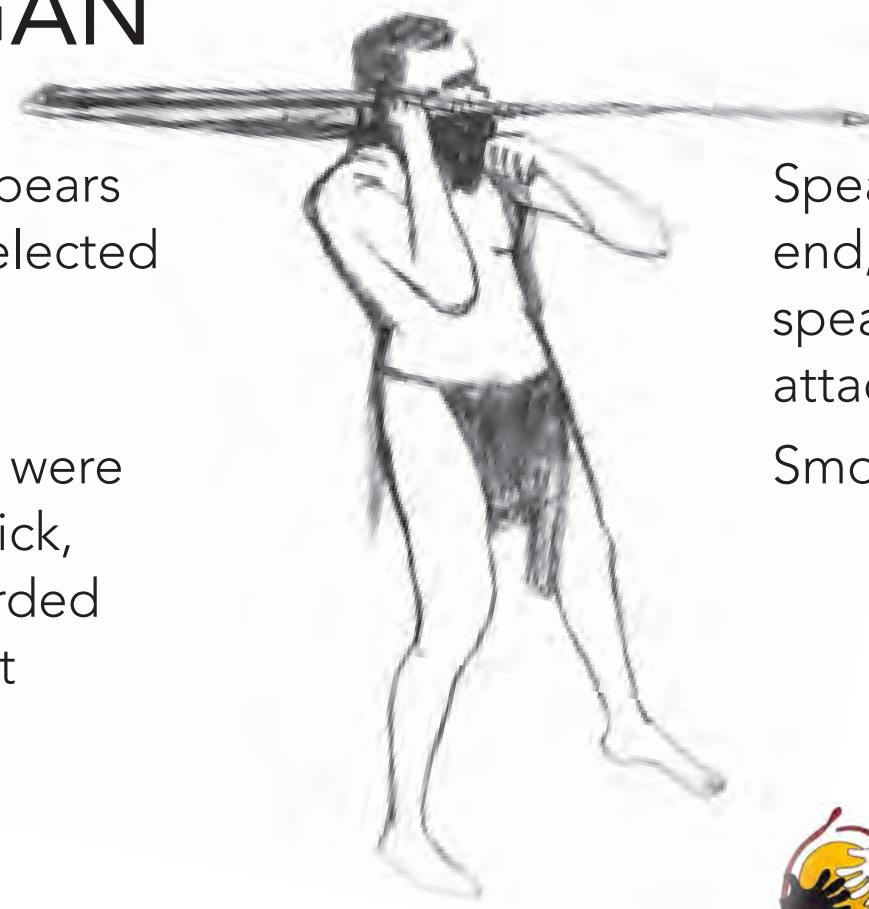


TEA TREE *Kunzea ericoides*

Woiwurrung name: BURGAN

The *Burgan's* straight stems were perfect for spears used for hunting and weaponry. A stem was selected and pared down with a stone scraper, its kinks removed by heating over a fire.

Spears were about three metres in length and were hurled with great accuracy using a throwing stick, or *murri wan*. In 1842 at Yarra Glen it was recorded that three spears thrown from forty paces went accurately through a finger hole in a door.



Spear tips could have a sharpened point, a carved barbed end, an inserted sharp tip designed to separate from the spear while removing it from prey, or a stone flake firmly attached with a glue made from grass-tree resin.

Smoke from *Burgan* was a natural insect repellent.



Victorian Aboriginals' war implements, Coranderrk (ca. 1877)
Fred Kruger, National Gallery of Victoria

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa



SPINY-HEADED MAT-RUSH *Lomandra longifolia*

Woiwurrung name: KURAWUN

The leaves, inner bark, and root fibres of many shrubs, trees and reeds were used by the Wurundjeri to make mats, bags, hunting nets, baskets for carrying and cooking and articles of adornment such as necklaces, headbands and girdles. Human hair and animal fur were twined into string, and feathers, kangaroo teeth, echidna spines and ochres were added for decoration.



Women used the partly dried leaves of the Mat-rush, and a small sharpened stick or a bone awl for opening up the weave, to fashion these strong baskets.

A string handle made it possible to sling the basket over the shoulder or back for carrying foods such as yams.



Woman with baskets (1877)
National Gallery of Australia

Knotted bag (1888)
Museum Victoria

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa



WOMBAT

Woiwurrung name: WARENDJI

Wombats sleep during the day in their long, multi-chambered burrows. Young men were sometimes sent along a burrow to signal the position of the wombat, so the men above could dig a vertical shaft, leading directly to their target. Eastern grey kangaroos, wallabies and emus were stalked and speared.

Ringtail and brushtail possums were smoked or cut from tree hollows and their hides sewn together to make cloaks to keep the clan warm in cold weather.

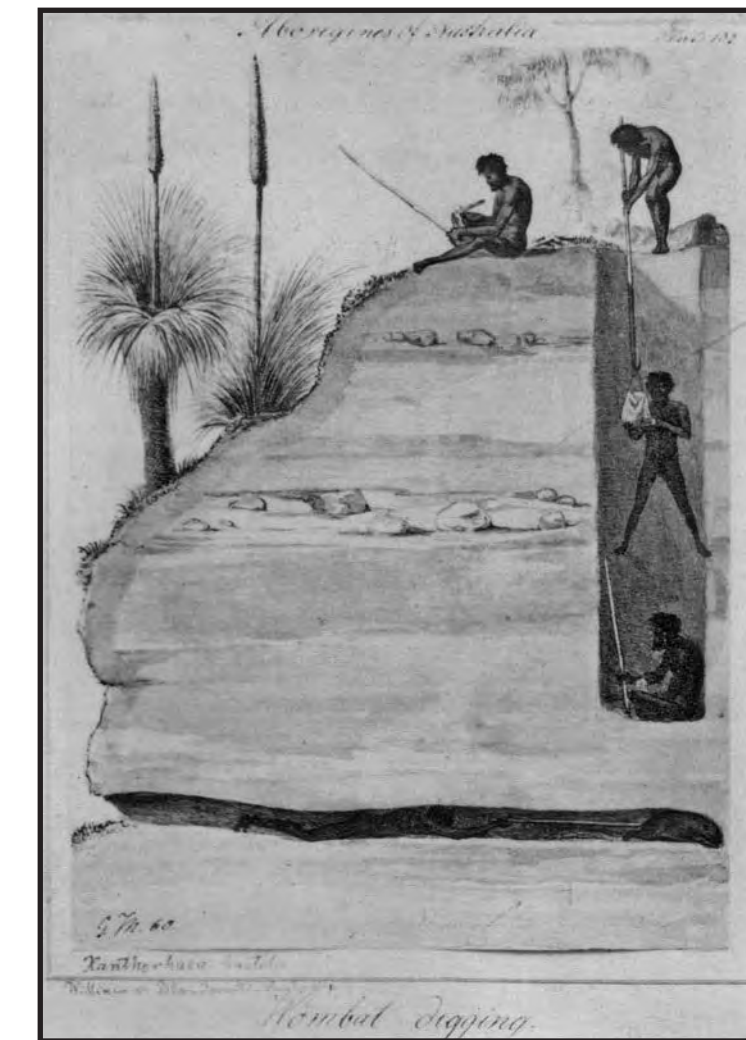
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Wombat
© Mike'n'Gail Bottomley



Insects provided valuable protein when game was scarce. Ant eggs and Bogong moths supplemented their diet, and sugarbag honey from native bees added a sweet treat and an important energy source. Traditional lore and ceremony protected all food sources from over-exploitation.



Wombat Digging (ca. 1855)
Gustav Mützel, based on a sketch by William Blandowski

BRACKEN FERN *Pteridium esculentum*

Woiwurrung name: the generic name for fern is BUYET

The Wurundjeri used bracken fern as a mattress, an ointment and for making bread.

They used the springy, leathery fronds of the bracken fern covered with soft, possum skin rugs, for bedding.

The juice of the young stems is poisonous and was not eaten, but provided immediate relief for insect stings and bites.

Underground stems, called *rhizomes*, were fibrous and starchy, and when roasted and beaten to a paste could be made into a type of bread.

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa

Bracken rhizomes
Museum Victoria



Bracken F. McWhirter



VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS BUSH *Prostanthera lasianthos*

Woiwurrung name: CORANDERRK

Coranderrk is a mint bush. The leaves were used by the Wurundjeri as food flavouring and for medicinal purposes.

Coranderrk was important for fire-making. A stalk was twirled rapidly between the palms while pressing down against the flattened flower-stalk of a grass tree. The smouldering ash created by the friction trickled down onto a ball of tinder which, when blown on, ignited into flame.

Women transported fire between campsites by inserting small hot coals into a Bracket fungus (*Laetiporus portentosus*) – its thickness made the coals cool enough to carry.

Aboriginal people requested the name 'Coranderrk' for the Aboriginal Reserve at Healesville, where this shrub grew profusely between Badger Creek and the Watts River.



Fire making
Rozenn Leard

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa



ECHIDNA

Woiwurrung name: GAWARN



Echidna
Susie Walker

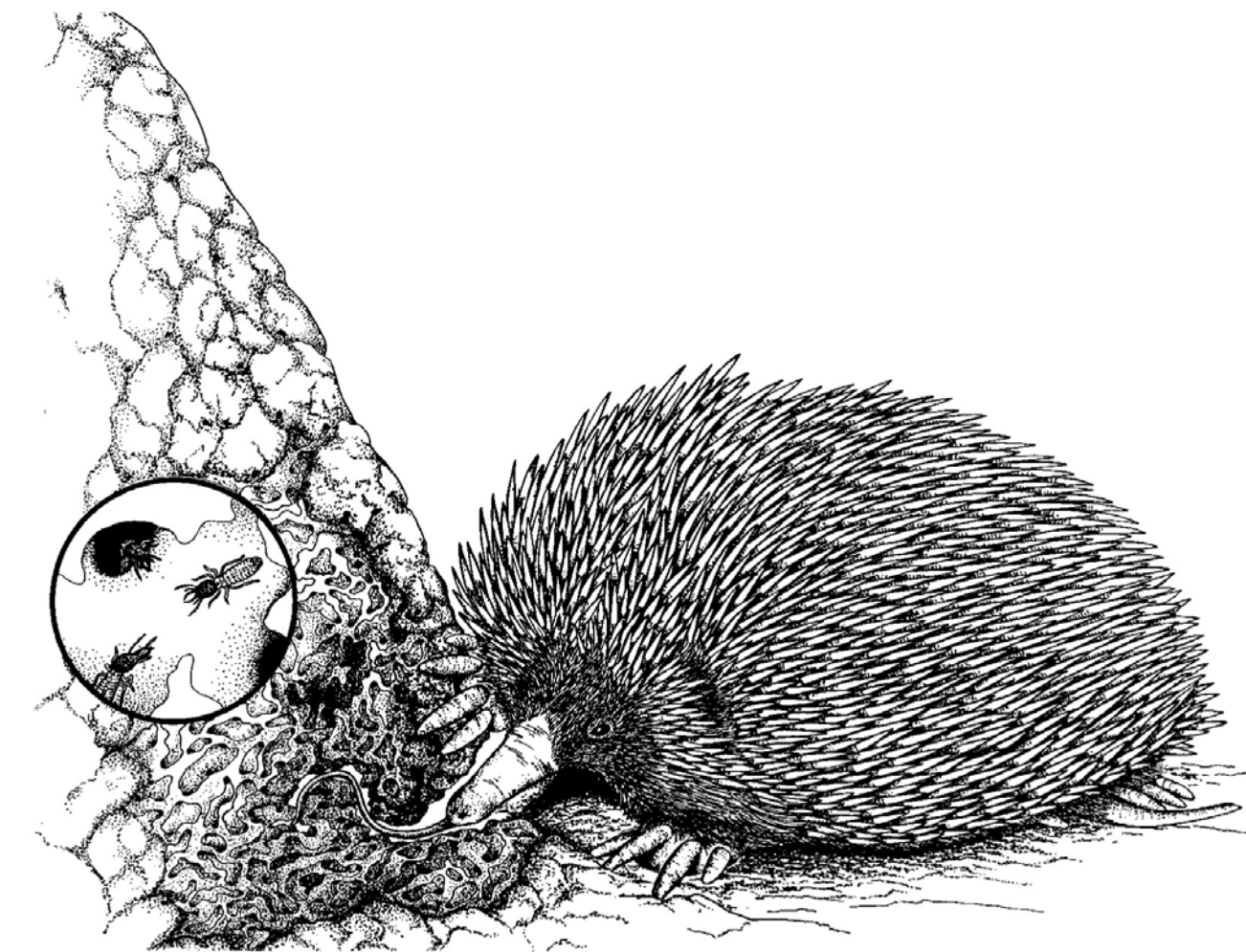
GAWA is a derivation of *gawarn*.

The echidna may have heard you coming and used its long digging claws to quickly bury itself, escaping you as a perceived threat.

Echidna was prized by the Wurundjeri for its fatty delicious meat, which was roasted and eaten only by clan Elders. This lore ensured the slow-moving and easily-captured echidna remained a sustainable resource.

Echidna spines were not wasted. They were kept for Wurundjeri women to thread onto fine bush twine or kangaroo sinew to make intricate, decorative necklaces.

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa



Lyn Skilling, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service



WATSONS CREEK

Woiwurrung name: The creek's name was never recorded

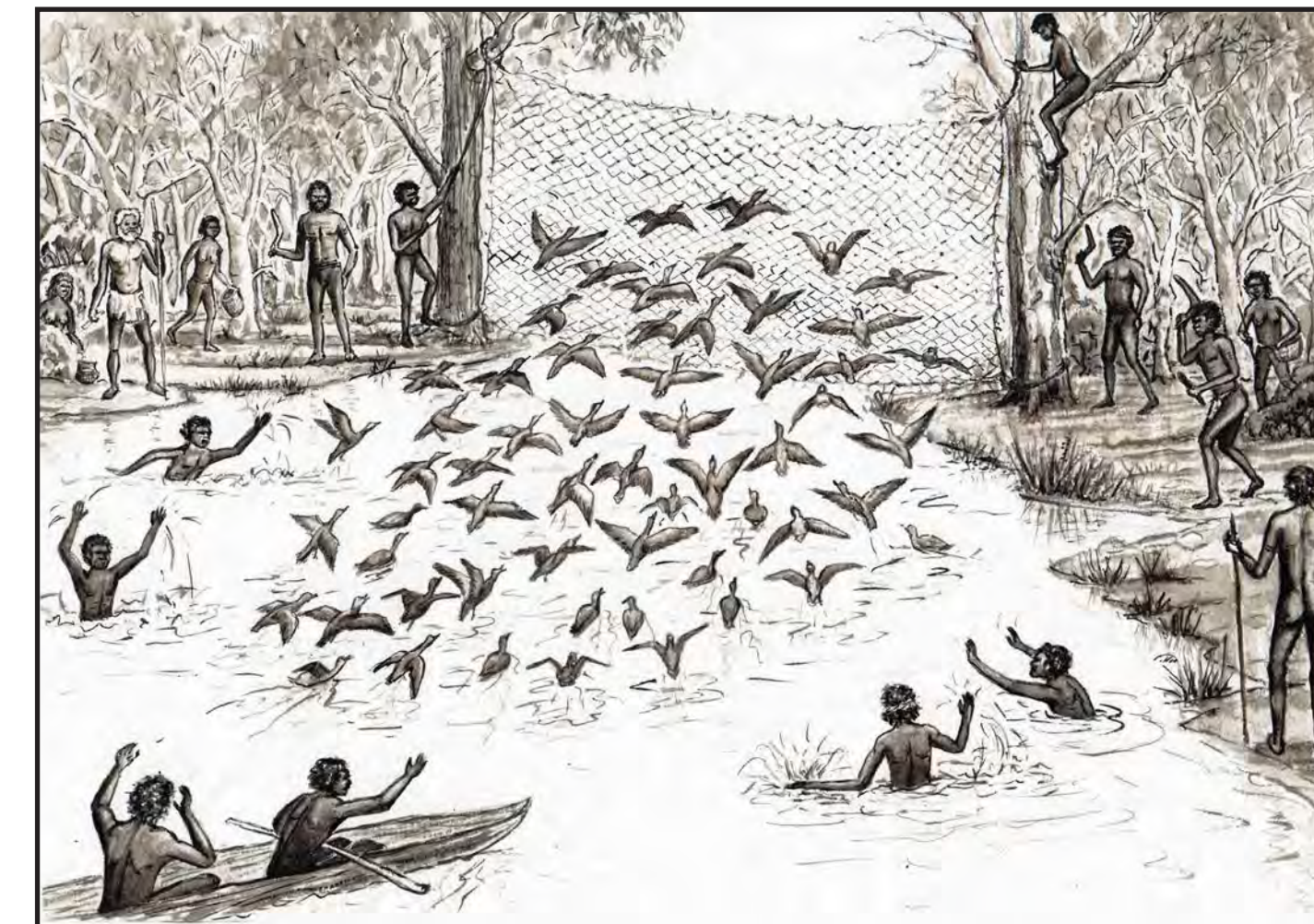
The creek provided seasonal bounty for the clan. When the rains came the creek became a torrent, while in the heat of summer only a trickle remained.

The Wurundjeri knew the ebb and flow of the creek, gathering yabbies and mussels and fishing for eels and blackfish with spears made from the river reed (*Phragmites australis*).

Wurundjeri men hunted kangaroos and wallabies as they came to the creek to drink.

They caught ducks by stringing nets above the water. Women and children collected cumbungi reeds and water ribbons for their starchy bulbs. River mint and watercress were also good for eating.

A river or creek was the place where the clan gathered to make camp and where, at night around the campfire, creation stories were told and Wurundjeri lore was passed down through the generations.



"Catching Ducks", drawing by Margo Heeley

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa



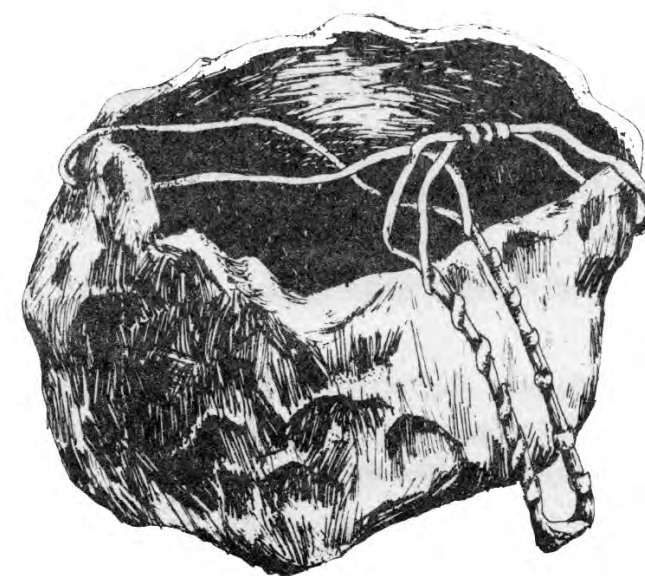
MANNA GUM *Eucalyptus viminalis*

Woiwurrung name: WURRUN

The large tree in front of you is a Manna gum, or *wurrun*. Within *wurrun* lives a small grub, *djeri*. Say the two words together to discover the origin of the name *Wurundjeri*.

The Manna gum had multiple uses:

- a *tarnuk* could be carved from the burl or knotty outgrowth that develops on the trunk – this could be used as a bowl for water



Tarnuk

- a curved tray, also called a *tarnuk*, could be cut from the bark and was used by women for carrying seeds and tubers, even babies
- the smoke of smouldering manna leaves had medicinal properties
- shields and canoes were carved from the bark.

Today, scarred trees from which *tarnuks*, shields and canoes were harvested provide continuing evidence of Aboriginal presence in this land.



State Library of NSW

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa



RED STRINGYBARK *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*

Woiwurrung name: WAYUT

The stringybark was used for building shelters or *willams*. Bark was cut off in slabs to form the roof and walls, while acacia or similar wood formed the frame. The *willam* was a simple structure strategically positioned to protect against wind and rain and to maximise the heat from the campfire. The floor was covered with bracken fern and possum skins to make it warm and comfortable.

The Wurundjeri used the fibrous inner-bark to make string and rope for nets, ties and string bags. The fibres were rolled on the thigh into lengths that could then be combined to make a strong rope.

Ant eggs were mixed with the dry, powdered outer bark of the stringybark and eaten. The mix tasted like creamed butter and sugar.



Old Mary, Jacky Logan and Rosie wearing possum skin cloaks in front of their willam, 1890.

Coranderrk - A History of the Aboriginal Station, Aldo Massola

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa



WATTLES *Acacia*

Silver wattle *Acacia dealbata* Woiwurrung name: MUYAN

Black wattle *Acacia mearnsii* Woiwurrung name: GARRONG

Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon* Woiwurrung name: BURN-NA-LOOK

When the Silver wattles bloom it is a time to remember William Barak, the highly respected leader of the Wurundjeri people, who died on August 15, 1903. All past Elders are also now honoured on this day.

Acacia wood is strong and dense, making it suitable for protective shields and hunting clubs for men, as well as digging sticks for women for collecting tubers such as yams. From the angled root of wattle, a Wurundjeri man could carve a boomerang to make a deadly hunting implement.

The gum of the acacia (*djaak*) can be dissolved in water to make a sweet drink. When mixed with ash and made into a sticky paste it becomes a sealing agent used to waterproof baskets, *tarnuks* (water carriers), and canoes.

Acacias also provided food and medicine: seed for bread and flavouring, smoke for coughs, tannin for stomach trouble, bark infusion for rheumatism.



"Out hunting for dinner, a run of luck" (ca. 1865)
Tommy McCrae, State Library of Victoria

For more information go to: nrg.org.au/gawa

