

Tyrendarra

Volcanic Plains, Victoria



The ancient volcanic landscape of Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) was created by the spectacular eruption of Budj Bim (Mount Eccles) around 27,000 years ago.

This region is a traditional meeting place and camping area for the Gunditjmara people—the land is part of major Dreaming trails and an important ceremonial site.

Owned and managed by the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of the Gunditjmara, Tyrendarra sits on Darlot Creek, a tributary of Lake Condah to the north. The property covers 248 hectares (almost 2.5 square kilometres) in the Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregion.

Tyrendarra features the remains of a large, settled community that systematically farmed eels for food and trade in one of Australia's earliest and largest aquaculture ventures. The remnants of Indigenous engineering works include weirs, channels and eel traps, as well

as settlements of circular stone dwellings.

These complex enterprises were carried out in a landscape imbued with spiritual meaning for the Gunditjmara.

Nationally recognised for its archaeological, cultural and environmental importance, Tyrendarra IPA forms part of the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape—one of the first places to be listed on Australia's National Heritage List in July 2004. The Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation manages the Indigenous heritage values of the landscape, in addition to land and resource management activities they carry out on the IPA.

Tyrendarra is home to a wide range of mammals and marsupials, including possum, kangaroo, wallaby, koala, quoll, antechinus (native mouse) and glider species. With large areas of wetlands, about a fifth of all recorded native species are aquatic, including frogs, turtles, native fish and eels, yabbies, and

freshwater crabs and mussels. Tyrendarra is also well known for the high numbers of tiger snakes and copperhead snakes active from spring through to autumn.

As well as widespread wetlands, Tyrendarra's vegetation includes a distinctive woodland community of manna gum and blackwood, with remnants of messmate stringybark and the formerly widespread woolly tea-tree. It is believed that tea-tree removal over the years may have contributed to changes in the property's natural water systems. The remaining wetlands are home to a wide variety of sedges, rushes, reeds and grasses.

The management of Tyrendarra IPA centres on reinstating the pre-1840s wetlands system, supporting the consequent regrowth of the manna gum woodland, managing introduced flora and fauna, and establishing an eel aquaculture industry as a sustainable business venture. A cultural rehabilitation plan is also guiding cultural landscape restoration.

These aims are being supported by IPA activities such as repairing and upgrading infrastructure on the property, controlling weeds and feral animals, building visitor boardwalks and interpretative signage, and replanting trees and shrubs.

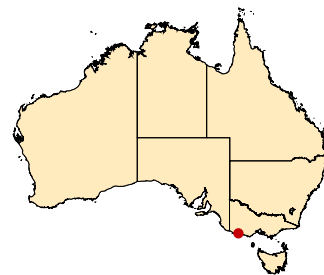
Over 5,000 trees and grasses planted in 2004 and 2005 were destroyed by bushfires in January 2006, along with 90 per cent of the property's vegetation. Despite this devastating blow, new seedlings have been planted from locally grown seed with the assistance of International Student Volunteers.

The declaration of Tyrendarra IPA in December 2003 was made under World Conservation Union (IUCN) *Category VI – Managed Resource Protected Area: Protected Area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems.*



Tyrendarra IPA is part of Australia's National Reserve System, a nation-wide network of reserves especially set up to protect examples of Australia's unique landscapes, flora and fauna for current and future generations.

For more information about Indigenous Protected Areas visit www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa or contact the Department of the Environment and Water Resources Community Information Unit. Email: ciu@environment.gov.au Freecall: 1800 803 772



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Photo Credits: Front – Tyrendarra wetlands and volcanic rock ruins, Ivan Haskovec. Back – (Left) Matthew Butt and new Tyrendarra bridge works, Ivan Haskovec. (Right) Tyrendarra Tiger snake, Matthew Butt. (Bottom) Boardwalk through a ruined stone settlement, Matthew Butt. **Art Credit:** Taken from original artwork ©Eunice Nungarayi Woods.