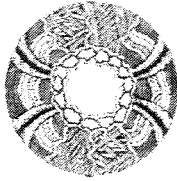


Submission No.....28  
Date Received.....



**Guditj Mirring**  
**Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation**  
ABN 30 030 646 482  
PO Box 216 Street Heywood VIC 3304  
03 5527 1427

25 July 2008

House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
Australian Parliament  
Canberra ACT 2600

RECEIVED  
23 JUL 2008

Dear Standing Committee

BY:.....ATSLA.....

**Indigenous Economic Development**

Over the past few thousand years, Guditjmara people traditionally engineered Australia's oldest and largest aquaculture system for the farming of kooyang (short-finned eels). Guditjmara clans established villages and a unique society.

Since invasion, Guditjmara people have a long history of striving towards the appropriate recognition of our rights and obligations as traditional owners.

Since the 1980s, Guditjmara people have had a history of economic development in the tourism and farming industries. This activity had high levels of success before failing due to a variety of reasons.

Guditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation was established in 2006 by Guditjmara traditional owners from the Lake Condah district in the far southwest of Victoria. Following the successful Guditjmara native title consent determination in 2007, the organisation was recognised as a Prescribed Body Corporate under the Native Title Act 93 (Cth). The organisation was also recognised as a Registered Aboriginal Party under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 06 (Vic).

Since 2002, Guditjmara traditional owners have been involved with the Lake Condah Sustainable Development Project (LCSDP). The LCSDP has the major aims of developing the Lake Condah, Mt Eccles and Tyrendarra area into a major heritage park and restoring permanent water to Lake Condah.

In 2004, the Lake Condah, Mt Eccles and Tyrendarra area was declared as the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape for its Guditjmara heritage values. The restoration of permanent water to Lake Condah is scheduled for the summer of 2008/09.

Alongside these major activities, the LCSDP promotes the development of an economic framework to ensure employment and enterprise development opportunities.

The Gunditjmara had experienced several 'lulls' in its community interest and activities over a 30 year period. These situations can be attributed to our community's ongoing level of capacity and ability to address economic development.

What we have learnt is to sustain the level of capacity and activity through the ongoing development of community members, particularly younger people, through personal and professional development programs and community support.

Gunditj Mirring recommends to the Standing Committee that it takes into consideration the 'ebb and flow' of an Aboriginal community's level of interest for economic development activities over a long period of time.

While some Gunditjmara people have established their own businesses and have grown their capacity to run a business, a majority of Gunditjmara people have not. Many Gunditjmara people have spoken about not having the confidence and knowledge to develop, establish, operate and grow a successful business.

This lack of confidence needs to be addressed by the Standing Committee in its investigations into Indigenous enterprise development.

We are aware of the Gunya model (link to Gunya below) that seeks tax incentives for industry to invest and partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business. The Gunya model also provides a supportive network of mainstream business advice and mentoring to ensure the success of the enterprise.

We believe that the Gunya model offers a solution to the current situation of where our community members are extremely tentative to advance to owning and operating their own successful businesses.

If you require further information please contact me at the Winda Mara office.

Yours sincerely



Damein Bell  
Chairman

[http://www.gunya.com.au/acrobat/gunya\\_discussion\\_paper\\_august\\_07.pdf](http://www.gunya.com.au/acrobat/gunya_discussion_paper_august_07.pdf)