



Geelong Nature Festival

our backyard

WADAWURRUNG COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Wadawurrung Peoples the Traditional Owners of Land Waterways and Skies. We pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of our Greater Geelong community today.

Nature, Our Backyard

Nature, Our Backyard was designed by Dr Mary-Jane Walker of The School of Lost Arts together with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and made with the help of the Mount Duneed Men's Shed.

The unique artwork installation was created with large-scale animals and hundreds of smaller painted tiles, made by students from 22 schools and genU artists. This representation, arranged on the sands of the Geelong Botanic Gardens celebrated the six landscapes of Wadawurrung Country across Greater Geelong: Urban, Wetlands, Waterways, Coast, Hills and Plains. Its ephemeral design represents our constantly changing environment.

The artwork design was inspired by the six seasons of the Geelong region and the way species move and behave throughout the year. By understanding the seasonal cues of Country, First Nations People were able to locate food, water and other resources.

Spring and early summer Brolga (wetlands)

September – October is springtime where the weather is warm, wet, and windy. Many flowers are in bloom and many food plant species are available for food. The flowers on plants provide nectar for insects, birds, and bees. Snakes and lizards become more active as the weather warms up. Flood plains are full of water and provides perfect habitat for tadpoles and frogs.

Early spring Kangaroo (plains)

July – August indicates early spring, and the weather starts to warm up. Flowers from the silver banksia emerge indicating an end of winter. Lower wetlands were utilised for hunting ducks and other bird species for food. Murnong was harvested throughout the grassy plains in large quantities for staple food supply.

Mid summer and late summer Short finned eel (waterways)

November – January is early and mid-summer seasons. The weather is warm to hot certain wattles and swamp gums flower in late November that indicates the starting of a dry season. As the dry season begins people move to watercourses such as creeks, rivers, and lakes. During this time water sources attract an abundance of wildlife. The fish move upstream, and traps are set out to catch freshwater species. When the eel moves downstream out to sea it indicates the start of the next season.

Seasons

Deep winter Wedge-tailed eagle (hills)

June – July are deep winter season and is cold and wet with lots of storms and rain from the west. Rivers and plains flood. People would move to the uplands to seek shelter just as many animal species do also. The pelt of the possum when made into a cloak provides warmth for people.

Late summer Fiddler ray (coast)

February – March is late summer and is hot and humid with early Autumn rains and thunderstorms starting. Planned burning regimes are implemented to clean the area and promote healthy soil. Eucalyptus like the stringybark start to flower same as the coastal moonah trees and banksias that provide nectar for insects and birds. Eel season starts as female eels start migrating out to sea and traps are set throughout the rivers and creeks. Birds migrating north with more frequent rains indicate the start of early winter.

Autumn and early winter Painted lady butterfly (urban)

April – May is autumn and early winter as the cooler misty days start and frequent rains. Mushrooms and other fungi begin to sprout and collected in groups that indicate early winter. Waterholes start to fill and moth species emerge are harvested, native bees collect nectar from the lilies and heath.

Schools

Chilwell Primary School
Geelong Baptist College
Geelong Lutheran College
Geelong South Primary School
Herne Hill Primary School
Lara Primary School

Little River Primary School
Mirriposa Primary School
Montpellier Primary School
Nazareth Catholic Primary School
Nelson Park School
Newtown Primary School
Point Lonsdale Primary School

St Catherine of Siena Catholic School
St John's Lutheran Primary School
St Margaret's Catholic Primary School
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

St Robert's Catholic Primary School
St Thomas Primary School
Surfside Primary School
Wangala Primary School
genU
The FOrT

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