

## **Keep on dreaming at the 2x2 Relay, November 19<sup>th</sup> 2023**

To acknowledge and to pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the country on which Lane Cove River Kayakers Club stands we celebrated the last 2x2 event of this year in the name of the Dreamtime. A total of 20 members signed up with many being regulars to this increasingly popular event. The race took place in its usual format as a 2000m relay sprint race and proceeded as a social brunch where we told Dreamtime stories to our fellow paddlers to share and learn about the aboriginal Dreamtime.

We as the LCRK club acknowledge that the aboriginal culture will always be the first nation of our land and we revived classic themes of the Dreamtime stories while paddling at Lane Cove, the land of the Cam-mer-ray-gal people. Two young boys of our club, Jitta Jittas, (Willy-Wagtails, Jeffrey Tonazzi/ Jeff Collins) teased all of the people in the tribe and came first with more than one and a half minutes distance to the second team Gaya-Dari (Matt Swann/Jeff Hosnell). Gaya- Dari is the product of a forced relationship between a duck and a water rat, resulting in a hybrid duck, the platypus, paddling vigorously to place 2. Gaya-Dari was followed closely by Parrwang and Bunjil, the wise Magpie and Eagle (Naomi Johnson/Karen Tipping). They lifted the blanket of darkness from the Lane Cove River, brought light and colour to the scene. Right in the middle field came our mixed doubles teams Minga Gulaga, the Mother Mountain (Alanna Ewin/Tony Hystek) and Woo'rah, the Water Rats (Merry Sugiarto/ Ester Wheeler). I could not have chosen any more suitable names for those 2 teams. Tiddalick the Frog (Andrew Pearce/Kevin Mulally) was not drinking the waterhole empty this time but leaving enough water under the boat to paddle to place 5. Team Brudbri (Duncan Johnstone/Wade Rowston) danced effortlessly in their flashy K1s, had strong and confident moments doing their lyrebird dance around the course. Team John Duffy and Justin Paine were looking quite flattened this morning after tickling old Kooekard, the river goanna, with their carbon spears. The Kookaburras were laughing hard from the nearby trees.

Team No	Team Name	Single/ Double	Paddler 1	Hand1	Paddler 2	Hand2	Adjusted Total Handicap (x 0.66 because only 16km)	Start Time (clock starts at 7:45)	Finish Time	Mins
1	Jitta Jitta	Singles	Jeffrey Tonazzi	6	Jeff Collins	16	$22 \times 0.66 = 14$	7:59am	09:26:52	01:27:52
2	Gaya-Dari	Singles	Matt Swann	10	Jeff Hosnell	14	$24 \times 0.66 = 16$	8:01am	09:28:33	01:27:33
3	Parrwang and Bunjil	Singles	Naomi Johnson	19	Karen Tipping	10	$29 \times 0.66 = 19$	8:04am	09:28:47	01:24:47
4	Minga Gulaga	Double	Alanna Ewin	20	Tony Hystek		$33 \times 0.66 = 22$	8:07am	09:29:19	01:22:19
	Woo'rah	Double	Merry Sugiarto	13	Ester Wheeler					
5	Tiddalick the Frog	Singles	Andrew Pearce	7	Kev Mulally	7	$14 \times 0.66 = 9$	7:54am	09:30:15	01:36:15
6	Budbri	Singles	Duncan Johnstone	11	Wade Rows ton	13	$24 \times 0.66 = 16$	8:01am	09:32:08	01:31:08
7	Tjukurpa Goanna	Singles	John Duffy	17	Justin Paine	-12	$5 \times 0.66 = 3$	7:48am	09:32:23	01:44:23



### **Contrasting cultures: In a land without time and where dreaming reveals reality.**

In Aboriginal cultures, the Dreamtime tells about the creation of life and the relationships of humans to nature. Before the beginning of creation the land was flat and empty. There were neither trees nor mountains, no animals or people. Then creator spirits emerged from the land, the sea and the sky and began to shape the country. The rivers, mountains, rocks and lakes were formed during the travel of those spirits, which then also created birds, the kangaroos, the emus, the fish and even kayakers! Some of the ancestor spirits became one with landscapes such as rocks or trees which are sacred sites today. Ceremonies performed at such sites help the life force to remain active and to keep creating new life.

We often refer to the “Dreamtime” but none of the hundreds of Aboriginal languages contain a word for “time”. The concept of Dreamtime is even harder to express in any other language, not by the lack of words but certainly by the lack of understanding. In our modern society time is measured in years, hours, minutes and seconds. Time is related to time at work, family time, or time in the boat. Time is a clearly measurable period of actions. Now try to imagine life without time, where the past is the present and the future, all at once. When time is the “everywhen” there is no need for measuring time. For that reason the word “Dreaming” appears more appropriate when explaining an all-embracing concept that also provides rules for living, a moral code, rules for interacting with nature, and a total way of life. The Dreaming, or ‘Tjukurrpa’, rather means to ‘see and understand the law’. Aboriginal people disclose their Dreaming stories to pass on imperative knowledge, cultural values, traditions and law to future generations. Stories contain lessons to be learned from and the laws to be obeyed, for the purpose of living in harmony with each other, the land and its resources.

A world without time and where dreaming reflects the ultimate reality is the extreme contrast to our current modern society. For us time is the most precious dimension of life. It is constantly measured, in working hours, in age of all living creatures or age of history. Time is short and we are always running out of it. But wait a minute, who brought the idea of measuring time to the table anyway? The first preeminent civilisation, the Egyptians, began to track time based on lunar circles and numbers of nights passed. Apart from being a highly successful realm for almost 3000

years, the Egyptian Empire collapsed by an economic crisis, foreign invaders and drought. The concept of dreaming in our modern culture again has the complete opposite meaning of dreaming in the aboriginal culture. For us dreaming is fully surreal and the furthest away from reality. Dreaming is for those who still get enough sleep or have a wishful thinking for the future, “keep on dreaming’! Now it becomes evident that the attempt to integrate aboriginal culture into our modern society is extremely difficult, if not impossible, and brings major loss to the aboriginal culture.

There are some overarching questions coming to my mind on how the aboriginal culture has become the oldest living culture on the planet without measuring time? How has a culture without scientific tools and evidence sustained successfully a deep and meaningful relationship with the living and non-living systems? How have the cultural identity and the believe systems been maintained for 60 000 years while our standards, values and morals have moved like shifting shadows? As for me, my worldview of a successful human culture has been challenged. Today was a day to contemplate and re-think, a day to discover and to learn about contrasting ways of living and being, a day to step outside of my own worldview und my understanding of success.

## Some of our Dreamtime stories told today

### **Gulaga**

Yuin (Ewin) people know **Gulaga** as Mother Mountain. One day Gulaga and her two sons, Baranguba and Najanuga, were collecting bush tucker. When Baranguba asked if he could go fishing, Gulaga said, ‘No, you’re too young, you’re to stay next to me’. As they walked along, Baranguba insisted that he go fishing. But Gulaga said, ‘No, no, you have to stay next to me, it’s not safe to go fishing by yourself’. But Baranguba snuck away. He made himself a canoe and he rowed out to sea, where a big wave came and washed him off the canoe . He laid down in the water — and that’s where he still lives today. When Najanuga, the younger son, saw this, he wanted to move away and set up his own camp. But Gulaga said, ‘No, you’re too young, you just sit here right next to me’. So now she lies there, looking out at the sea at her older son, with her younger son right next to her, in arm’s reach. **Moral of the story:** Gulaga has been described as the ancestral origin for all Yuin people, while Gulaga itself also symbolises the mother and provides a basis for Aboriginal spiritual identity, for Aboriginal women and men alike.



## **Parrwang**

A long time ago the sky was a blanket on the land. The earth was in darkness and the people were afraid. If not for the courage of Parrwang the magpie, determined to assist her newfound friends, this blanket may still be with us today. Tjatjarrang (Big Sister) and Koki (Brother) are young, adventurous and tired of living in the dark. When they manage to climb to the highest branches of an ancient gum tree, they discover a world of colour and light and a friend in Parrwang (Magpie). Parrwang decides to help her new friends lift the blanket of darkness from the young human's world. The plan is devised but Parrwang must first convince the Great Council of Birds led by Bunjil (Eagle). Will the council agree? **Moral of the story:** A metaphor for life and the quest for knowledge and understanding. It is a celebration of friendship and the courage it takes to speak truth to power.



## **Tiddalick the Frog**

Once upon a time, a long time ago, in the Dreamtime, lived a frog called Tiddalick. Tiddalick was the largest frog in the entire world. One very warm morning, he woke up with feeling very, very thirsty and started to drink the fresh water. He drank and he drank and he kept drinking until all the fresh water in the entire billabong was gone! When the other animals arrived at the billabong to get their morning drink, they found it was all dried up. This made them very sad. They knew Tiddalick the frog had drunk all the water. They knew they needed to come up with a plan to get the water back, but they didn't know how. They thought and they thought and they thought until they realised that the best way to get the water back was to make Tiddalick laugh. If they could make him laugh then all the water would come spilling out of his mouth and back into the billabong! The first animal to try and make him laugh was the echidna. She rolled herself up into a tight little ball and rolled down the bank of the

billabong like a bowling ball! The kangaroo laughed and so did the emu, but Tiddalick didn't laugh. The next animal to try and make Tiddalick laugh was the wombat. The wombat stood up on his hind legs and danced around in a circle until he fell over in the dirt! The Galah laughed and so did the goanna, but Tiddalick didn't laugh. The next animal to try and make Tiddalick laugh was the kookaburra. She perched herself on a branch close to Tiddalick and told her funniest story. It was so funny that she burst out laughing! But Tiddalick didn't laugh. He just sat there with his big belly full of all the water. Finally, the snake decided to try and make Tiddalick laugh. She started to dance and dance, wriggling and squirming all over the ground until she eventually tied herself into a knot. The knot was so tight that she struggled and struggled to untie herself but was stuck! Tiddalick watched struggle around, trying to untie herself, and let out a small chuckle. That small chuckle turned into a rumbling in his tummy before it turned into a great big belly laugh! The water came gushing out of his mouth and filled the billabong back up once again. All the animals jumped with joy as they took big, long, gulps of water to quench their thirst. **Moral of the story:** To share and not be greedy or selfish.

