



Sharing our story

Brien Nelson, storyteller

'I'm an **elder** of the Nelson family group. I'm the only Jaara elder living on Jaara Country now. This story I'm telling you is about Bunjil the Eagle and Waa the Crow.

'Long time ago in the Creation, Bunjil took the form of the eagle and created our land, language, people, plants, animals, religion and the **laws** we live by. Our **moieties** are Bunjil the Eagle and Waa the Crow.



Brien Nelson in his possum-fur cloak

Glossary:

elder—a highly respected person in an Aboriginal community; especially one who holds knowledge of local history, culture and language

laws—traditional stories, beliefs and knowledge or a code of behaviour

‘For the Jaara people, the land is sacred and what the **Dreaming** beings have created and left behind is very important to us.



Brien showing children the stories woven into the lining of his cloak

‘This story teaches our children the history of our past. They might read things about Aboriginal history and culture, but hearing the story about Bunjil and Waa they know exactly how this area was created and the significance of this place to the Jaara people.’



Children with their Bunjil the Eagle paintings

moieties—each tribe is divided into two halves (moieties). A person’s moiety determines who and what they are related to, their responsibilities and which stories they can tell

Dreaming—a word to describe Aboriginal laws, stories and songs that show people their history, how to live and behave. There are many different kinds of Dreamings



Bunjil the Eagle

Early on in the Dreaming, the land was one huge mountain covered with great forests. It was thick bush and hilly. That was where the Aboriginal people camped—in good places beneath the forest **canopy** that protected them from the rain.



Glossary:

canopy—the leafy branches of forest trees that form a dense cover or shelter



All kinds of strange animals lived in the forest—there were kangaroos, emus, eagles, crows and bats. Bat was a friendly animal who watched over the lonely and tired travellers, warning them of danger. Bat darted here and there around travellers in the moonlight and showed people the way home.



Aunty Trish Vines

‘That’s how a lot of Koori kids are, drifting through life. It hurts not to know where you really actually fit in. When you do eventually find your identity, it’s like walking out of a dark room into a beautiful room that’s full of everything and it’s part of you. That’s how it feels to me, and I get really emotional with it.’

Aunty—a term of respect for older women in the community, even when they are not blood relatives

Aunty Lynne Warren

'For those looking at the picture of me you would think I was a white person, but my father was white and my mother Aboriginal. I was classed as quarter-caste. I grew up with my grandmother, and only after Mum died was I told who she was and that she was Aboriginal.'



Aunty Lynne Warren with a photo of her mother

'I'd always thought I was a white person. It never crossed my mind there was anything different until I heard about Mum. Part of me was excited, part of me was angry; I had so many mixed emotions.

'I wanted to find out as much as I could about culture and history and family then. I love hearing the elders' stories. I thought the story **Uncle** Brien told us was really terrific. It's very inspirational and really great for our young kids to learn about their history, that Bunjil was our **Creator spirit**.

'If they don't hear the stories now and have them recorded, when they grow up they'll have nothing to look around and say what happened. When their children grow up, they got no answers for them; there's just a big hole, there's nothing there. It's important to keep the stories going to hold it all together.'

Uncle—a term of respect for older men in the community, even when they are not blood relatives

Creator spirit—powerful spirit who made the land, people, plants and animals