

Loddon HERALD

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**MOPS AND
WIPES CLEAN
UP TRUCKS**

- Page 5



**NOW IT'S TIME
TO THANK
COMMUNITY**

- Page 5



**ROBYN, OSCAR
THE SHIRE'S
TOP CITIZENS**

- Pages 8 & 9

LAKE LOCK

■ **Aboriginal leader's duck ban bid**

■ **World Heritage listing proposed**

**TWO WEEKS TO
GIVE FEEDBACK
ON SHOOT HALT**

AN ABORIGINAL leader has launched federal action to kick duck hunters off Lake Boort.

Gary Murray, a member of Victoria's First People's Assembly, wants the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act used to stop shooters using the lake from April.

He claims the 2026 season will "cause injury and desecration of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage" of the lake.

Mr Murray said the federal intervention bid was part of a move by Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Corporation commitment to protect and preserve land.

He also told the Loddon Herald on Tuesday that a consultant had been engaged by representative Aboriginal parties to develop plans to have Lake Boort listed on state and national heritage registers and to receive World Heritage recognition.

Officials of the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Aboriginal heritage unit were expected to

By CHRIS EARL

attend next month's meeting of Boort Tourism and Development, Mr Murray said.

Mr Murray said the 2024 annual meeting of Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Corporation had supported a motion to protect significant heritage sites.

"We have a mandate to do what we are doing," he said.

Mr Murray said Lake Boort and its scar trees, middens and burial grounds could not be preserved if duck shooting continued.

Hunt opponents had alleged shooters had damaged scar trees at Lake Boort, but the Game Management Authority later rejected the assertion.

The Federal Government has opened consultation until February 5 before a decision is made on Mr Murray's bid.

The Victorian Aboriginal treaty backer has said he would assert the human and cultural and treaty rights of "all (Aboriginal) peoples without fear or favour,

and without red tape". Mr Murray said duck hunting on Lake Boort risked:

■ Scarred trees being vulnerable to degradation from natural processes.

■ Burials and middens being dug up, driven over, used as toilets and rubbish dumps by duck hunters.

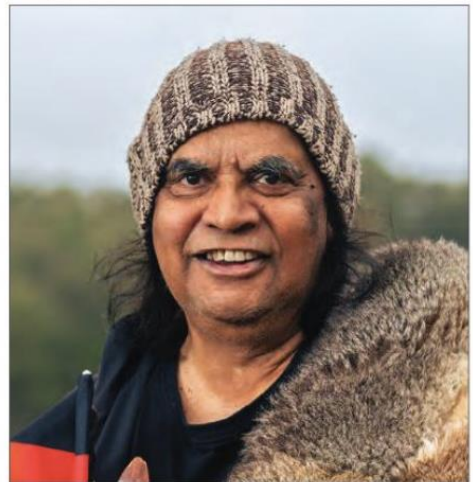
■ Cooking mounds being driven over, dug up, disturbed or being used as fire repeats and shooting platforms by duck hunters.

Loddon Shire Council has continued to back duck hunting that boosts the Boort district economy each year.

Boort Ward councillor David Weaver said environmental flows posed a greater risk to the lake's scar trees. "These flows could see the red gums topple over within 15 years. The red gums are rotting," he said.

Paul Haw, whose home is on the banks of Lake Boort, said: "It's one of the most significant wetlands for Aboriginal artefacts."

CONTINUED PAGE 3



Gary Murray ... wants federal intervention to stop duck hunting on Lake Boort

Kick hunter off lake 'and boost ecotourism'

FROM PAGE 1

Environment and Water Minister Murray Watt will receive a report the effects any declaration under the Act may have on the "proprietary or pecuniary interests of persons other than the Aboriginal or Aborigines who made the application".

Mr Murray wants a long-term preservation order put on Lake Boort.

DJAARA in November hosted a two-day meeting of Victorian registered Aboriginal parties where talks were held to strengthen protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage across the state.

Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Natalie Hutchins last June was at Lake Boort with Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council and Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation representatives to announce more than \$5 million for project funding through the Aboriginal Cul-

tural Heritage Fund. However, no details have emerged of how the funding will be used.

Mr Murray said development of a cultural centre at Boort would build ecotourism in Boort. "We have to protect the site and we don't need duck shooting," Mr Murray said.