

What makes Lake Condah a defining moment Video Transcript

Narrator: Lake Condah is some 330 kilometres west of Melbourne and about 50 kilometres from Port Fairy.

The Gunditjmara people have lived on the shores of Lake Condah for many thousands of years as it proved a reliable source of food and water.

Kangaroos came to drink at the shores and the lake was full of waterbirds, eels, and fish.

The Aboriginal people in these parts differ from those in other areas of the state in a number of ways.

Owing to the cold weather, they wore well-made rugs of opossum and kangaroo skin which doubled at night as blankets and they built huts from wood and volcanic stone.

The remains of these little shelters can still be seen today at Lake Condah on the high ground, just beside the lake.

That circle is one of the stone houses that we, our mob made, to live because this is what we used for houses.

We built 'em up as a circle shape. And we get 'em up to a certain height.

Then we'd use the stringy bark tree, it's stringy bark across to make us roofs and we'd get reeds to block up the holes in the walls.

And we have like the women that do their basket weavin'.

They might have a little fire outside. And usually this is the way we live.

Narrator: This part of the lagoon was important to the local people for, as the lake filled each year, it overflowed, releasing into the creek, fish and eels.

So the aboriginal people created stone channels and water canals in which they placed fish traps and woven fibre nets to catch fish and eels.

Here are some of the best preserved ancient Aboriginal fish traps in the country.

And they're estimated to be about 8,000 years old.

In July 2019, the Budj Bim cultural landscape, including Lake Condah, was accepted onto the prestigious United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation, World Heritage List.

And in a world first, UNESCO accepted this site for both its natural and cultural significance.

But why is this area so important?

And is it a defining moment for both the community where it's situated and for the whole of Australia?

Let's look more closely at this remarkable place.