

10.30 am – 11.30 am Dr. Chris Gouramanis:

“Past Climate and Environmental Change from Iconic Crater Lakes in Western Victoria”

Climate change is the largest and single most consequential global challenge facing humanity today that will persist for generations to come. But what happened in the past? What do we know and what do we think happened to the climate leading up to the current calamity? The western districts of Victoria, and particularly the Camperdown area, have numerous volcanic crater lakes, whose lake floors provide the evidence needed to address these questions. Since their formation, following violent volcanic eruptions, these lakes have sequentially accumulated sediment (including fossils) on their lake floors that, over time, reflect climate and environment changes that are representative of the regional climate of south-eastern Australia. Lakes Keilambete, Gnotuk and Bullen Merri serve as exemplars from the region. Chris will discuss the evidence of past environmental and climate change from these sites.



Dr Chris Gouramanis is a Research Fellow based at the Research School of Earth Sciences at the Australian National University and has examined past environmental and climate change records from lakes across Australia and Southeast Asia.

11.30 am – 12.30 pm Dr Iain Buckland:

“Scottish Country Dance - created by the Scottish aristocracy, but now adopted by dance and fitness enthusiasts worldwide”

While a “Highland Fling” might be typical of a specific, energetic style of dancing from the Highlands, Scottish Country Dance was derived mainly from an English form of dance from the 17th century. The uniquely Scottish version of country dancing appeared in the 18th century incorporating French influences introduced originally by Mary Queen of Scots.

Dances were set to Scottish tunes such as Strathspeys, jigs and reels and usually comprised sets of dancers in lines which performed intricate and elegant patterns of movement. The Scottish form of country dancing deviated from the English style particularly in its emphasis on precise footwork. While English country dancing largely disappeared, the Scottish form has endured with thousands of dances created and performed in venues from castles and country houses to church halls and pubs. The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society supports the continuing tradition today and a new emphasis has evolved promoting the mental and physical health benefits of social dance. Scottish Country Dance is popular today amongst both Scots and the broader world community.



Dr Iain Buckland is a popular and multiple contributor to our History Talks program. Following a long career as a mechanical engineer, Iain embarked on a new career exploring a long-held passion for food culture and history. In 2011, Iain completed a Le Cordon Bleu Master of Arts in Gastronomy at the University of Adelaide. This led to an offer from the University to undertake a Doctor of Philosophy in food history which he completed in 2016. Iain and his eminent sculptor wife Julie Edgar both come from families with Scottish connections. This has inspired Iain to ongoing academic and practical interest in the unique culinary and other traditions of Scotland.

1.30 pm – 2.30 pm Dr Vicki Couzens

“Mother Tongue – a living legacy: revitalisation of Gunditjmara Aboriginal language”

‘Mother Tongue- a living legacy is a family/clan based creative language revitalisation project. It undertakes the concurrent activities of grammar reconstruction and rebuilding whilst actively practicing language acquisition through applied immersion learning opportunities in everyday lived settings and through creative cultural expression practice.

In the Project I mentor individuals and family clan groups in immersive language learning in day-to-day experiences and in creative cultural expression experiences on Country. Family/clan groups participate in a series of language development workshops to identify their language learning needs in everyday settings. Each individual and/or family clan group is supported to take language home, integrating their learnings into their daily lives.

The family clans participate in one or more ‘camps on Country’ activity to engage with creative cultural practice experiences through which language is also acquired and practiced - weaving, fibrecraft; song; dance and cultural Ceremony.

Each of these immersion experiences builds capacity, confidence and experience in language use, specifically supporting oral traditions of knowledge sharing and transfer. This approach is targeted at ‘living legacy’: that is for individuals, families and communities to becoming fluent speakers; engaging and using language in ways which supports traditional oral knowledge transference.

‘Our languages nourish our spirit, our hearts, our minds, our relatives and our Country’



Yoolongteeyt Dr Vicki Couzens is a Keerray Woorroong Gunditjmara citizen whose homelands are in the Western Districts of Victoria, Australia. Vicki acknowledges her Ancestors and Elders who guide her work. She has worked in Aboriginal community affairs for over 45 years and her contributions in the reclamation, regeneration and revitalisation of cultural knowledge and practice extend across the ‘arts and creative cultural expression’ spectrum. This includes language revitalisation, ceremony, community arts, public art, visual and performing arts, and creative and academic writing.

Vicki is Senior Knowledge Custodian for Possum Skin Cloak Story and Language Reclamation and Revitalisation in her Keerray Woorroong Mother Tongue.

Vicki has been employed at RMIT University since 2018, initially as a Vice Chancellors Indigenous Research Fellow and is now a co-founding Director of Yoonggama First Nations Transdisciplinary Research Cohort; and a continuing Research Fellow working on her Australian Research Council funded ‘Mother Tongue’ Project. The Project aims to expand and enhance Gunditjmara language ecology. It examines Gunditjmara language acquisition and learning through practical methodologies in everyday settings.

