



Wallaga Lake Heights community newsletter 26, 27 April 2023

The traditional culture of the Wallaga Lake foreshore –

Around thirty members of the Heights Care community, friends and colleagues were informed and entertained by a fascinating talk by Gary and Paul Campbell, followed by a barbecue, on 6 April. Supported by this year's Environmental grant from the Bega Valley Shire Council, this followed last year's equally successful seminar on the health of Wallaga Lake.

Marion Williams, journalist for the [Narooma News Online](https://www.naroomanews.com.au/) has said we could use her excellent summary distilled from her extensive notes.

160 years living by Wallaga Lake

Text and pictures by Marion Williams, Narooma News Online

Members of the Campbell family shared their extensive knowledge of the Wallaga Lake area and its indigenous history that dates back thousands of years.

Traditional custodians of Country Gary Campbell and his brother Paul discussed their people's traditions and culture at a seminar on Thursday, April 6, that was organised by local community group Wallaga Lake Heights Care.



Gary Campbell taught pupils at Bermagui Public School about bush tucker, growing food and birdlife for 11 years. His family has lived in the Wallaga Lake/Tilba/Mystery Bay area since 1860 but through stories handed down through countless generations their knowledge dates back thousands of years.

Around 30 people from Wallaga Lake Heights, Beauty Point and surrounding areas came to learn about the traditions and culture of the people who have lived on the shores of Wallaga Lake for thousands of years.

Tsunamis, skulls and a corroboree

At one point there was no Wallaga Lake, just a gully and the area of land known as Murunna Point was much bigger.

"A big tsunami came and wiped out villages," Mr Campbell said.

Scientists at University of Wollongong have published papers citing the upturned boulders and geological composition of some rocks at Mystery Bay as evidence of tsunamis.

Mr Campbell said the bones sometimes visible at Murunna Point are 3,000 years old, the result of "big fights" with tribes who came from Victoria by canoe.

Nearby is a corroboree site, "tens of thousands of years old", that is only visible after fires go through.

"They danced in circles in the same way the world goes around. Only men danced."



Gary Campbell discussing how Yuin people used to make fishing nets.

Fishing nets, trading

As he walked the group to Murunna Point Mr Campbell recounted how vines were used to make fishing nets.

They also used bark to make fishing nets they placed over the spit to sustain their communities and use for trading. One of these nets still exists, in a museum in England.

Around Dalgety, for example, there is very good rock for making spear heads. "We used to trade our stuff for theirs, so you find little spear heads down here and our shellwork is up in Dalgety," he said.

Mr Campbell said the causeway that was built in April 1894 has affected Wallaga Lake's tidal flow so it isn't as deep as it was.



Prior to walking to Murunna Point there was a smoking ceremony to cleanse and get rid of any negativity.

Living off the land and lake

Paul Campbell said Wallaga Lake has sustained his people for a long time.

"It is our Woolworths, Bunnings and chemist."

Unlike Bodalla and Potato Point which had emus, they were heavily reliant on fish for protein.

He said Yuin people follow 24 seasons, with things like when moths are plentiful or waratahs in flower signalling it is time to take certain fish and shellfish.

"That is the way we live through the seasons," he said.

Marion Williams

Journalist

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New web site www.heightscare.org.au up and running

We are delighted to report that, after some months offline, Wallaga Lake Heights Care once again has a new web site. With masses of material from Alison and excellent support from Mike Power, owner of local IT operation mpower.com.au, we are live again. There are still a few tweaks to be made, but do have a look.

Best wishes, Heights Care steering group,

Roz Bannon

Alison Kuitert

Bill Southwood

Peter Campbell

Doug Mein

Ivana Gattegno

Olga Nielsen