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culturallandscapesprize

THE 2023 LAUREATE
OF THE UNESCO-GREECE
MELINA MERCOURI
INTERNATIONAL PRIZE

GUNDITJMARA COMMUNITY
BUDJ BIM CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
(AUSTRALIA)

PROGRAMME

ADDRESS
Audrey Azoulay
Director-General of UNESCO

VIDEO INTRODUCTION
UNESCO-Greece Melina Mercouri
International Prize for the
Safeguarding and Management
of Cultural Landscapes

WELCOMING REMARKS
H.E. Ms Maria Diamantopoulou
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of
Greece to UNESCO

ADDRESS
H.E. Ms Lina Mendoni
Minister of Culture of the
Hellenic Republic

VIDEO OF THE 2023 LAUREATE
Gunditjmara community, Budj Bim
Cultural Landscape (Australia)

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF
THE 2023 LAUREATE
Mr Denis Rose
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation
THE 2023 LAUREATE
GUNDITJMARA COMMUNITY
BUDJ BIM CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, located in the traditional Country of the Gunditjmara people in south-eastern Australia, is an outstanding representative example of human interaction with the environment and a testimony to the continuing cultural and social practices of the Gunditjmara community, as well as of its custodianship of the landscape for over six millennia.

This property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2019 for its exceptional testimony to the cultural traditions, knowledge, practices and ingenuity of the Gunditjmara and for their interaction with a patchwork of wetlands on the Budj Bim lava flows, whose productive potential they purposefully harnessed. The dynamic relationship between the Gunditjmara and their land has been passed down by elders from generation to generation through the Gunditjmara’s knowledge systems and cultural traditions, including the ongoing kooyang (eel) harvesting, associated storytelling, dance and basket weaving.

Contemporary custodians of the land express this continuity of land-use by modifying and maintaining a vast system of hydrological engineering that redirects waterflows to trap, store and harvest kooyang. Beyond the carefully managed physical elements that migrate seasonally through the system, beyond the physical elements such as channels, weirs, dams, ponds and sinkholes, this interaction between people, animals, plants and land features is supported and enhanced by the stories and cultural traditions of Gunditjmara, which are closely linked.

The preservation of this heritage sustains and enhances local livelihoods, as well as biological, cultural and agricultural diversity through traditional land and water management practices. The work of the Gunditjmara community illustrates an outstanding contribution to the objectives of the UNESCO Prize by sustaining continued cultural and spiritual linkages with natural environment and connecting past, present and future generations.

All photos above © Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

JURY

▶ KHALIFA AL KHALIFA
Bahrain
Chair of the Jury President, Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities

▶ BETINA ADAMS
Brazil
Independent Architect in Urban and Architectural Conservation, Counsellor of the Santa Catarina’s State Council

▶ KRISTAL BUCKLEY
Australia
Honorary Researcher at Deakin University

▶ SUSAN KEITUMETSE
Botswana
Holder of the UNESCO Chair in African Heritage Studies and Sustainable Development at the University of Botswana

▶ VESNA ZAKONJSEK
Slovenia
Landscape Architect at Public Institute of Kozjansko Park, Laureate of the 2021 edition of the Prize