Kurok-iyar, teen koytpa koy koy pulitja pa marrang ngeerangoon
(Kurok-iyar, the story of the Seven Sisters)

The meaning of the story

The rising of the Pleaides in the southern hemisphere is important seasonal marker for Aboriginal people. It signals the beginning of spring and increased food abundance. It is the time best to harvest minimuk (whitchity grubs). The story also reinforces the importance of strong family connection.

Australia’s First Astronomers

Aboriginal people have always used astronomy to keep track of seasons, months and even days. Below are the ordinal numerals of the Gunditjmara people in south western Victoria Australia. It is a calendar system based on the 28 day cycle of the moon. The relevant body parts associated with the date of an event was usually marked with ochre or a tie as a reminder. In other words your body was your diary. Using todays modern calendar the 29th day starts back at 1.

Further Information

ABC Science: Australia’s First Astronomers
hfeature

Australian Aboriginal Astronomy
http://emudreaming.com/culture.htm

Star Stories: short film
https://vimeo.com/146605413
Protocols for Classroom Activities

Classroom activities must be facilitated by local Aboriginal people to whom the stories belong. These stories are the cultural heritage of the Gunditjmara and require local cultural knowledge and authority to articulate them accurately.

Aboriginal Studies is a requirement for all curriculums nationally and schools should incorporate these activities as part of their cultural education program. Engaging local Aboriginal people to facilitate these activities will in most cases require a payment (at least equivalent to casual teacher rates) for their services. Please see Aboriginal Community contact details below.

Local Aboriginal Community Contacts

Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation – Heywood

Gunditj Mirring Aboriginal Corporation – Heywood

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative – Warrnambool
T: 03 5559 1234

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation – Warrnambool
T: 0419 132 471 E: easternmaar@gmail.com

Kuyaang Maar Aboriginal Corporation – Warrnambool
T: 0407 391 888

Dhauwurd Wurrung Elderly Citizens (DWEC) - Portland