

FREE EVENT

Festival of the Wind Opening Event

THE MANDABOORNAP

DREAMING PUPPET PERFORMANCE

Presented by Esperance Nyungar Community in partnership with
Esperance Community Arts & Escare



THURSDAY 16 MARCH - 6PM WHALE TAIL

Join us for the Welcome To Country and stunning large scale puppetry performance of "Mandaboornap" retelling the Dreaming Story - the creation of Frenchman Peak - constructed and performed by members of the Esperance Nyungar and wider community with puppetry artist Karen Hethey. Come and be enchanted by this ancient story and it's many lessons.

Artwork by
Gail Yorkshire-Selby



Government of Western Australia
Department of Culture and the Arts



MANDABOORNAP PUPPET PERFORMANCE

This story has been handed down over hundreds of thousands of years through generations to today's custodians of Kapa Kurl/ Esperance Nyungar people. The Nyungar culture has been passed on through language, song and dance.

We have kept our strong connection with the land in our everyday lives. When we go out with our families we share these stories. The Landmarks were created in the dreamtime and the stories tell how they came to be formed.

Frenchman Peak or, as we Nyungar people say, Mandaboornap, was formed from a giant Walitj (eagle) sitting on her nest keeping a watchful eye on two boys that stole and broke her eggs. The Walitj threw the boys into the ocean unable to swim back in, they have turned into two islands off the coast of Lucky Bay.

Nyungar Dreamtime stories have lessons for all. Traditionally, these stories were sung in ceremony, around campfires and when we travelled on country. They hold different meanings for different age groups, educating the younger generations, helping them with looking after the country and respecting the laws of the land when it becomes their time.

The Mandaboornap story is one of thousands that criss-cross this country and connect Nyungar people with other First Nation people of Australia. The stories are precious and essential to holding the culture, values and heart of who we are.

The song that you will first listen to has been generously given for use by Traditional Owner Annie Dabb and her family. This song was handed down for centuries through her family and was given to her by her late father, which is the original song for Mandaboornap. Tonight it is being shared with the public to hear for the first time. We thank her and her family for this special gift.

So sit back, enjoy and be immersed in this modern take of this ancient Nyungar story.



'Artwork by Jennell Reynolds'

JENNEL REYNOLDS – NYUNGAR ARTIST/CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Being first approached by Esperance Community Arts to be a part of this unique Aboriginal project, I jumped at the chance. I love sharing my culture and my knowledge with everyone especially our own Nyungar children. With the help of a core group of ladies and one giant or two giant ideas we set out on a rewarding journey.

This journey has strengthened relationships and understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous Esperance community members, through storytelling and puppetry. Sitting around a giant eagle we sewed, yarned, laughed, talked family and got to know each other better. We mastered skills we never thought we had along the way, with the careful guidance of puppeteer extraordinaire Karen Hethey things started to take shape, literally! Once the building stage was over, my role changed from Lead Artist to Project Manager / Co-Artistic Director but I couldn't have done it if it wasn't for those core group of ladies; Anna Bonney, Roslyn Rivers, Colleen Frost, Johnine Graham, Jane Mulcock and Thuriyya Ibrahim.

A big thanks to our Esperance Nyungar Elders for their knowledge and guidance, special thanks to Annie Dabb for her support and gift of letting us use her father's recordings. It has been a pleasure working with all age groups from my community to bring our Nyungar story to life and I hope you enjoy our interpretation of our MANDABOORNAP Dreaming.

KAREN HETHEY – PUPPETRY ARTIST/CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The journey of the Mandaboornap project has been such an incredibly special artistic and cultural collaboration for me. To have the opportunity to learn about this important story from the Traditional Owners, elders, custodians and Nyungar artists of Kapa Kurl and to bring it to life with people through a weaving of Nyungar storytelling and puppetry arts has been an honour and immense pleasure and I sincerely hope we have done justice to the story.

None of tonight's performance would have been possible without the amazing artistic team most especially Jennell Reynolds, Johnine Graham, Anna Bonney, Colleen Frost and Ros Rivers, who have been the backbone of the project and of course to Jane Mulcock of Esperance Community Arts, who worked tirelessly to get the grants to make it real. From late night carving to hundreds of wire twists, to kilometres of thread - many hearts and hands have built not only giant puppets, but new connections, new stories and new friendships.

It is projects like this that remind me of the power that art has to bring people together, lift spirits and to make a real difference in our communities and our world.

I am especially grateful to the generosity of Doc Reynolds, Annie Dabb, Gail Yorkshire-Selby, Aunty Veronica Williams-Bennell and Uncle Bill Bennell and their families who have shared their stories with me and given their support and I take with me new friendships and a deeper awareness and respect for the richness of the Nyungar culture of this area. I wish everyone all the best for this year's 20th anniversary of the Festival of the Wind.

A MESSAGE FROM ESPERANCE COMMUNITY ARTS

Esperance Community Arts would like to extend a very big thank you all the volunteers and partner organisations involved in this project, especially Escare and Nulsen Primary School, who have contributed considerable support. Thanks also to Community Arts Network WA and Lotterywest for funding, and to each of the businesses who donated materials.

Most importantly, however, we thank the Esperance Nyungar community for sharing the Mandaboornap story and for working so hard to bring it all together in a very tight time frame.

Artists Jennell Reynolds and Karen Hethey have put in an extraordinary amount of time and commitment and skill to bring this very special performance to life, supported by a core team of very wonderful women - Johnine Graham, Anna Bonney, Colleen Frost, Roslyn Rivers - and their families - from very young children to senior elders.

Special thanks must go to Johnine Graham, who has worked closely with us for almost two years to provide guidance and direction through a long community planning process.

Thank you also to Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation for supporting this project.

It has been such a great privilege for us to be part of the Mandaboornap Dreaming Puppet Project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Esperance Nyungar Community
Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation

Escare

Festival of the Wind Inc

Nulsen Primary School

Gail Yorkshire-Shelby

Shire of Esperance

Esperance Port Authority

Catalyst Community Arts Fund CAN

Lotterywest

WA Department of Culture and Arts

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Country Arts WA

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