

MUNGO MAN ARRIVING IN BALRANALD NOVEMBER 16th ON JOURNEY HOME TO MUNGO NATIONAL PARK



The Discovery of Mungo Man in 1974



Painting by John Winch (grandson of Alice Kelly) depicting the spirit of Mungo Man and the Aboriginal tribes at Lake Mungo



The late Alice Kelly, Mutthi Mutthi elder and custodian of Lake Mungo NP & the Willandra Lakes region

After spending more than 40 years in a box in Canberra the Return to Country of Mungo Man this November is a long awaited moment that acknowledges the Aboriginal Australians as the oldest living culture on Earth and commemorating the oldest modern humans outside of Africa and one of the first expressions of spiritual consciousness in humankind.

Mungo Man was first discovered in 1974 by Geologist Jim Bowler at the banks of Lake Mungo located within the Balranald Shire. This discovery and the earlier one of Mungo Lady (1969) forever changed our understanding of the antiquity of human occupation of Australia setting it back beyond 40,000 years. He was held at the Australian National University for decades before being officially handed back to traditional owners in 2015. Since then he has been stored at the Canberra's National Museum of Australia while protracted discussions between government departments and traditional owners took place.

Appropriately, Mungo Man's last stop before his journey home to Lake Mungo will be in Balranald on 16th November where a Smoking Ceremony will take place at the Aboriginal Cemetery followed by a special event at the Balranald Discovery Centre to commemorate Mungo Man's journey home as well as honouring Mutthi Mutthi elder, the late Alice Kelly who was born and lived in Balranald on Mutthi Mutthi country and was custodian of Lake Mungo National Park and the Willandra Lakes region.

Alice Kelly lobbied for both Mungo Lady and Mungo Man to be returned to country and played a critical role in contributing to the anthropological and archaeological knowledge of the Willandra Lakes area when Mungo Man was discovered. She was on many government and non-government committees concerned with land preservation and cultural heritage including the World Heritage Committee. She also contributed greatly to the 1981 UNESCO listing of Lake Mungo and adjacent lakes as the globally-significant Willandra Lakes World Heritage area.

Her daughter, Mutthi Mutthi representative Patsy Winch (nee Kelly) who is a member of the Willandra Lakes Aboriginal Advisory Group committee and a member of the Repatriation Committee says "It is of great significance that Mungo Man's last stop before going home to Mungo is in Balranald as he was discovered at Lake Mungo within the Balranald Shire, and

Balranald was home to Mum.” Patsy goes on to say “Mum was a visionary who respected her culture and heritage and all Aboriginal people not just the Mutthi Mutthi tribe. She made a big difference to indigenous and non-indigenous relationships and consequently was named Aboriginal Woman of the Year in 1988. We are proud that she will be honoured on November 16th when Mungo Man stops in Balranald on his journey home to Mungo.”

The Return to Country and ancestral spirit of Mungo Man is about the soul of a culture, the harmony with nature and a burial site that is consecrated ground and a pertinent reminder that the spirituality and essence of a culture goes far beyond skeletal remains.

The Smoking Ceremony in Balranald on the 16th November will take place at 4.00pm followed by the special event at the Balranald Discovery Centre at 5.30pm, everyone is welcomed.

On the 17th November Mungo Man will leave Balranald for his final journey home to Mungo.

For more information, please contact the Balranald Visitor Information Centre on 1800 444 043.

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