

The following Wurundjeri Dreamtime Stories were directly transcribed from a series of interviews with Wurundjeri Elder, Ian Hunter, recorded in 2004-5.



## Bunjil & Pallian Creation Story

In **Wurundjeri** society we had to have a god too, same as any body and the god in our language was called **Bunjil**. And Bunjil was said to be Creator of all living things [...]

It was passed down that Bunjil came in the form of an **eagle** [...] I see him as a great force, same as any god, whether it be the Christian God, or Allah, or Buddha. A god has to perform and create. And Bunjil created everything according to our rules - the land, the earth, the animals.

And then after creating the earth, he then went to the **Yarra [River]**, which originally was called **Birrarung**, place of the mists, he got two great clods of clay and fashioned two great clods of clay into two forms.

Now most people think that these two forms would be man and woman, but they weren't they were two men. [...] Bunjil created the two men, which he called **Kulin** out of clay. He then kneels down over the two men and breathes from the top of their heads to the tip of their toes and then around in circles around their navels and gives them life.

So the two men stand up and he calls them Kulin. So he gives them long sharp sticks and tells them that they will be hunters, for animals that move. **Pallian**, his brother, he's seen this going on, but he's not a god. But Pallian says,

"Now that's not a bad sort of a trick [...] maybe I can do something as well."

So Pallian with his stone axe chops down two saplings. And with the saplings, as he's chopped them down, he trails them in the Yarra - the great place of significance, of sacred water.

And he starts chopping away at them and chopping and chopping and chopping away at the two saplings. He doesn't realise his axe is getting blunt (it's greenstone you see).

[...] So finally Pallian says,

"Oh, me axe is blunt, that'll have to do".

So he's created two different forms, a little bit more shapely, with a couple more bumps. He calls them **Bagrook**, what we call today women.

Then Pallian kneels and tries to breath life into the two women - he can't do it. He keeps blowing and blowing [...] so he keeps going, but it doesn't work. But then he says,

"Hey Bunjil, they won't go. Will you give me a bit of a hand down here?"

So Bunjil comes down and gently breathes air over the two forms of women. So he says, "Stand up."

And the two women stand up and they're alive. The two women he then calls Bagrook and he calls the other two men, the Kulin, back.

"Wanna see these, come 'ere."

And he says one man and one woman will be of the **eagle** people, or moiety, or blood, or class. One man and one woman would also be of the **crow** class, of which Wurundjeri people are crow people.

So [*there after*] the eagle man would marry crow woman and have eagle children. The crow man would marry eagle woman and have crow children, so they would then have unrelated children [...] and that's how the social system of Aboriginal societies generally worked - in moiety.

[...] Then when Bunjil's finished all that, he sees fit to do what he wants, he's done the whole deal - he's created the earth and animals and men and women to look after it, same as in the bible.

So he then sees fit to go into the heavens, or **Tandaburruk**, where he can then look over his people to make sure that what he's created is going to behave right.

And when he goes there he takes with him **Mindi**, something else which he created along the way, which is a bit of a mistake; half a dog half a snake. And Mindi [*is*] this creature who can sort of seek retribution on Aboriginal people. He knows all black fellas

and black fellas know Mindi, but he can't operate unless he sort of gets the nod from Bunjil, who was the creator of all living things according to the Wurundjeri people. And men and women were created with the power of the Yarra [River]. So our Yarra, or Birrarung is definitely THE place - the place of the start of creation. Whether it be God, the Christian god, or Allah, Buddha, Bunjil, Rainbow Serpent ...they're all gods, all different names. I've come down to it now, me, as an older bloke now, I've come down to it that there is a god, there has to be a god. Otherwise there's now reason for all this, why we are here [...] we have to believe in a here-after, because what we see of ourselves is only a shell to hold our spirit, or our **murrup**, [*which*] does transcend and come back in another form.