

## MEDIA RELEASE



**7/03/2024**

**FORUM SET TO SHOW THE WAY**

**EEL FESTIVAL 2024**

The versatility of eels, a Yoorook Commission update and the environmental history of the Hopkins River will be on the agenda for the Forum at the 14th Lake Bolac Eel Festival.

With the festival theme, 'Song, Story, Dance, Ceremony and Celebration', the forum is a central part of the festival on 22-23 March.

Speakers include Wergaia/Wamba Wamba Elder and Yoorook Justice Commission chair, Prof. Eleanor Bourke; Tasmanian geographer, ecologist, eel advocate and PhD candidate Malcolm S. Johnson; and Deakin University's Honorary Associate Environmental Humanities Professor, Dr Rod Giblett.

Festival goers will also hear from Tyson Lovett-Murray, a former World Heritage Ranger on the UNESCO World Heritage listed Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. Tyson has worked in numerous roles in the Aboriginal community from land management to community services.

A look at both men's and women's Indigenous dance practice, presented by Festival Cultural Adviser Adeline Thomas and Indigenous Cultural Artist Brett Clarke, will be the cultural highlight of the forum.

The forum will be held on the Saturday morning of the festival from 11am to 1.00pm with time for audience questions.

"The festival forum is a popular and important part of the festival" said festival chair Rachel Taylor.

"The forum provides a unique snap shot of work of relevance to the region's environmental and cultural assets."

Tickets to the festival have been kept to the same affordable prices as the last festival in 2022 and can be purchased via [eelfestival.org.au](http://eelfestival.org.au)

The festival is held every 2 years to mark the autumn gathering of local First Nations for the eel migration season, and is sponsored by Ararat Rural City Council, the Willaura and Lake Bolac Bendigo Community Bank, Pitch, GWM Water, Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Regional Arts Victoria, South West TAFE and Beyond Bolac Catchment Action Group.

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