

# Carving out a career in agriculture and Farm Management

## Case Study

### garinga djimbayang

Aaron has embraced his studies in agriculture and developed a promising career along the way, “ticking off a lot of boxes within that native space, cultural space and then bringing it back to the agriculture space.”

Proud Gunditjmara man, Aaron Bamblett wears many hats. As property manager, he cares for three farming properties on Gunditjmara Country in south-west Victoria. He’s also team leader for the Budj Bim Rangers who manage land for the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation. Somewhere in between, he’s adding to his already impressive qualifications by studying for a Diploma of Agriculture through Rural Industries Skill Training (RIST).

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Corporation and Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation are partners behind the farms Aaron manages: Kooreelah, Alambie and Lake Gorrie. Together, these Traditional Owners and Indigenous-owned organisations are committed to improving health, education and employment opportunities, while progressing the protection of cultural heritage and caring for Country.

## Aaron’s pathway to a career in Agriculture

Aaron first joined the team at Winda-Mara on the cultural side, and also developed a keen interest on the agricultural side. *“I jumped into the training and really started learning with my previous manager. He trained me up and it’s been my passion ever since.”*

Aaron says that certifications he got from chemical users and excavator courses, bush care and on the job learning *“put me in a good spot. I’ve always used my previous jobs as stepping stones to find the career that really suited me.”*

Last year, Aaron completed a Certificate IV in Agriculture, his first qualification through RIST. In his studies, Aaron learned about pasture management, grazing, weed control and different strategies and systems for farm management.

*“Once I did the course, everything started lining up and I could see why we do certain things. It really helped me make informed decisions on how I manage this space.”*

With an opportunity to further his qualifications and the support of senior managers, Aaron is now studying a Diploma in Agriculture while working. He explains that the Diploma *“focuses right in on policy management”*, developing approaches for team management, work health and safety, biosecurity, land care and more. *“It can really set my career up, and then there’s space to make it my own.”*

## Inspiring and guiding the next generation

On Kooreelah, which covers more than 1,000 hectares, Aaron is responsible for the wide range of tasks that are needed on a working cattle farm. At any one time, around 200 head of Angus steers are fattened on the property before they are sold at market.







Aaron takes pride in teaching skills such as cattle mustering, grazing and disease management, biosecurity, weed and pest control, bush regeneration, fencing and tractor operations to a team of about eight trainees. Some of them are also enrolled in courses at Southwest TAFE.

Farm safety is a big part of training, and before the trainees can help with operations, they need to learn skills on quad bikes in order to go out mustering, and learn about chemical safety before they can help with bush care or fertilising. Tractor safety is also a must.

### **One foot in agriculture, one foot in cultural heritage**

Working at Kooreelah provides the opportunity for trainees to learn about environmental protection alongside the business of cattle farming. Two or three times each week, elder Aunty Maud comes to yarn with the trainees and help guide their journey. Additionally, a wattleseed orchard has been established as they look to expand the farm's output of traditional bush foods.

On the farm and at the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, caring for Country is at the core of learning. Trainees gain understanding on how conducting cultural burning can support land management, which is important on the farm. Trainees have also worked on bush regeneration projects with Greening Australia and planted around 8,000 stringy barks on Kooreelah to create windbreaks and bring back natural habitats.

### **Inspiring and guiding the next generation**

Aaron explains that while some trainees have no previous work experience, he hopes the new skills and training may encourage them to pursue a career on the farm and roles in caring for Country. Hands on learning, mentoring and different opportunities can set young mob up for other jobs in agriculture, or cultural heritage protection and land management, as Budj Bim Rangers.

**"My aspirations are working in this industry for a long time," Aaron says, "Where I can train people so they can go out and manage their own farm or work within this industry."**

For more about Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, including the Budj Bim Rangers, visit [windamara.com.au](http://windamara.com.au)

For more about Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, visit [gunditjmirring.com](http://gunditjmirring.com)

For more about First Nations peoples' connection to agriculture, visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au/garinga-djimbayang](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/garinga-djimbayang)

