

## Tjirbruki Munaintya Tjirbruki Dreaming<sup>1</sup>

*This summary of the Munaintya has been prepared by Karl Winda Telfer, cultural custodian, and Gavin Malone, cultural geographer, from CRED: Cultural Research Education Design. Karl is from the Mullawirra and Mulla mai/Kudnarto tribal clans. His family, the Williams, have been senior custodians of this story and its places since the early 1980s after Kurna people started coming home to Country from mission living. The writing of Norman B. Tindale, 'The Wanderings of Tjirbruki: a tale of the Kurna people of Adelaide', Records of the SA Museum, 20:5-13 is acknowledged as the primary written source for this summary. Milerum, also known as Clarence Long, the key Aboriginal informant for this story is also acknowledged.*

*The Munaintya Dreaming is a complex and multi-layered story that tells of creation, the law and lore, and of human relationships. The story comes from an oral tradition so it's telling at any time is to suit the need and appropriateness of the occasion, both who is telling the story and who it is being told to and why. This summary provides an outline, more detail may be told and meaning revealed when appropriate.*

Tjirbruki is a Bukkianna meyu *Ancestor being* of the Kurna meyunna *people* and was from the time after the sea waters had risen and created Wongga Yerlo *Gulf St Vincent*. Kurna Yerta Parnngarra or *Kurna Tribal Country* extends from Cape Jervis to the south of Adelaide, to Crystal Brook to the north and west of Pikoillya in the Mount Lofty Ranges to the coast of Gulf Saint Vincent. Their ancestral lands include the Adelaide Plains and the city of Adelaide.

Tjirbruki was living at one of the summer camping places near Patpangga (Rapid Bay) with his clan when a kari *emu* hunt was organised in lands to the north, in Tarndanya (the Adelaide region) as there were many kari there. His three nephews Kulultuwi, Jurawi and Tetjawi and others went on the hunt. Kulultuwi was Tjirbruki's nangari, sister's son, and much loved by him. Jurawi and Tetjawi were from other mothers.

Tjirbruki did not go on the hunt but moved his camp to Witu-wattingga (Brighton region) to fish, catching big hauls of kurari, also called darawe *beaked salmon*. The kari hunters went north and moved across Mikkawomma, the open plains between Tarndanya (Adelaide area) and Yerta Bulti (Port Adelaide area) to drive the birds towards Mudlunga *Nose place* (Le Fevre Peninsula) and trap them at the tip of the peninsula. Whilst some birds got away, the hunt was successful.

Meanwhile Tjirbruki moved camp to Tulukudangga, a fresh water spring near the beach (at Kingston Park), and then went inland to hunt kari for himself and saw the fresh tracks of a male bird which he decided would be his. According to custom, the first to sight the presence of game had the right to take it. After finishing his fishing Tjirbruki followed the kari's tracks south towards Witawodli (Sellicks Beach) where they turned inland. Tjirbruki decided that the bird would later come back towards the coast so he travelled further south to intercept it.

Kulultuwi had also come back down south and saw the kari's tracks, followed them and then killed the bird. But he crossed Tjirbruki's footprints and in doing so broke the lore, he should have known it was Tjirbruki's because of his footprints. Tjirbruki realised the bird was not coming his way and began to back track. He saw smoke from a fire and headed that way, soon hearing Kulultuwi singing whilst a cooking fire was being prepared with Jurawi and Tetjawi. Tjirbruki confronted Kulultuwi about killing his bird. Kulultuwi said he was sorry and apologised, saying he had not realised it was his uncle's bird and so offered him the meat. As Tjirbruki had some kangaroo meat with him he took only some of the kari and went on his way. He had forgiven Kulultuwi for his mistake.

As Kulultuwi was finishing the cooking, he checked its progress and a burst of steam from the kari blinded him. Jurawi and Tetjawi rushed in and speared and killed Kulultuwi, reasoning that they had done so because of their elder brother's breaking the law in killing their uncle's bird. They then shared the meat with their own clan and told them what had happened. The clan then started smoke drying Kulultuwi's body before later taking it to Warriparri (Sturt River) to continue drying the flexed body on a rack over a fire.

But the brothers then made up a story to cover up what they had done, that Kulultuwi, in fear of Tjirbruki's anger, had gone elsewhere to hunt kari. Tjirbruki soon heard the false story and also asked people of the Witjarlung clan to pass on his forgiveness to Kulultuwi if they saw him. Although they knew of his death, the Witjarlung concealed it from Tjirbruki who then went looking for his nephew. Eventually, near where he had last seen him, he came across sugar ants on the track and saw they were carrying human hair and blood and red ochre. He realised his nephew was dead and then saw where the body had been and the smoke drying had started.

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<sup>1</sup>Tjirbruki is also spelt Tjilbruke

Tjirbruki, being a man of the law, had to decide if Kulultuwi had been lawfully killed. He determined Kulultuwi had not been killed within the law and that he had to avenge the murder. He went and obtained some good spears and travelled north along the hills before making his way back to the coast and found out that there was a big camp at Warriparri. He first went to Witu-wattingga to rest and was greeted there by the two brothers who still deceived him about Kulultuwi's death, blaming it on others who may have been Peramangk (from the Adelaide Hills). Tjirbruki knew they were lying but did not say so, he went along with their deception. The next day they went inland to the camp at Warriparri (where Kulultuwi's body was still being smoke-dried). In the evening they danced for the old man Tjirbruki who then sang the camp to sleep. He made sure all were asleep by calling out but there was no response.

Tjirbruki was a master at fire-making. He used powdered morthi bark *stringybark tree* as tinder and set it round the hut they were sleeping in with piles of grass, leaving only a small gap at the entrance. Then, using a baruke *iron pyrites* stone and a piece of paldari *flintstone*, he started fires at each pile of morthi tinder, telling the fire to blaze up quickly. He cried out loudly, 'You are getting burned! Camp on fire'. When Jurawi came out he speared him with a wundi *dread-spear*, and then the same to Tetjawi. When he knew they were dead he pulled out his spears.

In the morning Tjirbruki carried Kulultuwi's partly smoked dried body to Tulukudangga, the fresh water spring on the beach (at Kingston Park) to complete the smoking and for an inquest to be held. Many people gathered for the ceremony and the names of the two killers and the way Kulultuwi was killed were confirmed.

Tjirbruki then wrapped Kulultuwi's remains into a compact parcel and headed south to Patpangga (Rapid Bay) to place the remains in a perki cave. Along the journey he stopped several times to rest and overwhelmed by sadness at his favourite nephews death he wept and where his mekauwe *tears* dropped to the ground a spring of fresh water welled up. That is how the freshwater springs along the coast at Karildilla (Hallet Cove), Tainbarilla (Port Noarlunga), Karkungga (Red Ochre Cove), Wirruwarrungga (Port Willunga), Witawodli (Sellicks Beach), and Kongaratinga (near Wirrina Cove) came to be. And each place became a camping place.

Along his journey south Tjirbruki also punished others who had deceived him about Kulultuwi's death. He walked into the offender's camp and speared four men, Ngarakkani, Nenaratawi, Limi, and Tulaki in the leg as retribution; it was the right punishment to spear people in the leg. The people in the camp knew Tjirbruki was serious and took fright, some jumping into the sea to become various kinds of shark which we now know as Ngarakkani *Gummy Shark*, Nenaratawi, *Southern Fiddler Ray or Banjo Shark*, Limi *Cobbler Carpet Shark* and Tulaki, *Bronze Whaler or Cocktail Shark*. These fish became the totems of the Witjarlung clan. Any others left in the camp also fled and they turned into birds.

Tjirbruki was then there alone, satisfied with what he had done and after resting, continued his journey. When he finally came to the right cave he went into the darkness and found a rock ledge to make a small platform on which to place Kulultuwi's remains. He then went further in, travelling to the depths of the cave before coming to an opening further inland at Wateira nengal (Mt Hayfield). There he emerged covered in yellow dust which at the foot of the hill he shook off, forming yellow ochre at that place.

Saddened by these events and feeling old, Tjirbruki decided he no longer wished to live as a man. He travelled to Lonkowar (Rosetta Head) in Ramindjeri Country where he decided what to do. He saw a grey currawong, stalked and killed it and then rubbed its fat on his body and tied its feathers to his arms with hair string. He took to the sky and his spirit became a bird, tjirbruki (Glossy Ibis). His body became a martowalan *memorial* in the form of the baruke *iron pyrites* outcrop at Barrukungga, the place of hidden fire (Brukungga – north of Nairne in the Adelaide Hills).