



museum without walls

MANDURAH COMMUNITY MUSEUM

Indigenous Creation Story

In the beginning.....

All across the land there was a terrible drought. The bush, plants, and meat became hard, tough and rank. So three old people from the tribe, Elders, went down to the sea. They began to pray to their creator for water so that the trees could have some sap, and the animals could get tenderness in their meat. The Elders called upon their creator, and the creator came out of the water. It was in the form of a snake, which they called Wagyl. Wagyl was green and smoky grey, so it was unnoticeable in the water. It came out of the sea, and along its path the inlet was formed.

Having created the inlet, Wagyl gave birth to its young in the estuary which formed its unique shape. Wagyl's young stayed in the estuary until they grew bigger. Soon the young left their birthplace, travelling away uphill and forming the Murray, Harvey, and Serpentine rivers as they moved across the land.

The mother, Wagyl, she missed her young ones, and thought they'd gone southwards. She went down, underground, and came up at Lake Clifton to look for them. Not finding her young, she went down to Lake Preston, and looked around there. She kept going around through that way which created the flat land close to the Leschenault Estuary at Australind. She went in through the Leschenault Estuary and right back around into the ocean, still looking. She never found her children.

The little ones actually went up to the east. They were fat when they left and they started going up hill, forming the rivers and the swamps, which were their resting places. They kept going until they were famished, starved, and they started dissolving. When they dissolved right out, right at the end of the swamps, they died and went down. Underground springs were created by the young ones going back to their heaven, the ocean. As they went, underground water supplies were restored throughout the land once more.

The old people believed that when the young of the Wagyl became water, the bush got more moisture, more sap, and the sap flowed into the animals, and the animals became fat and tender. The Six seasons of the people started working again, and the land was green once more.

As told by Aboriginal Elder Joe Walley