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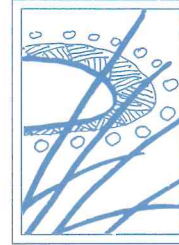
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SHARING THE DREAMING

Nyoongar Aboriginal Stories of the Dreaming



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT WESTERN AUSTRALIA
CALM ... caring for Aboriginal heritage



FIRESTICK

During the Dreaming, the Nyoongar people were marlee (swans). They had no fire to keep warm and they had to eat raw meat.

In these times Meika, the moon, had fire on his tail but would not give it to the people. Kower the purple-crowned lorikeet and Watta the pigeon were ngoolijar-mat (brothers-in-law). They said, "We will get the fire for our demman (cousins), the marlee."

Meika looked around and saw Kower and Watta running away with the fire. He called out, "Kal-yung, Kal-yung" ("Fire, give, fire, give"). He kept calling out but they continued to run away.

Meika was very angry and called upon Waddern the sea, the moon's uncle, to put the fire out. Waddern rose up and flooded the land.

Kower the lorikeet quickly ran to the balga (the blackboy bush), took the fire from his wing and put it in the flowering stem high up in the balga bush. Kower then showed the marlee (the swans) how to make fire from the balga flower stems.

They were so glad to have fire that they called the balga stem Kower after the lorikeet. The lorikeet still has a red fire under the wings to show the swans that he was a fire bringer. The Nyoongar people never kill the lorikeets, for they are sacred (winnaitch).