

**ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT –  
CHALLENGES, CHANGES & PERSPECTIVES FROM A  
REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY:  
THE WURUNDJERI TRIBE LAND COUNCIL**



**DARREN GRIFFIN**

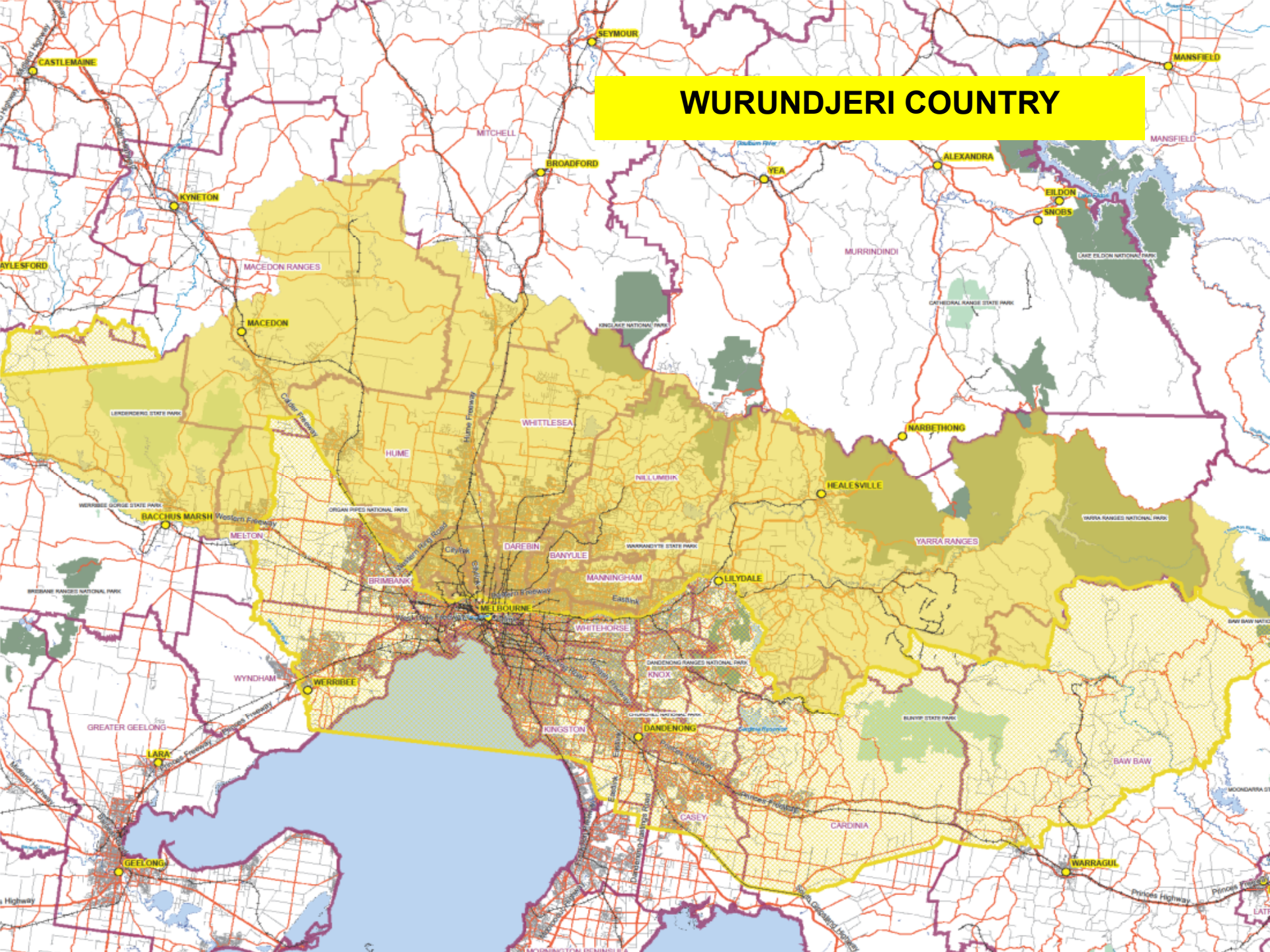


# WURUNDJERI TRIBE LAND COUNCIL

- ✘ Established in 1984
- ✘ Comprises descendants of the Woi Wurrung - the Traditional Owners of the Greater Melbourne region
- ✘ Currently has approx. 100 members and 33 Elders
- ✘ All operational decisions are made by the Committee of Management – made up of 12 Elders – 4 Elders from each of the 3 family groups. Elections held every year.
- ✘ Appointed as a RAP by the VAHC in August 2008
- ✘ Office is located in the Abbotsford Convent – near Dights Falls

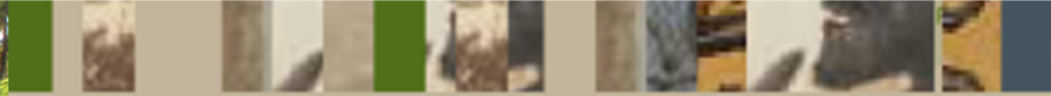


# WURUNDJERI COUNTRY





# **The Landscapes of Wurundjeri Country**





# Our Ancestors Our History



## WURUNDJERI TRIBE LAND COUNCIL THEN...

- ✘ For over 20 years Wurundjeri Council exercised statutory functions under the *Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*
- ✘ Consent to disturb powers
- ✘ Field reps involved in heritage assessments
- ✘ Minimal engagement with heritage consultants + developers



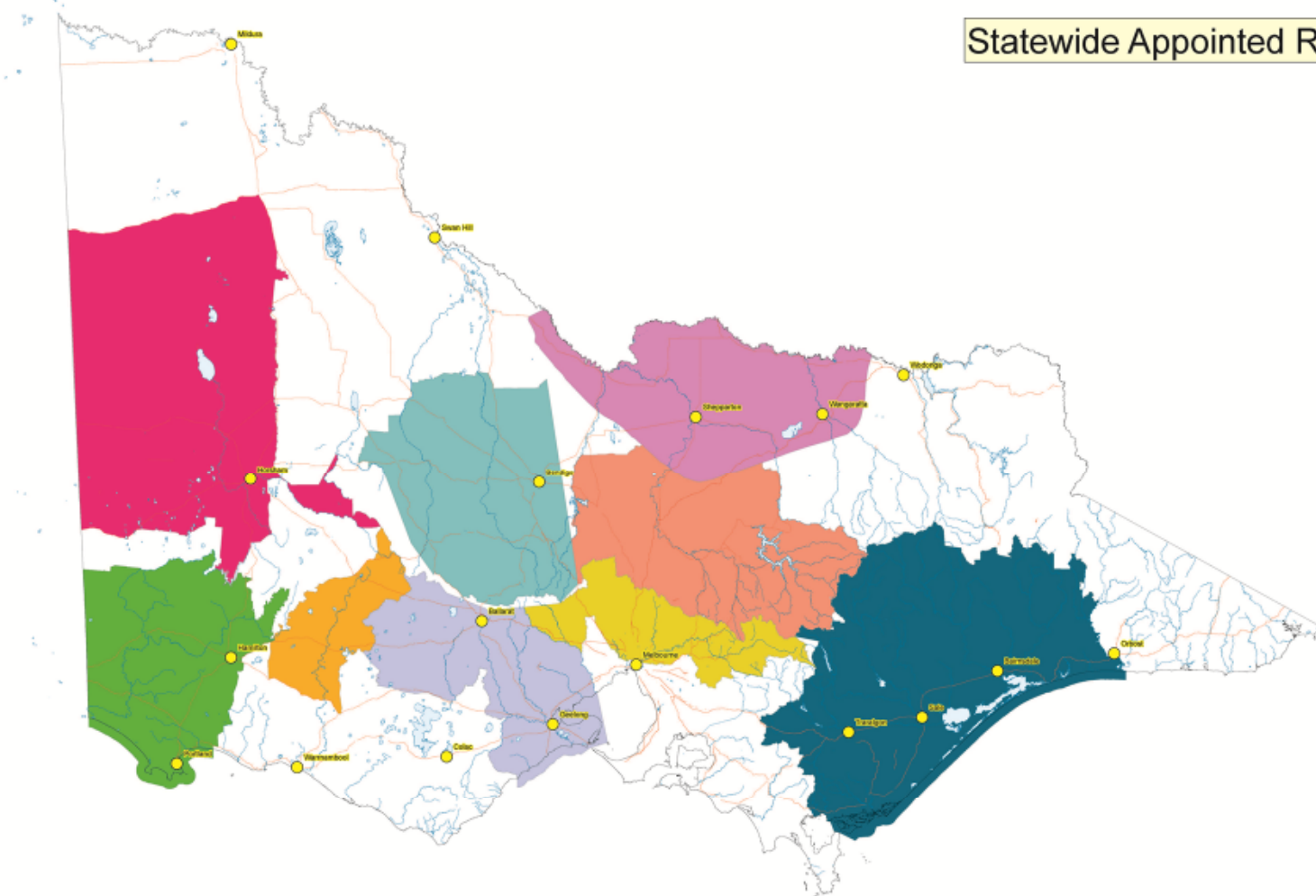


## ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE LEGISLATION

- ✘ *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- ✘ *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007*
- ✘ Enacted 28 May 2007
- ✘ Established the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (VAHC)
- ✘ Appoint Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)
- ✘ Provisions for Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) and
- ✘ Cultural Heritage Permits (CHPs)



## Statewide Appointed RAPs

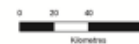


Statewide Registered Aboriginal Parties  
as at September 3, 2009

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation       |  Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation                               |
|  Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation             |  Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation                                     |
|  Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation       |  Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc. |
|  Gundij Murring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation |  Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation                             |
|  Martang Pty Ltd  |   |



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## CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLANS

- ✘ Strict guidelines on content and format outlined in Regulations
- ✘ Contains:
  - ✘ Desktop Assessment (background research, site prediction model)
  - ✘ Standard Assessment (archaeological survey)
  - ✘ Complex Assessment (archaeological excavation)
- ✘ Size, Nature and Significance of each Aboriginal site/place within activity area
- ✘ Management Plan – how will these sites/places be managed for the life of the activity? Avoid, minimise, salvage



## ***CULTURAL VALUES ARE FOUND IN...***

- ✘ 'natural' resources, waterways & landforms
- ✘ places of memory, ceremony & spirituality
- ✘ routes & tracks, views, landmarks
- ✘ archaeological sites and materials
- ✘ men's and women's business
- ✘ places of recent history, home & work



## CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLANS?

- ✘ Evaluated by the RAP
- ✘ If no RAP then Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) evaluates plan
- ✘ There is a statutory 30 days from submission of CHMP to when the RAP/AAV must approve or reject the Plan
- ✘ CHMP manages the Aboriginal heritage for the life of the activity. If activity changes, a new CHMP is required



## WURUNDJERI TRIBE LAND COUNCIL

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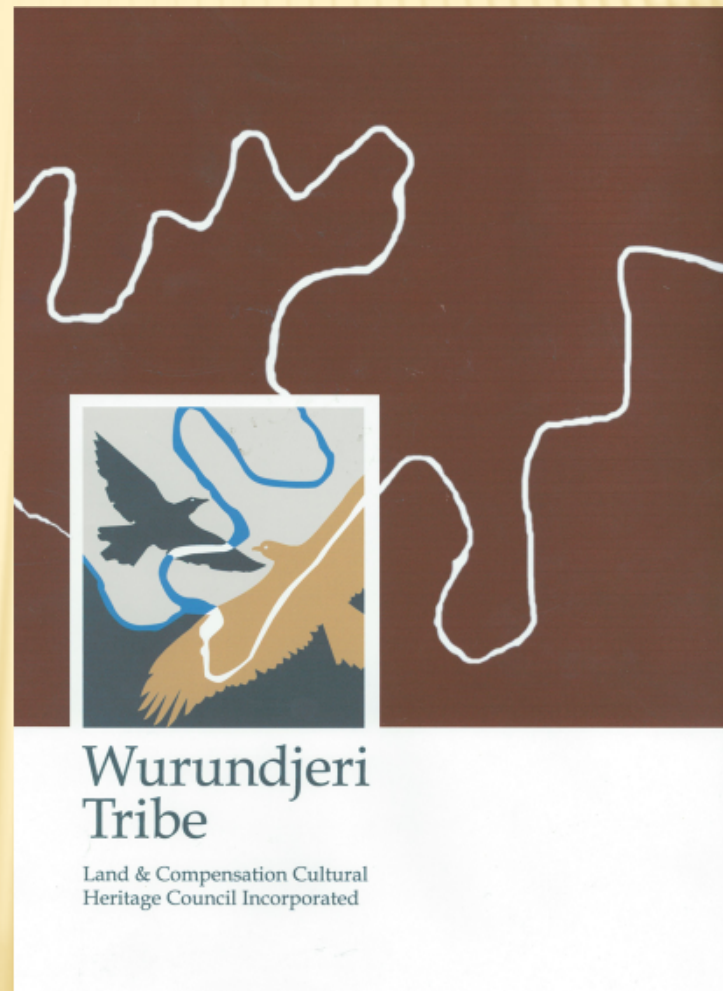
- ✘ We have 359 CHMPs on the books:
  - + evaluated 304
  - + 49 in progress
  - + ~6 not very active/stalled
  
- ✘ Managing this process is a massive administrative exercise

# ENGAGING IN THE ENTIRE CHMP PROCESS

- ✘ **Statutory timeframes** – NOI responses, CHMP evaluation timeline, tracking timelines
- ✘ **Managing information** – filing systems, tracking information, setting up email systems
- ✘ **Managing engagement** – booking meetings, booking field representatives, conducting meetings, managing Sponsor expectations + concerns, managing heritage advisors, stipulating baseline information requirements for meetings
- ✘ **Managing finance** - invoicing, keeping track of statutory payments, staying solvent!
- ✘ **Managing personnel** – allocating work to field workers (~30), office staff management (15), managing OHS + training, uniforms
- ✘ **Infrastructure** – phones, computers, desks, storage facilities, vehicles, office, fax, photocopier, printer, scanner, camera, software etc
- ✘ **Communicating with Elders/community** – reporting back on CHMPs, organising meetings with Elders
- ✘ **Evaluation** – understanding project, knowing the activity area, understanding + applying statutory requirements to evaluation process, involving Elders in decisions, managing community expectations + politics, documenting evaluation, communicating evaluation with sponsor + heritage advisor, defending decisions in VCAT, seeking legal advice + staying on top of case law

# WURUNDJERI CHMP STANDARD STEPS

# WURUNDJERI RAP INFO PACKAGE







# SHIFTS IN OUR THINKING & WORKING

FROM...

- ✘ being consulted...
- ✘ commenting...
- ✘ reacting to the agendas of others...
- ✘ looking for 'sites' ...
- ✘ separating nature & culture...
- ✘ doing the minimum, complying...

TO...

- ✘ being involved, through resilient long-term relationships
- ✘ doing the work ourselves, taking responsibility
- ✘ participating, planning, working on our own priorities
- ✘ seeing the cultural landscape
- ✘ recognising that nature is part of our culture
- ✘ reaching for something better

# narrap

WURUNDJERI TRIBE  
NARRAP BULLETIN 02

Welcome to the 2nd Issue of the Narrap Bulletin – to keep everyone informed about the Country Plan activities during June and July, and looking ahead.

Although everyone has been very busy with Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC, we have continued our program of visits and workshops during the winter months.

Each visit provides a chance to discuss the meaning of country in that place, meet with the local managers, and to think about how to care for country in various practical and culturally appropriate ways.

#### Our winter program so far - Wurundjeri Children's Narrap Day

We took advantage of the school holidays to visit our neighbours in Abbotsford – the Collingwood Children's Farm. We were well supported by the City of Yarra, and the Manager of the Farm, Alex Walker. A bright and sunny winter's day made the visit all the more enjoyable. Back at the Wurundjeri office, the children worked on a large mural and Country Plan artworks with the Wurundjeri Art & Craft Coordinator, Cinzia Ruffilli.

#### Merri Creek

There are many significant Wurundjeri places along the Merri Creek, so we are very pleased to work on the documentation of the cultural values of the Merri Creek with Melbourne Water, the Merri Creek Management Committee and other land managers and communities along the Creek.

Elder Ringo Terrick and Alex Parmington are working on this project, with funding from Melbourne Water. During June, we met with the Merri and Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group (MECCARG), and visited the area where they have been planting and harvesting the important plant food murrumbong (yam daisy), and other food and medicine plants. Wurundjeri Elders and staff are also working with Parks Victoria on some exciting plans to develop an Indigenous Food & Fibre Garden near Dights Falls.

#### Bolin Bolin Billabong

Elders and members met at Bolin, on the Yarra River in July. It was our first chance to see the new interpretation signs, designed by Wurundjeri artist Judy Nicholson. It was a very moving experience for the community to be at Bolin and read from the new signs. It was wonderful to see the story of the Wurundjeri people told well at this special place.

Prior to the visit, we met with Cam Beardell and John Williams of Parks Victoria to find out more about the site, the ecology of the billabong and the actions taken to improve the environmental quality of the billabong.



(top) Murrumbong harvested from the planting on the Merri Creek in Coburg.

(above) Wurundjeri Children's Narrap Day at the Collingwood Children's Farm.

The Country Plan has been given the name 'Narrap', which means ground or country in the Woiwurrung language.



(left to right) Wurundjeri Children's Narrap Day at the Collingwood Children's Farm. Group photo at Bolin Bolin, Bolin Bolin Billabong.



Wurundjeri  
Tribe

Land & Conservation Cultural  
Heritage Council Incorporated

- Narrap – *ground* in the Woiwurrung language
- Explaining the meaning of *Country*
- Describing the *cultural values* of *Country*
- Directions for the *ways we want to work* with land managers
- Many *different activities* – for young and old, in-Country and in our office, writing down our thoughts and memories
- Getting to know more about *how land managers work*
- Good communication, a regular newsletter



Wurundjeri  
Tribe



# FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

- ✘ Parks Victoria
- ✘ VicRoads
- ✘ Growth Areas Authority
- ✘ Melbourne Water
  - 'Merri Creek Values Recording' Project
- ✘ Commonwealth 'Caring for Our Country'

# ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ON MERRI CREEK



John Batman's famous treaty with the blacks, Merri Creek, Northcote, June 6, 1835 . John Wesley Burt (1875) oil on canvas, La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria

William Thomas, *Billibellary, Chief of the Yarra Tribe on Settlement*, in Robert Brough Smyth Papers. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.





William Strutt, Aboriginal troopers, Melbourne police, with English corporal, pencil and watercolour, 1850, in Victoria the Golden: scenes, sketches and jottings from nature, 1850-1862.

William Strutt, Aboriginal police force [uniforms], pencil and watercolour, 1850, in Victoria the Golden: scenes, sketches and jottings from nature, 1850-1862.

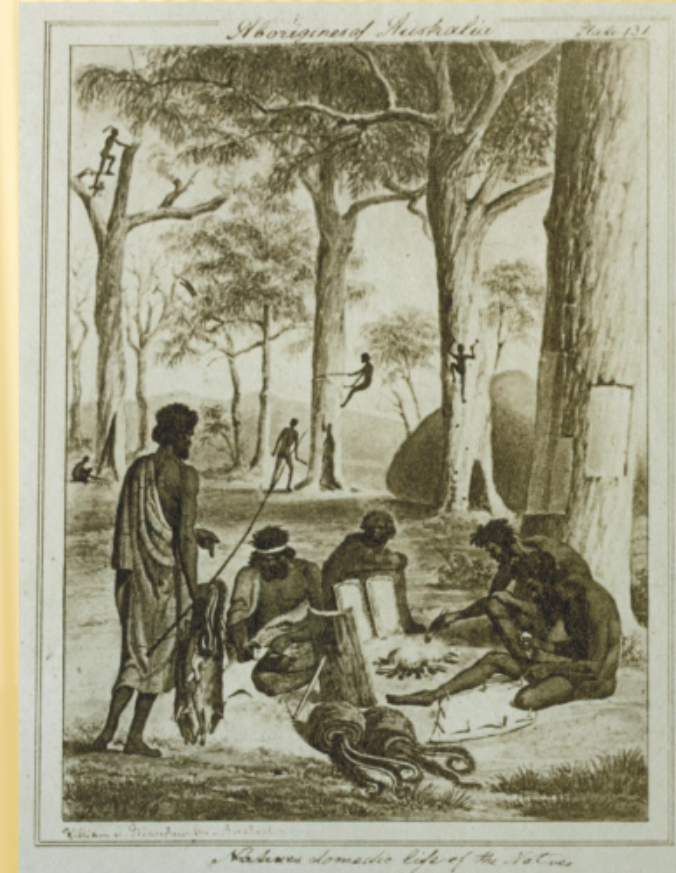


# TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND CEREMONY



Allen (2010: Plate 64),  
Aborigines of Australia.  
Composition by Mutzel based  
on Krefft and/or William v  
Blandowski sketches.

Allen (2010: Plate 182), Aborigines of  
Australia. Roasting a Kangaroo.  
Composition by Mutzel based on Krefft  
and/or William v Blandowski sketches.





Allen (2010), Aborigines of Australia Corroborri or Native Festival. Engraved by J Redaway and Sons.



Allen (2010: Plate 34), Aborigines of Australia. Composition by Mutzel based on Kreffft sketches, bark removal (Kreffft 1866).

Allen (2010: Plate 151), Aborigines of Australia. Native performing the ceremony of knocking the front tooth out. Composition by Mutzel based on Collins (1798).





# CONTEMPORARY SMOKING CEREMONY AT MERRI CREEK, YARRA BEND



“Merri Creek is special; visiting it makes me feel at home and comfortable. I feel alive and well” - Eddy Ockwell, Wurundjeri Elder.



“The sites left by our ancestors connect us to our past and are physical ongoing connection to Country and how the land was used by our people and a culture that is still living” - Uncle Ronald Terrick, Wurundjeri Elder.

# PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES TRADITIONALLY USED BY WURUNDJERI PEOPLE

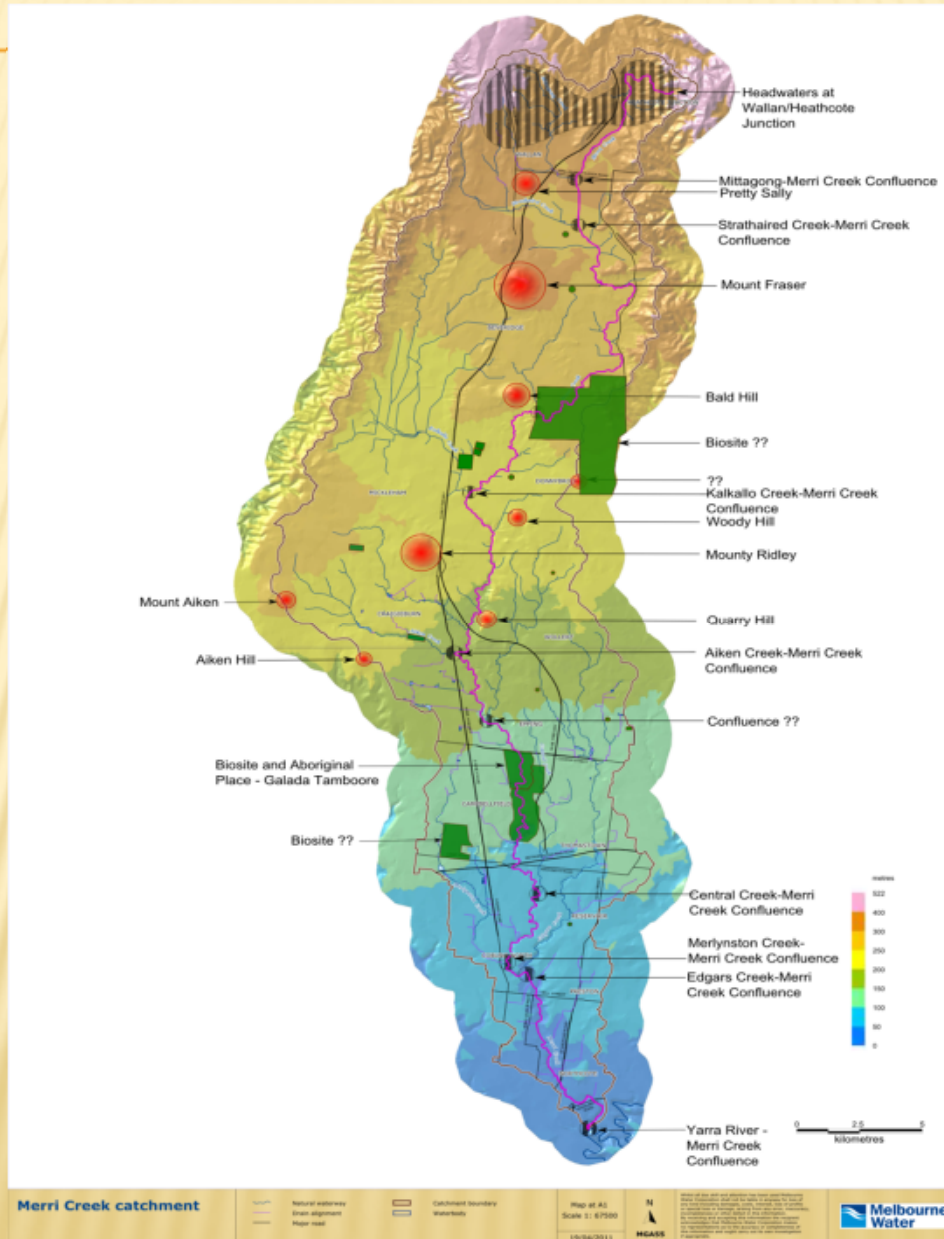
Common Name	Scientific name	Kulin Name	Use	Image
Black She-oak	<i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i>	Wayetuck	Wood used to make boomerangs and the leaves were chewed to obtain water.	
Blackwood	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	-	Bark used to treat rheumatism by heating over a fire and infusing in water. Wood used to make shields, boomerang, clubs and spear-throwers.	
Black Wattle	<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Garrong	Important source of gum. Sweet drink made from gum and flower nectar when dissolved in water. Also used as resin.	
Pink Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus erubescens</i>	-	Roots cooked, kneaded into dough and eaten.	
Mistletoe: Creeping Mistletoe Drooping Mistletoe	<i>Muellera eucalyptoides</i> <i>Amyema pendula</i>	-	People enjoyed the sticky fruits and in some areas the leaves were used for healing. The Grey Mistletoe is often found on Blackwood trees. It is a parasite which can take over and eventually kill the host tree.	
Chocolate Lily	<i>Arthropodium strictum s.l.</i>	-	Tubers roasted before being eaten.	

“Areas of water, vegetation, the escarpment, were all areas where our people roamed. There was plenty of bush foods and fauna and special areas for women, men and children” - Vick Nicolson-Brown, Wurundjeri Elder.

Common Name	Scientific name	Kulin Name
Bushed-tailed Possum	<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	Waled
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	<i>Macropus giganteus</i>	Mirm
Wombat	<i>Vombatus ursinus</i>	Warendj
Fruit Bats	<i>Dobsonia maluccensis magna</i>	Boleang
Growing Grass Frog	<i>Litoria raniformis</i>	Nared
Platypus	<i>Ornithorhynchus anatinus</i>	Dulai wurrung
Short-finned Eels	<i>Anguilla australis</i>	Eok
Water Rat	<i>Hydromis chrysogaster</i>	Rakali
Blue-tongued Lizard	<i>Tiliqua scincoides</i>	Toorrop
Tiger Snake	<i>Notechis scutatus</i>	Koormiel or Gunmel
Emperor Gum Moth	<i>Opodiphthera eucalypti</i>	Tarr-ien

“Our family has spoken of Merri Creek all our lives. From what my mother told me she collected feathers and that I watched her making her flowers. She also did bark paintings to make pictures.” - Aunty Di Kerr, Wurundjeri

# CONSIDERATION OF THE CULTURAL VALUES OF THE WHOLE LANDSCAPE





# SERVICES WE OFFER

- ✘ RAP/Cultural Heritage Management & Advice
- ✘ Field Representatives
- ✘ Cultural Values Recording
- ✘ Ceremonies:
  - Welcome to Country
  - Smokings
  - Dances (*Jindi Worabak*)
- ✘ Cross Cultural Training/Education
- ✘ Arts and Crafts



# REVIEW, INQUIRY AND FUTURE OF ACT

- ✘ 5 year review of the Act
- ✘ Parliamentary Inquiry in to RAPs
- ✘ Overwhelming support of the ACT and the RAP system
- ✘ Some small changes to the Act to improve processes
- ✘ How to improve working with the ACT: early engagement and partnerships with the RAPs (Traditional Owner Groups)



# Willam-ee-moor-ing

(Mount William Greenstone Axe Quarry)







LA TRINE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY  
Please do not feed the animals





Wurundjeri  
Tribe



# Koorong Cutting Day

10 October 2012





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Tribe



Wurundjeri  
Tribe

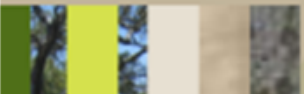








Illustration by J. H. R. Smith

WATERWAYS OF THE UNITED STATES  
GENERAL INVESTIGATION

Published by the U.S. Geological Survey



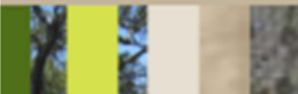








Wurundjeri  
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