

# YALUKIT WILLAM

*The River People of Port Phillip*



MEYER EIDELSON



## The Home of the River People

Yalukit Willam country in 1864 including today's City of Port Phillip. The early villages of Sandridge (Port Melbourne), Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) and St Kilda can be seen rising amidst the wetlands of a 'temperate Kakadu'.

▲ Camping, Ngargee (corroboree) and meeting places (willams) recorded after settlement.





MELBOURNE

SOUTH  
MELBOURNE

EMERALD  
HILL

ALBERT  
PARK  
LAKE

SANDRIDGE

PORT  
MELBOURNE

PRAHRAN

ST KILDA

HOBSONS BAY  
(NERM)

RIPPONLEA

ELWOOD  
SWAMP

POINT ORMOND



For Murrangurk who showed we can live  
in both worlds

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Cover image: A corroboree on Emerald Hill in 1840,  
1875, W. F. E. Liardet, State Library of Victoria

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*Boon Wurrung  
Traditional Owner  
Caroline Martin,  
community Elder  
Aunty 'Jacko' Jackson,  
and community  
member Mark  
Williams at the launch  
of Our Rainbow Place*

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## THE PEOPLE OF THE RIVER

*'Womin Jeka  
mirambeek beek.  
Boon Wurrung  
Nairm derp  
Bordupren uther  
willam.'*

*'Welcome to my  
country, the land  
of the great bay of  
the Boon Wurrung  
people, our beautiful  
home.'*

Carolyn Briggs  
Boon Wurrung Foundation



Before the arrival of Europeans in 1835, the City of Port Phillip area was occupied by the Yalukit Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung people or language group.

Yalukit Willam means 'river home' or 'people of the river'. This is an accurate description for a people whose territory was on a flood plain surrounded by water near the mouth of the Yarra River. The City of Port Phillip landscape has changed vastly since European occupation but it was once a kind of 'temperate Kakadu' surrounded by sea, river, creeks, lakes and lagoons. To the west and north was the encircling Yarra River and estuary. To the south was the foreshore of Hobsons Bay, a crescent of coastline linking today's Port Melbourne, St Kilda and South Melbourne. Between the sea and the river was a score of wetlands surrounded by dunes, heath, woodlands, salt marsh and beach, that teemed with wildfowl.

Waterways, in fact, defined the boundaries of most of Melbourne's clans. Boon Wurrung lands were mainly those with streams that flowed to the sea. The Woiwurrung or Wurundjeri occupied lands drained by the tributaries of the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers.



The first written description of Yalukit Willam country was by the Charles Grimes survey party that arrived on the ship Cumberland in 1803. The log of Wednesday 2 February reads:

*went on shore (St Kilda); for about a mile the land dry, a light sandy soil; afterwards a large swamp...The land appears to be covered in water in wet seasons. Came to a salt lagoon (Lagoon Reserve, Port Melbourne) about a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide; had not an entrance to the sea. Soon afterwards came to a large river (Yarra); went up it about a mile when we turned back and waited for the boat to take us aboard. The ground is a swamp on one side...Saw many swans, pelicans and ducks.*

Settler John Fawkner described the view of this land of sand and water as seen from the schooner *Enterprize* in 1835:

*The lovely knolls around the lagoons and on the flats or swamps and the flocks almost innumerable of teal, ducks, geese and swans and minor fowl filled them with joy.*

## Language

The Yalukit Willam clan spoke the Boon Wurrung language. 'Boon' means no, and 'Wurrung' means language, lips or mouth. 'Boon' is pronounced as in moon. Yalukit Willam is phonetically pronounced Yull-loo-kit Wee-lum. The term 'willam' means house, home or place. It is used in this book to describe places used for socialising, food gathering, performance, ceremonies, judicial proceedings, toolmaking or trade.

Aboriginal languages were oral, not written languages. As a result there are often spelling variations of Indigenous names in use in Melbourne in the past and today. For example there are over sixty variations recorded of 'Boon Wurrung'. In addition different names can be used for language, culture and people. The spelling and use of local names today is usually determined by regional protocols with local Aboriginal communities. There were once approximately 38 Aboriginal languages spoken in Victoria. The Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) works with communities to retrieve, revive and strengthen these languages. For further information contact VACL: [vaclang.org.au](http://vaclang.org.au); tel: (03) 96003811.



*Yalukit Willam camp  
c1837 beside the Yarra  
River (near today's  
Queens Bridge)*

### **‘Willam’**

Rising from the wetlands were prominences such as today's Point Ormond Hill, The Esplanade bluff, the silurian ridge of St Kilda Hill, and the ancient volcanic core of Emerald Hill. These provided higher and drier locations for willam or camp places for ceremonies, tool manufacture, ochre collection and lookouts. The many lagoons and billabongs waxed and waned with the seasons, filling up in winter and spring and sometimes drying up by late summer. Regular burning of woodland areas with fire created open grazing areas for kangaroo and access for walking. The early settlers were struck by the open country which they often described as resembling well kept English estates. In fact Professor Bill Gammage described Australia in his recent book as ‘The Biggest Estate on Earth’.



### The Boon Wurrung people

Melbourne was the shared country of the Boon Wurrung and the Woi Wurrung (today Wurundjeri) peoples. Both were part of the larger Kulin confederacy or nation of five peoples that shared similar languages or *wurrungs*. The other three *wurrungs* were the Daung Wurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Watha Wurrung. Kulin means 'the people'. These language groups were part of about 30 tribes in Victoria, numbering perhaps 60,000 people before the British arrived. Koori or Koorie is also a term used widely by Aboriginal people in Victoria since 1969.

The six clans of the Boon Wurrung people (sometimes called the 'Coast' or 'Westernport' tribe) were associated with today's southern suburbs, Mornington Peninsula, Westernport and Wilsons Promontory. The Yalukit Willam was the northern-most clan of the Boon Wurrung. They were recorded occupying the coastal strip on the top of the Bay from St Kilda to the Werribee River including Williamstown, Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and Prahran.

Today's City of Melbourne was a central location where the Kulin clans met regularly for social, ceremonial, trade, initiation, marriage, and judicial purposes, often north of Emerald Hill near today's Queens Bridge.





Artwork depicting the Kulin clans of Melbourne, near St Kilda Ngargee Tree, artist Glenn Romanis

## Kinship Networks

Yalukit Willam clan members shared the *Bunjil* or wedge-tailed eagle 'moitie' or totem and were required to seek partners from clans of the opposite *Waa* or Crow 'moitie' (half). After marriage, Yalukit Willam women would move to live with their husbands in surrounding Kulin lands. Such marriages provided clans with access to resources in more distant country. In addition, adults had responsibilities to others in terms of initiation, gender, marriage, parenting and religion. These large kinship networks involving mutual obligations were a key to the Kulin's survival over extraordinary periods of time.

Assistant Aboriginal Protector James Wedge described an encounter with a Boon Wurrung family on 20 February 1839:

*This morning we were visited by three male and two female aborigines of the Bunurong Tribe. One of the men was a fine manly figure and remarkably intelligent; he is the first I have seen with the cartilage of the nose pierced. The two females were young and remarkably interesting, the prettiest black women I have seen and so modest as hardly to be spoken with. We obtained with them a benyak or native basket, and a piece of network worn as band around the forehead to stick feathers.*



Top: Boon Wurrung  
men hunting eels  
sketched by George  
Robinson, 1840

## The Yalukit Willam economy

The Yalukit Willam were hunter-gatherers, travelling on a seasonal basis in family groups or bands through Boon Wurrung territories to harvest shellfish, wattle gum, plants and animals, reptiles, birds and eggs and roots. Their staple 'livestock' were kangaroos, continuously on the move. Melbourne was flood prone so as winter approached the clan moved inland and upstream to drier country at the same time harvesting mature eels which had begun the annual migration downstream towards the coast. They had highly efficient and lightweight tools and used sustainable land management techniques such as fire-stick farming to increase pasture for kangaroos and regenerate food plants. Working collectively, the clan gathered sufficient food in as little as five hours per day, leaving time for their important spiritual, ceremonial, trade and family obligations assisted by their annual journeys. A senior group or council could meet to make decisions about clan movements and important issues such as inter-tribal business or resolving conflict.

As coastal people, they harvested shellfish in large quantities evident by the many shellfish middens or cooking sites still remaining around Port Phillip Bay. Men hunted the larger game while women gathered marine and freshwater shellfish, plants and smaller game. The women were also capable hunters when the men were absent for periods. No-one went hungry in an Aboriginal camp as Thomas described on 29 February 1840:

*They are generous amongst themselves. Those who are fortunate through the day will distribute amongst those who are unsuccessful. Those who are ill are not expected to tramp the bush for food. If children are left orphans those children (are).. supported among them.. A child of three is capable of getting their portion in collecting gum &c. They live in the greatest harmony amongst themselves.*



Yalukit Willam  
opposite early  
settlement (Williams  
Street) at Yarra  
Yarra falls

In March 1840 George Robinson described Dindo, Derrimut's mother, harvesting tadpoles:

*Saw Deremart's mother and other women eating tadpoles. They had a large heap of them and was roasting and eating them. They laid them on grass and put hot coals on the top of them.*

Ten months later he sketched and described eels being speared at today's Royal Botanic Gardens:

*This afternoon two native blacks of the Boongerong tribe – Niggerernaul and a lad named Doller, came to my office and went to the lagoon about 1/4 mile distant in the paddock and in a very short time caught about 40lbs of eel. I saw them catching or rather spearing them at which they are very expert.*

Reverend Joseph Orton described the clothing and decorations of Aboriginal people he met in Melbourne the year after settlement.

*Their clothing consists of a garment of kangaroo or possum skins, sewn together with the fibrous parts of the animal which they throw over their shoulders and which reaches down to the knees. Their hair is black coarse and long, usually decorated with kangaroo teeth, claws of animals, bones of fish, pieces of earthenware and buttons obtained from Europeans or anything of the kind. Many of them have their faces whimsically*



*painted and have fish and other small bones pierced through the ears and other small bones on the dividing cartilage of the nose, which are worn as ornamental appendages.*

### **Arrival of the Ngamudji**

For the Yalukit Willam, Bunjil the great ancestor spirit of the wedge-tailed eagle had created their land, law and ancestors at the beginning of time. Their way of life evolved from one of the longest continuous civilisations in human history. Their ancestors may have arrived in Australia up to 50,000 years or more ago via courageous sea crossings. Their survival through 1,600 generations was enabled by their practices of economy, law, kinship, medicine, justice and religion despite drought, Ice Age, volcanic eruption, earthquakes and the flooding that created *Nerm* or Port Phillip Bay. The Boon Wurrung was the first of the Kulin to be impacted by the invasion by the *Ngamudji* – foreign expeditions, sealers and settlers which are known to have reached Westernport by 1798 and later permanently settled on the Birrarung or Yarra River in 1835. In 1802 Charles Grimes' party sailed from Sydney to survey Port Phillip Bay including the St Kilda coastline where they sighted two emus. In 1803, a British settlement was briefly established near Sorrento. A number of Boon Wurrung people were killed or wounded by gunfire when resisting early *Ngamudji* incursions.

### **Tanderrum**

In June 1835 John Batman arrived in Port Phillip on behalf of Tasmanian businessmen to sign a treaty with Kulin clans in return for an annual tribute. He claimed his 'Melbourne Treaty' was approved by eight 'chiefs'. These included two Boon Wurrung leaders: Metturananuk (Budgery Tom) and Kollorlock. For the Kulin this was *Tanderrum* or 'freedom of the bush' - a ritual allowing guests to access country with a ritual exchange of gifts. Batman used seven Indigenous men from Sydney as cultural intermediaries to gain the trust of the clans. For clan leaders this was a personal commitment between allies and friends bound to each other by the ritual exchange of names and other acts.



## Tanderrum

William Thomas described the 'Ceremony of Tanderrum, or Freedom of the Bush' in the 1840s:

*There is not, perhaps, a more pleasing sight in a native encampment than when strange blacks arrive who have never been in the country before. Each comes with fire in hand (always bark), which is supposed to purify the air - the women and children in one direction, and the men and youths in another. They are ushered in generally by some of an intermediate tribe, who are friends of both parties, and have been engaged in forming an alliance or friendship between the tribes; the aged are brought forward and introduced. The ceremony of Tanderrum is commenced; the tribe visited may be seen lopping boughs from one tree and another, as varied as possible of each tree with leaves; each family has a separate seat, raised about 8 or 10 inches from the ground, on which in the centre sits the male and around him his male children, and the female and her sex of children have another seat.*

*Two fires are made, one for the males and the other for the females. The visitors are attended on the first day by those whose country they are come to visit, and not allowed to do anything for themselves; water is brought to them which is carefully stirred by the attendant with a reed, and then given them to drink (males attend males and females, females); victuals are then brought and laid before them, consisting of as great a variety as the bush in the new country affords, if come-at-able; during this ceremony the greatest silence prevails, both by attendants and attended. You may sometimes perceive an aged man seated, the tear of gratitude stealing down his murky, wrinkled face. At night their mia-mias are made for them; conversation, &c., ensue. The meaning of this is a hearty welcome. As the boughs on which they sit are from various trees, so they are welcome to every tree in the forest. The water stirred with a reed means that no weapon shall ever be raised against them.*



*Batman's treaty or  
Tanderrum with the  
Kulin, 6th June 1835*

On 30 August 1835 John Fawkner's schooner *Enterprize* from Tasmania dropped anchor at Elwood before proceeding to the Yarra River to establish the site of the City of Melbourne. Yalukit Willam leaders Derrimut and Benbow became close acquaintances of Fawkner. The British Government, however, rejected Batman's treaty. The land was identified as 'terra nullius' or uninhabited and only the British would profit from the sale of virgin Aboriginal lands. Colonists were permitted for the first time to settle and purchase land. This sparked an extraordinary land rush of thousands of settlers. Within twenty years the number of Boon Wurrung had fallen ninety per cent due to starvation, violence, spiritual despair and disease.

Many Yalukit Willam eventually retreated to their favoured land at the Aboriginal Reserve at *Mordy Yallock* (Mordialloc).





William Thomas,  
Assistant Protector

### **The Aboriginal Protectors**

In 1839 the British Government formed an Aboriginal Protectorate in Victoria assigning George Robinson as Chief Protector and four Assistant Protectors to 'civilise' and protect the Kulin. They hoped to avoid the disastrous deaths of Aboriginal people that had occurred previously in Tasmania. William Thomas was the Assistant Protector for Melbourne and Gippsland. Thomas struggled through enormous challenges to assist the traditional owners but the Protectorate was ultimately a failure and closed in 1849. The British adamantly opposed the Kulin's wishes to manage their own lands in accordance with their religious, social and economic practices evolved over a vast period. As Thomas described:

*Their Government is patriarchal. They have a Chief to each tribe and a few Priests, Doctors, Enchanters, Dreamers etc who form a kind of Privy Council and Aristocracy...Their form of government however is no burden to the state – the Chief governs, Priests advise, Doctors and Enchanters cure, Warriors fight, but each and all gratis, equally applying for their daily food.*

Today, Thomas' voluminous diaries and papers provide an extraordinary amount of detail about the life of the Boon Wurrung people at the time of settlement.

## Abduction of Yalukit Willam women and children

Members of today's Boon Wurrung community include descendants of women kidnapped from Port Phillip by sealers who removed them to islands in Bass Strait for slave labour on sealing stations. These included *Nandergoroke*, wife of Derrimut, a leader of the Yalukit Willam, one of a group of women abducted from the Nepean Peninsula. In 1836 Melbourne's new colonists made attempts on behalf of Derrimut to rescue these women but were unsuccessful.

In June 1841 a young Aboriginal man called Yonki Yonka arrived by ship in Melbourne and was emotionally reunited with his father Benbow, a Yalukit Willam leader. He said he had been abducted from Port Phillip to Tasmania as a child with eight Boon Wurrung women in about 1833. Years later, he travelled by ship to Swan River where he worked before travelling to Adelaide and eventually back to Port Phillip.

Another witness was Pytterriner or Matilda, a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman who accompanied Chief Protector George Robinson to Melbourne in 1839. She confirmed to Robinson that she had been used as a decoy to entice the Boon Wurrung women into the hands of sealers:

*Matilda, the VDL [Van Dieman's Land] woman pointed out the spot a few miles down the harbor at Point Nepean where she said George Meredith and his crew of sealers stole the native women.... That there was a tribe of Natives on the Point hunting kangaroo, that they the Sealer's Men went on Shore in their Boats and enticed the Natives, and told her to do the same. After fixing upon the best looking women and Girls did upon a preconceived time seize upon them and tie them with cords, and then conveyed them on board the Schooner.....*

The abduction of Aboriginal women had devastating effects on the wellbeing of many Boon Wurrung families. Research continues today to trace the connections of families affected by these and other kidnappings.

## *Louisa Briggs - Living Across Two Worlds*

by Carolyn Briggs

In 1852, the Briggs family, relations of abducted women, arrived in Victoria from Tasmania to join the gold rush:

'For my great grandmother it was the strength of these beliefs and the belief that people could work together that helped her survive the crises our people faced when Europeans invaded her country over 160 years ago.

My great grandmother was known by her European name, Louisa Briggs. When Louisa was a young girl she went on a journey with her mother, aunt and grandmother to what is now called Point Nepean. This is a special place with a special significance for the Boon Wurrung women.

While they were there they were kidnapped by sealers and taken to an isolated island in Bass Strait. There they were put to work for the sealers. But at the age of 18 she took a husband and returned to her country in a small open boat.

When she returned to her country she searched for her people, but they were no longer there. Louisa eventually found some of her people at the Coranderrk Reserve and she settled down to live there. She worked at the reserve as a matron. She became a strong political activist and her family were again forced to move because of their strong stand on land rights. They were banned from the reserve. She died in the 1920s at a very old age, but in bridging the time between the invasion of her country and the dispossession of her people she provided the cultural link, ensuring that her heritage continued to live. She continued to dream and talk about her country.

Louisa fought oppression, racism and political inequality. Today, as we consider the act of Reconciliation, I hope that her story will inspire not only her descendants but that in the spirit of Reconciliation it will provide a model of strength that can inspire all Australians.





*Above left: Louisa Briggs with grandchild. Above right: Louisa Briggs (seated) and family. Courtesy Carolyn Briggs*

Today Melbourne is the great multicultural city of the world and this special place continues to carry forward the spirit of our tradition. This land will always be protected by the creator, Bunjil, who travels as an eagle, and by Waarn (Waa), who protects the waterways and travels as a crow. Bunjil taught the Boon Wurrung to always welcome guests, but he always required the Boon Wurrung to ask all visitors to make two promises: to obey the laws of Bunjil and not to harm the children or the land of Bunjil.

As the spirit of my ancestors lives, let the wisdom and the spirit of generosity which Bunjil taught us influence the decisions made in this meeting place'.



## PORT MELBOURNE

*High ridges of sand  
created by wind gave  
the name Sandridge to  
the area.*

*Port Melbourne Beach  
c.1836-37 showing track  
entrance which became  
Bay Street. Five Aboriginal  
figures are pictured centre*



Port Melbourne contained extensive wetlands in Fishermans Bend and North Port which were rich hunting and gathering grounds for game, fish and tubers. Fishermans Bend holds a vast accumulation of sands deposited by the Yarra River since the end of the last Ice Age. High ridges of sand created by wind gave the name Sandridge to the area. Much of the area was very flood prone with dense shrub. Much more habitable was the Port Melbourne Lagoon, a known Aboriginal site which ran a mile inland from the foreshore between today's East and West Esplanade. The lagoon was filled in from the 1890s to create Lagoon Reserve and Edwards Park. In 1839 Wilbraham and Caroline Liardet were camped nearby, on the beach near Bay Street with their nine children.





*Port Melbourne  
Lagoon c1870.  
Cattle have  
replaced kangaroo  
and are polluting  
the water*

Their daughter Josephine wrote:

*The sugary manna we gathered from under the gum trees... (My) brother's early morning shooting expeditions on the banks of the neighbouring lagoon (Lagoon Reserve), whose waters were covered with wild ducks, while cockatoos, plover, pigeons and other birds thronged the adjoining trees. We often had a game breakfast.....My two brothers were about half way home when, for the first time in their lives they saw a whole tribe of natives coming down towards the beach, they dropped their bags and ran home.*

On 19 July 1840 *The Port Phillip Herald* reported:

*On Tuesday last a large party of blacks some of them armed with spears and waddies, came to that part of the beach (Bay Street) and attempted to set fire to it as well as several others in the neighbourhood. Mr L. (Liardet) was away from home and the fellows easily succeeded in frightening the others away from the family; fortunately an old sailor arrived and succeeded in keeping the noble gentleman at bay until sufficient help arrived to drive the blacks off, without them being unable to effect any mischief.*



*Port Melbourne  
foreshore and  
Bay Street 1875.  
Aboriginal people  
are seated at  
the right*

This description suggests the cultural misunderstandings common in early Melbourne. The Boon Wurrung were known as a very peaceful people and if actually hostile, they would hardly have been deterred by one 'old sailor'! This was likely a Yalukit Willam party engaged in their regular burning back of their lands during cooler weather necessary to stimulate pasture for kangaroo, reduce undergrowth and promote fire-tolerant food plants. Settlers however strongly discouraged 'fire-stick farming' as they were unfamiliar with the role of fire in regenerating Australian flora. This change in land management may have contributed to the Black Thursday disaster in 1851 when a quarter of Victoria burned.

The Liardet family constructed a road to Melbourne which was the forerunner of today's Bay Street. Wilbraham Liardet later painted many scenes of early Melbourne including of his Pier Hotel at Bay Street opposite the foreshore.



## SOUTH MELBOURNE

*Nerre nerre  
minum*

*It was rich in lagoons,  
such as Albert Park  
Lake, surrounding the  
strategic and drier  
height of Emerald Hill...*

*Ngargee held on Emerald Hill (today the  
South Melbourne Town Hall) in 1840*





William Thomas' map 1840 showing Nerre nerre minum or South Melbourne

The South Melbourne area is marked as Nerre nerre minum on William Thomas' map of Melbourne and Westernport in February 1840. This location may have extended south to Fitzroy Street. It was rich in lagoons, such as Albert Park Lake, surrounding the strategic and drier height of Emerald Hill with a short distance west to today's coastline of Albert and Middle Park and north to the fresh water and river crossing at the Yarra falls.

Movements of Kulin clans around Melbourne in the 1830s and 1840s including in the City of Port Phillip are described by Ian Clark and Toby Heydon in their book *A Bend in the Yarra* 2004.

The Boon Wurrung camped at Nerre nerre minum with their Watha Wurrung allies in July 1844. Both groups had just attended judicial proceedings north of Melbourne on 3 July involving over 320 clan members organised by a Grand Council of 106 men. Yalukit Willam country shared a common border with Watha Wurrung country at the Werribee River and the relationship between the groups was strengthened by marriage ties.



View from  
Emerald Hill  
(Nerre nerre  
minum) north  
towards the Yarra  
River. Cattle are  
grazing on Yalukit  
Willam lands

### **Emerald Hill - South Melbourne Town Hall**

In Aboriginal society, prominences were often used as camp places or *willam* to engage in ceremonies, conciliation and exchange. Emerald Hill, today South Melbourne Town Hall, was such a site. New settlers arriving by ship often remarked on this bright green landmark surrounded by lagoons near the shore. The name 'Emerald Hill' was chosen by journalist Edmund Finn who recalled:

*It was at all times a favourite trysting-place of the blacks, who held corroborees and native dances there, a pantomimic performance occasionally witnessed by Melbournians on fine summer nights... This once beautiful eminence...was the grazing ground of the kangaroo until a sheep station and the strange-looking animals that accompanied it scared them away.*

According to Assistant Protector William Thomas, the Boon Wurrung held meetings every three months and Corroborees on full and new moons. Notices were sent to neighbours using message sticks and smoke signals. During these inter-tribal gatherings, marriages could be arranged and disputes resolved. Hills in Port Phillip such as Emerald Hill, St Kilda Hill, and Point Ormond would have been ideal lookouts for such signals.



Performers at  
Yalukit Willam  
Ngargee Festival

## Ngargee

Ngargee events were occasions to honour guests, showcase creativity in song and dance, ensure conciliation after conflict and to tell popular and new stories. A famous Ngargee or corroboree occurred at Emerald Hill in 1840 (see cover image). It followed a formal judicial conflict held the day before also attended by hundreds of settlers. Wilbraham Liardet, the founder of Port Melbourne, recalled the ceremony in his painting while writer Richard Howitt described this Ngargee in his 1845 book *'Impressions of Australia Felix'*:

*The next night we visited their dance of reconciliation, the corrobory. There is something in the corrobory unimaginably wild and grotesque; celebrated as it is by night in the presence of vast fires;...Imagine fifty men of all ages dancing in mazes, first in one figure, then in another; one old man, apart from the rest, as master of ceremonies, indicating their movements by his own, and time beaten by a group of women seated around a huge fire. Movement and vouch in most outlandish unison, sometimes slow and solemn then loud and shrill, and suddenly ended, and all hushed!*



No pictorial notion can convey any but faint notions of their movements; either of the battle or the corrobory. I have read of them and seen them pictured; but with all helps of a willing imagination, they were beaten hollow by the reality. I shall not attempt a complete description: let those who deem them equal to the task perform it. To us as much of the charm consisted in the season and the scene as in the people. The wild dance and the rude accompaniment of strange motions and sounds had a singular effect, so strongly aided by strong lights and shades.

Glimpses of what was seen will haunt the soul years after such exhibitions. You see the wild songs; see the dusky moving figure; the fantastic trees standing around darkly in their own deep shadows, their boles and under-boughs brightened by the fires; glistening eyes of dogs, and half faces and forms fire-tinged: the bland moonlight and stars in their dark depths contrasting tranquilly above with the smoke, flames and turbulence below.

Another ceremony, the Gaggip was a powerful and private dance of peace used to strengthen bonds of harmony between clans, often using painted figures on bark. On the summer solstice of 1843, the Boon Wurrung joined with 300 Kulin at Dights Falls Park to commence Gaggip involving seven great dances over seven days (21-29 December).

Boon Wurrung men, women and children could convene separate dances described by Hugh McCrae in 1846:

*...the men assemble to prepare for the dance, the fire being lighted... the dancers tie wisps of straw or grass around their legs; they take their weapons...wait till the Corrobera sticks begin to beat and the native songs begin, they begin to dance with the utmost fury, beating the clubs and spears together, cooeing now and then. The clang of the weapons, the din of their songs and the trampling of their feet is enough to break the drums of ones ears. The men, women and children each have a separate Corrobera...The children light a fire and dance around it, beating time with sticks until both arms and legs are tired. They sit down and eat their repast. Each wraps himself in an opossum rug and retires to his miamia...they listen to the clamour of their seniors till they fall asleep...the dance is kept up nearly the whole night.*



*Performers  
at Yalukit Willam  
Ngargee Festival*

### **Boon Wurrung Foundation**

The South Melbourne Town Hall replaced the Ngargee site in 1888. Recently traditional owners have returned to Emerald Hill as the Boon Wurrung Foundation is located in the former Town Hall. The Foundation provides training, consultancy and advice to local and state governments, Indigenous and community groups and educational institutions. Director Carolyn Briggs is a well known spokesperson who has addressed the Parliament of Victoria and is regularly invited to deliver the 'welcome to country' address at public events. For several years Carolyn ran the Tjanabi restaurant in Federation Square which specialised in contemporary Aboriginal cooking and where Prime Minister Julia Gillard invited United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, in November 2010.



## ALBERT PARK RESERVE

*Albert Park Reserve is one of Victoria's most visited parklands and occupies 225 hectares. It was once a rich willam or camp for the Yalukit Willam and their guests on country.*

*St Kilda Swamp  
(Albert Park Lake) 1876*

Albert Park Reserve is one of Victoria's most visited parklands and occupies 225 hectares. It was once a rich willam or camp for the Yalukit Willam and their guests on country. They were observed hunting and gathering and building bark shelters beside today's Albert Park Lake, a lagoon and woodland which teemed with wildlife still present today including *gunabi* (ducks), *gunuwarra* (swans), grebe, coot, swamphen, moorhen, stilts, cormorants, possums, bats, reptiles, amphibians, native fish, eels, reptiles such as geckos and over 130 species of birds.

St Kilda historian John Cooper recorded:

*The two Miss Jennings had memories of their father, Henry Jennings, taking them to see an encampment of natives, on the banks of the Albert Park lagoon.*

Edward Armitage was a resident in Park Street, South Melbourne in about 1860. Near the corner of Clarendon Street and Park Street, he recalled:

*The aboriginal lords of the soil throwing their boomerangs for the instruction and amusement of white invaders who had displaced them forever from their ancient and natural heritage of hunting and fishing grounds...*

John Gurner also observed:

*In Albert Park there was always a number of aborigines, men, lubras, and picaninnies, accompanied by great packs of dogs of all kinds. Frequently the blacks built mia-mias for themselves out of the gumtree branches in the park.*

Mia-mias or miams were usually constructed from slabs of bark cut from red gum trees which were once numerous around Albert Park Reserve. William Thomas described the method used:

*I have seen in half an hour a village comfortably housed from the bounty of the Providence in the forest around. A few sheets of bark with a sapling and two forked sticks at once make a habitation; the sheets of bark six or seven feet long laid obliquely to the angle of about ninety degrees. Every alternate sheet is reversed so that no rain can enter; foliage and pieces of bark enclose the sides and top. Their miams are rudely formed and are made according to the proportions of their families, and formerly held two adult and three or four children.*

Red gum trees were also a source of bark for canoes. The bark was heated over fire to bend into shape for use on creeks, rivers and lagoons for fishing, sometimes at night with a lighted brand to attract fish. The last remaining red gum tree in the park to have survived from the pre-settlement era is located 450 metres south-east of the lake and is known as the Ngargee Tree.



## **The Ngargee Tree, St Kilda Swamp (Albert Park Reserve)**

The St Kilda Ngargee or Corroboree tree is located in the south-east corner of Albert Park between Albert Park Lake and Fitzroy Street at St Kilda Junction. It is the longest living resident of the City of Port Phillip with an estimated age of 300-500 years. William Thomas recorded several Boon Wurrung camps nearby in the 1840s. These willams were sited at the south east end of 'St Kilda Swamp' (Albert Park Lake) by Fitzroy Street in November 1847, February 1848 and September 1848. They were camped again in the vicinity of St Kilda Swamp from August to September 1847.

Historian John Cooper's writings also concur with this location:

*They spread themselves, so far as their camps were concerned, fairly well over the western swamp terrain of St. Kilda.*

During late September 1848, William Thomas was visiting encampments frequently in St Kilda and noted some Aboriginal people were employed by Europeans. Geological study has suggested the likely presence of underground springs near the Ngargee Tree. The Boon Wurrung frequently used wells on the coastline to harvest freshwater. In March 1848 Thomas recorded that Aboriginal people travelled from Dights Falls to St Kilda to dig a well for local European residents.

The Ngargee Tree is the last survivor of a former wattle forest interspersed with mature gums that extended into Prahran. Its location at St Kilda Junction is where tracks connected to southern, northern and eastern districts. Jacob Miller was a St Kilda councillor who owned a residence and business nearby at 84 High Street from 1864. His son Victor Miller wrote that his father:

*often told me that he had seen the remnant population of blacks perform their dancing about the old tree... how the aborigines used to come to the kitchen door for 'tucker' and how they never went away empty handed. They would go to the park to eat the food.*

Victor recalled a fringe camp later at the tree, particularly two Indigenous people nicknamed 'Queen Mary' and 'King Billy' by the locals. In the 1950s he successfully campaigned to stop plans by park staff to cut the tree down. St Kilda Council responded by placing a plaque there in 1952 to ensure its significance was preserved:



*‘Aboriginals of early settlement days congregated and held their ceremonies under and in the vicinity of this tree.’*

The tree continues to be an object of affection and reverence by St Kilda residents and is the focus for many reconciliation projects. A Ngargee bushland, billabong and extensive native grasslands with wallaby and kangaroo grass have been created. A ceremonial dance circle and artworks have been built nearby as a focus for cultural and reconciliation activities.

### **The Yalukit Willam Trail, Albert Park Reserve**

The Ngargee Tree is located on a four kilometre self-guided trail which highlights significant Indigenous places in the City of Port Phillip and links historic places from the Ngargee Tree to the foreshore.



## Ngargee

*The Indigenous History of the City of Stonnington 2007* describes early Ngargee or Corroborees in Yalukit Willam country by residents of St Kilda, Prahran, and other suburbs:

*Their performances at times were unique, interesting, and very exciting – their weird and discordant song and dance of “Whar-ah-gar-we”, and “Whar-ah-gar-wan”, and their strange and fantastic movements, especially around the camp fires, with their bodies all bare, and their arms in the air, and with the constant accompaniment of their tribes’ shouts and yells, were such as one can scarcely forget, and many times were witnessed by hundreds. Sometimes foolish people supplied them with rum (fire water), and then matters were fairly lively, but still nothing serious happened, generally speaking. They were much more peaceful than many of their white brethren.*

Another witness recalled:

*The men had divested themselves of all their clothing, save a small loin cloth. Their bodies and legs were painted in streaks of red and white and they danced like skeletons around the blazing fire, shouting and brandishing their long spears while the lubras chanted and played on drums made of the wild skins of animals stretched across wooden or tin basins. The culminating point was reached when the leader followed by each of the others seized a blazing limb from the fire and flung it high to the dark heavens accompanying it with a mighty shout that terrorised most of the beholders.*





*St Kilda football team at Junction Oval, 1952. James Wandin is back row, second from left*

### **Junction Oval, Albert Park Reserve**

Assistant Protector William Thomas witnessed and wrote the first description of the Aboriginal game called *Marngrook* in a Boon Wurrung encampment on 18th January 1839. He described how a rolled ball of possum skin, bound tightly with kangaroo sinew, was kicked high in the air by two teams.

*There is general excitement who shall catch it, the tall fellows stand the best chance, when the ball is caught it is kicked into the air with great force...they will play at this game for hours and fine exercise it is for adults and youths.*

Today the annual Marngrook Trophy and the 'Dreamtime at the G' games at the MCG celebrate the contribution of Indigenous players to Australian Rules Football. Junction Oval was the home ground of the St Kilda Football Club from 1886 until they moved to Moorabbin. James Wandin, former President of the Wurundjeri Council and a descendant of William Barak, the Wurundjeri leader, played regularly at the ground for St Kilda in the 1940s. Early historian, Alfred Howitt, recorded that Aboriginal men and women both played Marngrook with women throwing the ball high rather than kicking it. The Waa and Bunjil moities or totems of the Melbourne clans often played against each other ie. the Crows versus the Eagles. The ball or '*mangurt*' could be forwarded as a symbol of friendship from one tribe to another. William Thomas recorded the Boon Wurrung camping in the vicinity of today's Junction Oval in the 1840s.





## ALBERT PARK

*Gasworks  
Arts Park*

*In 2003 Melbourne's  
largest 'bushtucker' trail  
featuring food, tool  
and medicine plants  
was laid out in the  
Gasworks Arts Park in  
the suburb of Albert  
Park. Nearby is Lagoon  
Reserve, a known  
Aboriginal site.*

These food plants sustained the Boon Wurrung and their ancestors for thousands of years. When Europeans arrived they found the people healthy and well nourished. In fact Indigenous people ate the kind of diet many nutritionists view as ideal today - high in vegetables, fish and lean meat and low in fats and sugars. Women were the main economic support of their clans, gathering staple foods such as roots and bulbs and animal foods such as reptiles, echidna and shellfish. Along the foreshore of Port Phillip up to twelve different varieties of shellfish were cooked in cooking fires or 'middens' on the beach. Some staple plants found in Gasworks Arts Park used by the Yalukit Willam include:

*Karawun* or Mat Rush: The leaves are excellent for making baskets and eel traps. The base of the flowers and young leaves were eaten.

*Burn-Na-Look* or Blackwood: The wood provided spears, boomerangs and shields. The bark was soaked and used to treat rheumatism.

*Kummeree* or Pigface: The leaves were squeezed for their water which was also used as a painkiller for stings and burns. The summer fruit was also eaten.

*Kabin* or Running Postman: The long tough stems were used for rope and the nectar was sucked from the flowers.

*Kurwan* or Bursaria: The flowers were also beneficial for their sweet nectar and the timber used for tools.

*Worike* or Banksia: Water was poured through flowers to filter and sweeten it.

*Bowat* or Poa Grass: The grass blades of this plant were used to weave string baskets and nets for fishing.

*Wurun* or Coast Manna Gum: Sugary deposits on the leaves were 'manna from heaven' for Indigenous people. The leaves were used to smoke out fevers or make a wash for sores.

*Wayetuck* or Black She-Oak: The wood was used for boomerangs, shields and clubs.

The Indigenous landscape of the Yalukit Willam consisted of grassy woodlands, coastal dune scrub, wetlands and saltmarsh in today's 'Sandbelt' of Melbourne. Remnants of these original landscapes are carefully maintained by the City of Port Phillip, Parks Victoria and resident groups such as Earthcare and Friends of Port Melbourne Foreshore. They can be experienced in Port Melbourne at Sandridge Beach (Perc White Reserve), in Albert Park at Gasworks Arts Park and Canterbury Road Urban Forest, in St Kilda at HR Johnson Reserve, St Kilda Botanic Gardens, Corroboree Tree Grasslands, West Beach and at Elwood at Point Ormond Reserve and Elwood Beach Reserve.



## ELWOOD

*The original red, brown and yellow sandstone at the bluff may have been a source of ochre for the body art paint used in performance.*

*Point Ormond rocks once known as Little Red Bluff*





*Little Red Bluff (Point Ormond) before levelling*

Today's Point Ormond hill is just a remnant of what was once a striking rocky headland called Little Red Bluff. Most of the headland was removed as rubble for colonial works. This bluff provided for outstanding views over Yalukit Willam country where clans around the Bay could be located by the rising smoke from their fires. Game such as kangaroo or emu could be spied out. High places also offered a defensive location against attack. The Boon Wurrung suffered a deadly dawn raid by Gippsland tribes at East Brighton in about 1833.

The original red, brown and yellow sandstone at the bluff may have been a source of ochre for the body art paint used in performance. Ochre was gathered from similar iron-rich cliffs around the bay and crushed in the pits in the horizontal rock slabs that run from the base of the cliffs to the sea.

The dunes and scrub behind the hill provided shelter from sea winds and still contain 39 original plant species such as drooping sheoak, sea box, white correa, common boobialla and coast daisy-bush.





#### *Point Ormond Hill*

The nearby Elwood swamp provided vegetables, wildfowl and eels. The reef which extends from the base of the Point into the sea provided shellfish, fish and crustaceans. Point Ormond was a very important source of seafood as Aboriginal women were visiting there three times per week in the autumn of 1840 to collect shellfish. John Cooper's *History of St Kilda 1931* records:

*Aboriginals came to the Red Bluff (Point Ormond), the sands thereabouts containing large beds of cockles...Mounds of shells once to be seen on the beach at Elwood and St Kilda told the tale of Aboriginal shellfish feasts.*

An Aboriginal shell midden was apparently uncovered during roadworks at Point Ormond in 1974 near Barkly Street and Glen Huntly Road, Elwood. Middens are the remains of cooking fires containing up to twelve different shellfish, charcoal, bones and sometimes tools. Two stone axes were found in the Elwood midden. Bone awls have also been found at the Point. Their uses include removing shellfish from shells, hooks, barbs and piercing possum skins to sew into cloaks.



*Stone axes found  
in Elwood midden  
1974*

On 17 April 1840, the Glen Huntley bounty ship arrived in Port Phillip Bay displaying the yellow fever flag. Superintendent Charles La Trobe immediately ordered the ship to take its crew and Scottish passengers to an emergency quarantine station under canvas at Point Ormond. Three passengers eventually died and were buried on the bluff. On 19 April, La Trobe ordered William Thomas to expel all Aboriginal camps from Melbourne because the women in the camps were travelling three times a week to harvest mussels near the diseased ship. Thomas said he could not convince them La Trobe's intentions were humane: the women argued that 'white men only would die'.

La Trobe's concerns were probably justified. Kulin camps on the Yarra were severely affected by dysentery, venereal disease, and tuberculosis causing the settlement's medical officer in 1839 to warn of possible 'extinction'. Even before the establishment of Melbourne, over half the Kulin may have died in each of two epidemics of smallpox in 1790 and 1830 that spread overland from settlers and traders.



## RIPPONLEA

*...we asked her if she could  
see her husbands tracks,  
she pointed them out to us  
amid hundreds of others...*



*Intertidal painting by  
artist Julie Gough*

Frederick Revans, a Supreme Court judge in New Zealand, arrived as a boy in Melbourne in 1854 and later published his reminiscences in the Victorian Historical Journal, Royal Historical Society. Amongst his memories, he recalled an event in Ripponlea:

*I remember our excitement when one day, probably in 1857, two hundred blacks from Gippsland arrived suddenly in Hotham Street, trooping towards Elsternwick. An hour or two later, a solitary gin appeared, and we gave her something to eat. She followed the tracks of the tribe in the dusty road, and when we asked her if she could see her husbands tracks, she pointed them out to us amid hundreds of others, and started to follow them at a run, pursuing an irregular course such as he had taken when carelessly strolling with the mob. In the evening we followed the blacks, hearing that they were going to hold a Corroboree, and found the whole tribe camped at a place where the trees were fairly thick. There were no residences near, save for a house or two along Brighton-road, some distance away. I think the spot must have been somewhere not far from where, in later years, Sir Frederick Sargood built his fine house (Ripponlea Mansion). Here we stayed until midnight, mixing with the blacks, listening to their chants, and watching the strange and grave dances of the Corroboree circle.*





## THE COASTAL ROAD

*The City of Port Phillip  
was one of the willam or  
camp places used by the  
Boon Wurrung people  
and other clans during  
seasonal travels around the  
foreshore of the Bay.*

*View from Melbourne  
(1875) towards Yalukit  
Willam, today the City of  
Port Phillip*



*Midden artwork  
near St Kilda  
Ngargee Tree*

The Boon Wurrung people comprised family groups made up of six clans: Yalukit Willam, Ngaruk Willam, Mayune Baluk, Boon Wurrung Balug, Yownegerra and the Yallock Balluk. The City of Port Phillip was one of the willam or camp places used by the Boon Wurrung people and other clans during seasonal travels around the foreshore of the Bay. Their annual route followed regular camp places such as Elsternwick, Brighton and Mordialloc as far as Sandy Point (Coolart) and then inland to the Dandenongs. The Assistant Protector wrote:

*A few years back when shifting from Melbourne their regular route was natural, shifting gradually along the Coast to the nine mile beach, Mt Eliza, (Berringwallin) Mount Martha, (Nerngallin) Arthurs Seat, (Wongho) Point Nepean (Monmore) Cape Schank (Tuornangho) Sandy Point (Yolodunnho) then to the index & returning in land by Mahoon (Western Port plains) to Dandenong the whole circuitous route of their Country...*

Fifteen locations along this ancient pathway are commemorated with sculptures, art works and panels by the City of Bayside and the Boon Wurrung Foundation, extending south from Elwood to Beaumaris beside Beach Road. The first is at Elwood Beach, opposite Head Street and commemorates Benbow and Derrimut, two of the last of the Boon Wurrung Arweets or clan leaders. (Trail locations and maps can be found on [www.bayside.vic.gov.au](http://www.bayside.vic.gov.au).)

### **Murrangurk - William Buckley's coastal journey**

Convict William Buckley escaped from the short-lived European settlement at Sorrento in 1803. His escape journey north followed the coastline along beachside trails and through Yalukit Willam country to cross the Yarra River falls near today's Queens Bridge. He may have sighted the falls from Emerald Hill (today South Melbourne Town Hall). His abandoned metal pot was found north of Emerald Hill near the Yarra by John Fawkner's party on 6 February 1836.

Buckley lived with the Watha Wurrung people as 'Murrangurk' in the Geelong region for 32 years before revealing himself to John Batman's party in 1835.

After settlement he became the Aboriginal interpreter for the new colony and was closely involved in several events involving the Yalukit Willam. In 1836 he was asked to translate Derrimut's warning to John Fawkner about an attack by hostile clans. A man of striking height (six foot-seven inches), this former convict and soldier's achievements were remarkable. He was the first known European resident of Victoria and the only person in Victoria to live successfully in both European and Aboriginal cultures. Instead of this being viewed as an achievement, his association and sympathies for the Koories made him suspect in the eyes of many settlers. Missionary George Langhorne wrote:

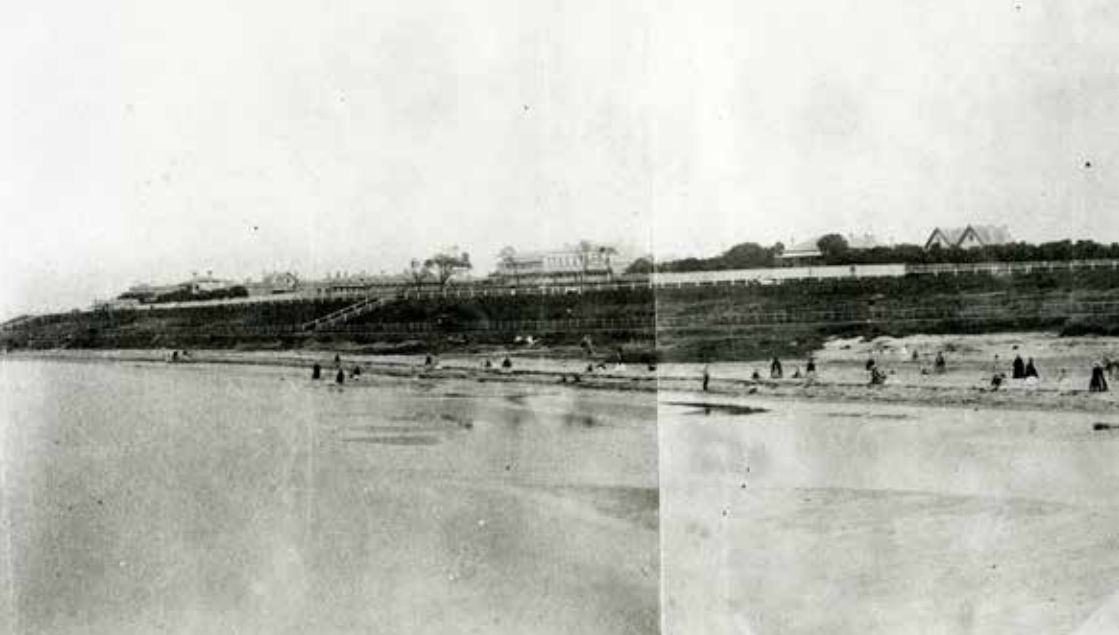
*He appeared to me always discontented and dissatisfied and I believe it would have been a great relief to him if the settlement had been abandoned and he left alone with his sable friends.*





WILLIAM BUCKLEY.





## ST KILDA (Euro-Yroke)

*St Kilda was called Euro-Yroke meaning the 'grinding stone place' according to George Robinson, the Chief Aboriginal Protector.*

*Euro-Yroke: St Kilda  
Esplanade bluff, c 1870*



Top: former Point Ormond cliffs

Stone axe found at Elwood, showing sharpened edge made by grinding

## The Esplanade and St Kilda Beach

St Kilda was called Euro-Yroke meaning the 'grinding stone place' according to George Robinson, the Chief Aboriginal Protector. Stone axes were a highly valued tool, universally used by Aboriginal men for cutting bark from trees for housing, canoes and containers and other purposes. Axes quarried from the Mount William Quarry at Lancefield in Wurundjeri country were particularly prized and were traded up to 700 kilometres. These stones were often traded as 'blanks' and later sharpened on suitable grinding rocks, usually near water. Two stone axes were excavated at Point Ormond in 1974. St Kilda historian John Cooper wrote:

*St. Kilda was known to the aborigines by the name of 'Euro-Yroke' and that the name was used by aboriginals to describe the red brown sandstone, found along the beach of St. Kilda, in outcropping spurs, and ridges. The stone to the aborigines, in the stone age, was, we are told, a master stone, on which they sharpened their axes.*

George Robinson also related a Kulin story that Bunjil, the ancestral creator placed rocks at St Kilda to stop the waters of the great flood. We can speculate that these sacred rocks may refer to prominences near the foreshore such as Point Ormond Hill or The Esplanade bluff. At the time of settlements these were significant headlands rather than the diminished slopes we see today.



### **St Kilda Town Hall and the Mordialloc Aboriginal Reserve**

St Kilda Town Hall is located on a triangle of land, a civic precinct which today accommodates St Kilda Town Hall, St Kilda Primary School, Bubup Nairn Children's Centre and church and community organisations. This land was formerly a Boon Wurrung camp place. Water was supplied from a creek flowing down from St Kilda ridge (near St Kilda Cemetery) to a wetland on the site. Today, a trapdoor in the floor of the Town Hall's Ngargee Room opens to a basement where a brick barrel drain in the floor still channels this ancient stream.

*The aboriginals, who came from Mordialloc, at frequent intervals, to visit St. Kilda for the purpose of begging, always camped on the ground upon which now stands the City Hall in Carlisle Street. They were a great nuisance to the local shopkeepers....Aboriginals, in the days of St. Kilda's early settlement, were rapidly deteriorating from their primitive bush independence.*

The above account published in the official history of St Kilda in 1931 reflects common colonial attitudes held by European society about the Aboriginal people, their economy and the causes of their impoverished state.

Shortly after settlement the colonists ceased to pay the annual tribute agreed by John Batman in the 1835 'Melbourne Treaty'. What the Koories viewed as agreed tribute by guests on their lands, the settlers re-defined as 'begging' and 'nuisance'. Four years after settlement, there were 6000 settlers and 700,000 sheep competing with kangaroos for pasture.

Elwood speculator Charles Ebdon bought land in Collins Street in 1837 for 32 pounds. He sold it two years later for over 10,000 pounds and famously remarked: 'I fear I am becoming disgustingly rich'. In 1836 the McLaurin family leased land from Elwood as far as Caulfield to graze sheep. By 1839 Benjamin Baxter was grazing cattle on his lease from Point Ormond to Port Melbourne, a huge proportion of Yalukit Willam lands. Aboriginal people found their sacred lands usurped, their waterholes seized, their food sources destroyed by stock and their freedom of movement and culture disrupted. Only a short period after settlement they were suffering starvation and disease.

Reverend Joseph Orton described the disaster unfolding in front of him in 1839:

*The Government is fast disposing of their lands...and no reserve whatever of land is made for the provision of the natives, neither in securing to them sufficient portions of their own native land as a hunting ground or otherwise providing for their necessities. The result is that the natives who remain in the neighborhood of the settled districts become pilfering-starving-obtrusive mendicants, and after suffering incalculable deprivations, abuses and miseries will gradually pine - die away - and become extinct, leaving only an eternal memento of a blot upon the justice, equity and benevolence of our Christian government.*

William Thomas, the government's own official, unsuccessfully petitioned the Governor four times for measures to save the Kulin including Aboriginal self-management, compensation, law reform, limits to development and land tenure for the Boon Wurrung.

The birth rate dropped dramatically as Koories saw no future in having children without a country to inherit. Thomas recorded that by 1857 the numbers of Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung had fallen from an estimated 350 people to 28 persons with only eleven remaining Boon Wurrung.



## **The selling of Mordy Yallock – ‘No more Blackfellows have country!’**

Cooper's *History of St Kilda 1931* records:

*The aboriginals...came from Mordialloc, at frequent intervals, to visit St. Kilda.*

The term ‘Mordialloc’ refers to the Mordialloc Aboriginal Reserve allocated to the Boon Wurrung people in 1852. It was one of five reserves established by the Government because of the extraordinarily rapid dispossession by settlers. Yalukit Willam leaders such as Derrimut and Benbow often camped at this favourite site where Mordialloc Creek meets the sea. Benbow was on his way there when he fell ill and died near Green Point in 1852. The Boon Wurrung, who had buried their dead at ‘Mordy Yallock’, for many years were horrified to discover in 1862 that the Aboriginal Protection Board was planning to sell the reserve.

On 4 November Derrimut met with the Aboriginal Guardian, William Thomas at Mordialloc to demand why

*‘white man take away Mordialloc where black fellows always sit down’.*

Thomas protested strongly to the Government about ‘ploughs furrowing up the bones of their ancestors’ but was ignored. He informed the Boon Wurrung who were deeply upset:

*‘they complain of country taken from them & no good white man – no good Governor – I try to pacify them – poor creatures they think Marminarta (white father) can do all for them I tell them Board bigger than Marminarta & Governor more big than Board – they said no more Blkfellows have country.*

Derrimut's health declined with the loss of the last of his country and he died in 1864. In 1872 the ration distributor at the Reserve callously reported:

*As the Mordialloc Aborigines now number only four, and one of the women (Eliza) is far from strong, I do not think that the Board will be put to any great cost before the tribe is extinct.*

Jimmy Dunbar and his wife Eliza, the last known Aboriginal residents of Mordy Yallock, died in April 1877. A number of Boon Wurrung families outside the reserve survived and their descendants actively represent traditional owners today.



*The Dunbars, residents of  
Mordialloc Reserve until  
1877*

### **All this mine, all along here Derimut's once!**

Derrimut expressed his frustration at settlers' attitudes in a conversation recalled by Magistrate William Hull, when testifying to an 1858 parliamentary committee into the condition of the Aboriginal people of Victoria:

*I was told by a black a few days ago that he was still alive, and that he 'lay about in St. Kilda'. The last time I saw him was nearly opposite the Bank of Victoria (Swanston Street), he stopped me and said "You give me shilling, Mr Hull". "No", I said, "I will not give you a shilling, I will go and give you some bread," and he held his hand out to me and said "Me plenty sulky you long time ago, you plenty sulky me; no sulky now, Derimut soon die," and then he pointed with a plaintive manner, which they can affect, to the Bank of Victoria, he said, "You see, Mr Hull, Bank of Victoria, all this mine, all along here Derimut's once; no matter now, me soon tumble down." I said, "Have you no children?" and he flew into a passion immediately, "Why me have lubra? Why me have picanninny? You have all this place, no good have children, no good have lubra, me tumble down and die very soon now."*



## ST KILDA ROAD

*It was along a deeply sandy  
road full of tree stumps,  
and the surrounding  
country pretty thickly  
strewn with gum trees and  
wattle or mimosa...*

*Port Melbourne and Nerre nerre  
minum (South Melbourne)  
viewed from St Kilda Road 1857*

St Kilda Road was initially a bush track. After 1839 it was known as Baxter's Track. Benjamin Baxter, Melbourne's first postmaster, used the track as a stock route to the land he leased in St Kilda. On 10 March 1848, Mrs. Perry, the wife of the first Anglican Bishop of Melbourne, described St Kilda Road in a letter to her friends in England which revealed the effects of fire-stick farming:

*It was along a deeply sandy road full of tree stumps, and the surrounding country pretty thickly strewn with gum trees and wattle or mimosa... There is not the slightest approach to underwood to be seen anywhere, and from the appearance of the grass in its present perfectly yellow state I should say it was closely nibbled by sheep. Indeed it is a marvellous country - it appears to be one interminable park.*

After the road was officially constructed in 1859, the government began 'filching' sections for housing from the parklands on both sides of the road despite strong objections from the councils. There was no consultation with the Aboriginal people who camped regularly on the west side of St Kilda Road at St Kilda Swamp (Albert Park Lake) and opposite on the east side where Yalukit Willam country extended to the Yarra River. In 2007 the City of Stonnington published an Indigenous history which recorded many camping places on the eastern side of St Kilda Road and important memories of past residents.

In the Prahran Telegraph of 16 October 1896, Joseph Crook recalled:

*The only amusement we had up to 1851 was where the natives used to meet once a month on the full moon in Fawkner Park, opposite the Fawkner Hotel (east of St Kilda Road)...there was no hotel, park or streets there then, but all bush. There the blacks held their corroboree, and I have seen the greater portion of the people of Melbourne and Prahran turn out and visit the camp on those occasions.*

Frederick Chapman wrote:

*Even down to 1861 the land (along St Kilda Road) between the (Melbourne) Grammar School and Toorak-road was vacant and unfenced, and so was the greater part of the large triangle up to St. Kilda. That large piece was covered with gumtrees, and blackfellows camped there every year. Watching them throwing boomerangs and climbing trees was the delight of the Grammar School boys who walked home to St. Kilda and Windsor. We knew these blacks, and established friendly relations with them. They built the rudest break-winds of branches and had no other shelter.*





# HOBSON'S BAY

## The Lost Country

Old Benbow recalled that his grandfather (ancestors) recollected when Hobsons Bay was a kangaroo ground; they say, "Plenty catch kangaroo and plenty catch opossum there..."

Assistant Protector William Thomas map of Port Phillip Bay 1840. The Boon Wurrung travelled annually down the coastline of the bay

The City of Port Phillip curves around Hobsons Bay or Nerm which was recalled by the Yalukit Willam as a hunting ground before the sea broke through the Heads and flooded the plain across which their ancestors could have walked to Tasmania. William Hull testified to a Parliamentary Committee on 9 November 1858:

*Old Benbow recalled that his grandfather (ancestors) recollected when Hobsons Bay was a kangaroo ground; they say, "Plenty catch kangaroo and plenty catch opossum there;" and Murray, an Aborigine assured me that the passage up the bay, through which the ships came, is the Yarra River, and that the river once went out at the heads, but that the sea broke in, and that Hobsons Bay which was once a hunting ground, became what it is.*

This extraordinary oral tradition which accurately described the bottom of the bay was explored recently by the University of Melbourne which mapped underwater river channels. About 18,000 years ago, global warming caused the Ice Age sheets to melt and the seas to rise till they covered a quarter of Australia. Tasmania separated from the mainland around 12,000 years ago. Between 6000 and 7000 years ago Port Phillip was flooded by rising seas, as far inland as St Kilda Road. Emerald Hill was then an island. About 3000 years ago the Bay entrance may have been blocked by sand and silt. The waters evaporated, returning the Bay to dry land again except for a lake near the Heads fed by the Yarra and Werribee Rivers. A thousand years ago the Bay entrance may have unblocked and flooded again. Scientists agree that this may have happened rapidly with the catastrophic earthquake and great flood described in Aboriginal accounts recounted by settler Georgina McCrae:

*Robert Russell says that Mr Cobb talks to them in their own language, and that the following is an account given by them of the formation of Port Phillip Bay: "Plenty long ago....gago, gego, gugo.. alonga Corio, men could cross, dryfoot, from our side of the Bay to Geelong." They described a hurricane – trees bending to and fro –then the earth sank, and the sea rushed in through the Heads, till the void places became broad and deep, as they are today.*

The ancestors of the Yalukit Willam survived dramatic changes to their territory during these extreme geological events. Many of their former willam or camp places now lie under the waters of Port Phillip Bay. At the time of settlement they occupied the coastal margin of their former hunting grounds.



*Bunjil sculpture,  
Docklands by  
artist Bruce  
Armstrong*

## *The Time Of Chaos*

*by Carolyn Briggs*

*Many years ago Port Phillip Bay was a large flat grassy plain. The Boon Wurrung were the custodians but traded with and welcomed people from other parts of the Kulin Nation. They obeyed the laws of Bunjil, their creator and spiritual leader. There came a time of chaos with the Boon Wurrung and the other Kulin nations in conflict and they neglected their land. As this chaos grew the sea became angry and began to rise and threatened to flood their whole country. Bunjil walked out to the sea, raised his spear and directed the sea to stop rising. The waters never subsided but stayed to create a large bay that the Boon Wurrung called Nairn (Nerm). Today it is known as Port Phillip Bay. The sea took away much of the land of the Boon Wurrung - and much of their country was reduced to a narrow strip of coastline. The Boon Wurrung returned to their old values and the laws of Bunjil.*



*Bunjil's Eggs, Black Rock - sculpture representing lost Boon Wurrung country and river channels by artist Ray Thomas*

## *The Great Flood – A Kulin Story*

Port Phillip Bay was once dry land where kangaroos and emus were hunted. One day the men were away hunting, and the women had gone off collecting yams and roots. Some little boys who had been left behind were playing in the camp. They were hurling little toy spears at each other, just like their fathers did. In the camp were some wooden containers, or darnuks, full of water and a thrown spear upset one of them. However, this was no ordinary darnuk but a magic one. It held a tremendous amount of water that came rolling down. It engulfed all the land and threatened to drown the people. Bunjil (the ancestral creator) felt sorry for them and placed a rock where Mornington now is and told the water not to go any further. With two rocks Bunjil made the Port Phillip Heads and told the water to run out and meet the ocean.





## CONTEMPORARY PLACES

*Community members and  
guests at launch of Our  
Rainbow Place*



*Sculpture 'Aunty Alma's Seats' by artist Julie Shiels in O'Donnell Gardens*

**O'Donnell Gardens** besides Luna Park is a contemporary Indigenous meeting place. Bronze milk crates in the park by sculptor Julie Shiels commemorate important Aboriginal elders including Aunty Alma Roach, who spent many afternoons in the gardens. Since 2006 it has been the location of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee Festival which is the opening event for the annual St Kilda Festival.

**Our Rainbow Place** is a community recreation place for the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community. Aboriginal elders assisted in the design of Our Rainbow Place which is located at the Inner South Community Health Service at 18 Mitford Street, St Kilda.

### **Port Phillip City Collection**

The St Kilda Town Hall displays an Aboriginal Art Collection as well as regular exhibitions at the Town Hall Gallery.



**Cleve Gardens** at the south end of Fitzroy Street in recent times was a gathering place for Koorie people from different parts of Australia who painted the Aboriginal flag and Uluru on the wall of the toilet block. This was controversially pulled down on the eve of the 1996 Melbourne Grand Prix, despite opposition from St Kilda Council who erected cultural art works the following year, with symbols of the traditional owners. Memorials celebrate elder William ‘Boom Boom’ Forbes and Robbie Hunter, the ‘Chief’ of the parkies.

### **Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation**

The group meets regularly in South Melbourne and is open to all interested persons. It is part of a network of reconciliation groups representing Port Phillip, Bayside, Stonnington and Glen Eira communities which work to build relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and the wider community.

### **Ngwala Willumbong Co-operative**

The Cooperative began in 1975 when volunteers began assisting ‘parkies’ from St Kilda with shelter and support. Since then it has expanded into one of Victoria’s largest Aboriginal Co-operatives with services on seven sites that aim to address social disadvantage. Services include harm minimisation from substance abuse, adult day activity, socialisation and support services, accommodation and home and community care services including the Winja Ulupna Women’s Centre.

### **Yalukit Wilam Ngargee; People Place Gathering Festival**

The City of Port Phillip hosts the Yalukit Wilam Ngargee; People Place Gathering festival. It introduces the annual St Kilda festival and provides a platform for contemporary and Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers and cultural practitioners to showcase their works to a diverse audience including international visitors.





*Right: Cleve  
Gardens artwork,  
artist Ray Thomas*

### **Return to country**

The Yalukit Willam were tightly bound to their particular territory. Land was not just of economic value, it was a spiritual resource and the basis for religious practice. Their country (which included today's City of Port Phillip) was the physical imprint of sacred creator beings. It was alive and contained centres of power, knowledge and story which they were bound to maintain. The Yalukit Willam buried their deceased 'at home', close to where they passed away and believed that the spirit returned to its country after death. The location of ancestral remains therefore indicates important habitations. Burial sites, believed to be Indigenous, were recovered in 1872, 1879, 1882 and 1897. Sites were uncovered in the region of Lagoon Oval (near Pickles and Dow Street), Fraser Street (border of St Kilda and South Melbourne) and Fishermans Bend. In November 1929, remains were uncovered east of St Kilda Road in the Domain Gardens. Whenever Indigenous remains are uncovered today, they are respectfully returned to traditional owners for reburial with appropriate 'Return to Country' rites.





# TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF PORT PHILLIP

*Derrimut, 1837*

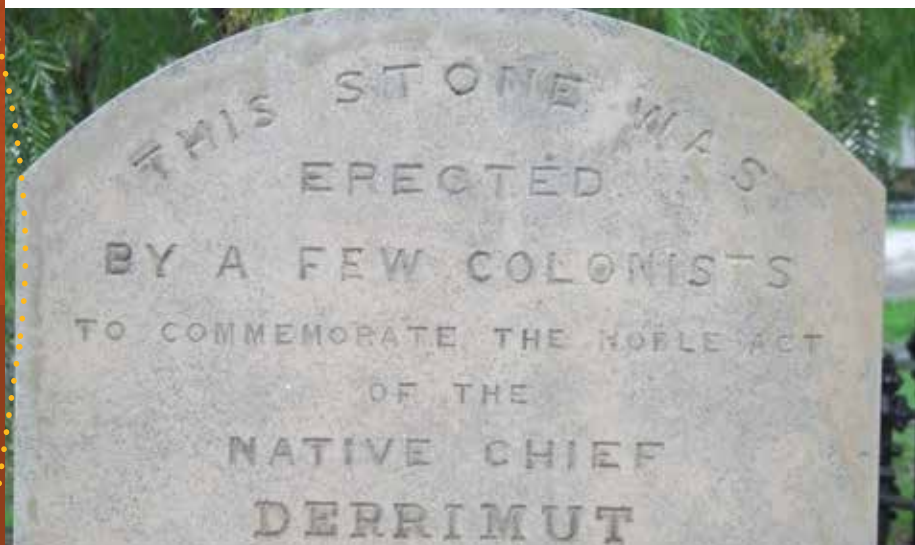
On 22 November 1839, George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector of Aborigines in Port Phillip District, forwarded William Thomas' census of the Boon Wurrung people including the fifty names below to Superintendent Charles La Trobe. Thomas counted 34 women and 49 men (83 in total) who 'claim the country from Port Phillip to Westernport, along the sea coast.' 40 persons were up to 20 years of age, 38 between 20-50 years and five between 50-80 years.

Mingarugon **M**  
 Togerrook **F**  
 Ditto **F**  
 Tagerrook **F**  
 Tillerrook **F**  
 Yit Yit **F**  
 Margagrook **F**  
 Waregull **M**  
 Lellerbrook **F**  
 Dindon **M**  
 Turnbull **(in charge)**  
 Derrimut **M**  
 Wodengrook **F**  
 Mingeranerook **M**  
 Nerangu **M**  
 Ligie **F**  
 Bullenrod **M**  
 Morungah **F**  
 Darenet **F**  
 Banrinuk **F**  
 Beabone **M**  
 Yarembrook **M**  
 Wingrut **F**  
 Wimarung **M**  
 Tringall **F**

Nirindin **F**  
 Quondrem **F**  
 Tallong **M**  
 Talgigal **F**  
 Bolineron **M**  
 Bindigrook **F**  
 Yat Yat **M**  
 Mara Merit **M**  
 Kerundirry **F**  
 Toorbroom **M**  
 Nirinaron **M**  
 Moryagrook **F**  
 Narenen **M**  
 Morabun **M**  
 Tumberook **M**  
 Warandoolong **M**  
 Bunygrook **M**  
 Tundigal **F**  
 Warragrook **M**  
 Warrabut **M**  
 Poolirong **M**  
 Morogoine **M**  
 Morugine **M**  
 Bar Inanin **F**  
 Kalkabrook **M**

**M**=male, **F**=female

From Cannon, M (ed). *Vol 2B Aborigines and Protectors, 1838-39, Historical Records of Victoria, Public Record Office, Victoria, 1983.*



Derrimut's  
gravestone,  
Carlton Cemetery

### Derrimut

Derrimut, a Yalukit Willam leader was a very well-known Indigenous spokesperson in early Melbourne. He inspired friendship from many settlers but was criticised by others. He had a long-standing relationship with settler John Fawcner whose diary records in April 1836 that Derrimut is:

*a chief from whom with others I bought my land, live with me, and frequently go out and shoot kangaroos, snakes for me.*

The early relationship between the Melbourne clans and Melbourne's colonists was generally cooperative. However on 3 December 1835, Fawcner wrote:

*Derramuck came this day and told us that the natives intended to rush down upon us and plunder our goods and murder us, we cleaned our pieces and prepared for them ... I and two others chased the Blacks away some distance.*

Other clan leaders such as Benbow and Billibellary also acted to protect the infant settlement. The likely reason is that they respected the Tanderrum or Treaty and its obligations to protect guests on country. In August 1836 Derrimut accompanied Fawkner to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). He was introduced to Governor Arthur and his portrait was painted. Derrimut's first wife had been abducted by sealers and in October 1845 he married Maywerer, a Watha Wurrung woman from Geelong.

Subsequent events showed Derrimut's faith in his friendship with leading settlers to be misplaced. Despite his strong protests, the sale of the last of his traditional lands at Mordialloc Reserve was announced in July 1863. His health rapidly deteriorated. On 8 January 1864 three Boon Wurrung men and women travelled from Mordialloc Reserve to visit him in nursing care in Melbourne. William Thomas was present:

*Poor Derremut cried & so did Mr Man who hung his head on the breast of Derremut like Esau & Jacob, I was forced at length to separate them.*

Fawkner visited him for the last time at the Benevolent Society on the day before he died.

A memorial stone was erected over Derrimut's grave in Carlton Cemetery. Its sentiments of gratitude seem strangely at odds with the events that led to his decline and death.

*This stone was erected by a few colonists to commemorate the noble act of chief Derrimut who by timely information given October 1835 to the first colonists, Messrs Fawkner, Lancey, Evans, Henry Batman and their dependants saved them from massacre planned by some of the up-country tribes of Aborigines. Derrimut closed his mortal career in the Benevolent Asylum, May 28th, 1864 aged about 54 years.*

Today a Melbourne suburb, streets, park and electoral district honour his name and memory.





*Benbow defiantly  
sends up his calling  
card*

### **Benbow and Tallumungrook**

Like Derrimut, Benbow or Bollour was a Yalukit Willam leader, well known and liked by the early settlers who often consulted him for information. Both Derrimut and he often went fishing with John Fawcner.

On 11 January 1845 the eight year old son of John Batman tragically drowned at the Yarra Falls near Queens Bridge. Benbow dived repeatedly to retrieve the child's body. Eliza Batman wrote:

*...before any assistance could be procured my lovely boy had sunk. Every effort was made to get the body, but to no purpose till next morning, when several of the blacks dived in different parts of the river and were successful in finding him.*

He participated as a member of the Native Police Corps in 1842 and defended settlers under threat from other tribes. For a time, he was employed by Chief Protector George Robinson in the late 1840s as a courier.



*The falls on the  
Yarra where  
Benbow dived  
(Queens Bridge)*

### **‘No white man’s ground, black man’s!’**

Like Derrimut, Benbow was an advocate for Aboriginal rights to land and expressed his sense of betrayal at the unjust treatment of the Boon Wurrung and the breach of the alliance. In September 1840 Superintendent La Trobe announced a total ban on all Aborigines from visiting Melbourne ‘under any pretext whatsoever’. William Thomas described Benbow’s bitter response:

*(They) relate all their good services to white people in past days...that he and the Port Phillip blacks kept the Barraboool blacks from killing all white man, and that he get blackfellows that kill first white men, now many white people come and turn black fellows away...Big Benbow (Benbow’s father) almost crying ... now go away, go away ... soldier say no good that.*

*I again tell them that they make willums (bark huts) on white man’s ground, and cut off bark ... make white man sulky ... they say no white man’s ground, black man’s.*



*Benbow's hut can be seen lower right in John Batman's garden (near today's Southern Cross Station)*

### **Duped by the white man!**

On 17 March 1849, Benbow dressed formally in his white commissariat uniform from the native police and went to the Royal Hotel, where Governor Fitzroy was visiting, to demand land for the Boon Wurrung. He sent up his 'King Benbow' brass plate as a visiting card and requested:

*to see the governor...he had been duped by the white man... his object was to ask the governor for a country for the Western Port blackfellows.*

The Governor refused to see him. Benbow defiantly waited all day but was ignored.

Benbow and his wife Tallumungrook or Kitty were described as inseparable. For a period they lived in a comfortable hut built by Benbow in the garden below John Batman's house at Batman Hill near today's Southern Cross Station.



Artworks near St  
Kilda Ngargee Tree,  
artist Glenn Romanis

In 1844 Kitty was given away in marriage to another man by her uncle who had recently inherited the right to do so. Thomas rarely intervened in sensitive cultural matters but when Charles La Trobe expressed concern about Benbow's welfare, he defied convention and forcibly insisted on Kitty's return.

On 1 January 1852 Benbow was carried by his clan to Melbourne suffering severe rheumatism. He recovered after a month's care. However, only six months later, Benbow died while travelling to the Boon Wurrung Reserve at Mordialloc on 5 July 1852. He was buried near Green Point, Brighton. Kitty was inconsolable. She *'could hardly be kept from the grave'* and reportedly died from sorrow within a short period.





## FIGHTING BACK





### **After Mordialloc – The Era of Assimilation**

In 1863, the same year as Mordialloc Reserve was closed, a new station was created at Corranderk in Healesville at the instigation of Aboriginal people led by Simon Wonga and his cousin William Barak. Successful industries such as handcrafts and farming were established on 2020 hectares of land with a village and school. In 1869 the Aborigines Act gave the Board for the Protection of Aborigines extraordinary powers to determine where Aboriginal people could live and work and to remove their children to promote assimilation. Once again the government and nearby landowners began casting acquisitive eyes on Aboriginal land. Despite well organised political protests by the community, a new Act in 1886 forced people of mixed descent off the mission to starve or assimilate. Most of the land was sold. Some Aboriginal people moved to other missions, some survived by taking up occupations such as fruit picking and wood cutting and living on the margins of society.



*Ngwala Willumbong  
Co-operative*

### **The rise of the Aboriginal civil rights movement**

By the 1920s and 1930s many Aboriginal people began moving to Melbourne suburbs such as Footscray, St Kilda and Fitzroy, seeking independence and employment. The political lessons of Corranderrk were not forgotten and in 1933 William Cooper and other legendary activists began a long-term civil rights campaign with the formation of the Australian Aborigines' League. They announced a National Day of Mourning on Australia Day, petitioned the King and Prime Minister and addressed crowds on the Yarra bank. Other community leaders were inspired to create Aboriginal controlled organisations in the following decades such as the Aboriginal Advancement League in 1957, Aboriginal health and legal services in 1973, the Koorie Heritage Trust in 1985 and many successful others which continue to support the Aboriginal community today. The 1967 referendum was a landmark event with over 90% of votes supporting the Commonwealth's power to legislate with regard to Aborigines and to include them in the census.



St Kilda was a traditional meeting place where Aboriginal people linked up from across Australia because of low cost accommodation and a tolerant and diverse community.

Initiatives in recent years by the City of Port Phillip include the annual Yalukit Willam Festival, Closing the Gap and the Reconciliation Action Plan. More remains to be achieved to redress historic inequities and social and health needs. However it is important to also acknowledge the revival achieved by decades of hardship and struggle by Koorie people to achieve legal reform, access to services, and to build Aboriginal organisations.

Today there are more than 14,000 Aboriginal residents of Melbourne, many with prominent achievements in many diverse fields.



### Appendix I - News in the City of Port Phillip from 1893 - 2014

**1893**

#### **Aborigines' Protection Board refuses permission to play**

*The Argus 4 May 1893*

*A meeting of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines was held yesterday at the offices, City Bank Chambers.... A letter was read from the secretary for Lands asking if the board had any objection to the excision of a portion of the Coranderrk reserve. The letter was acknowledged. An aboriginal from Coranderrk applied for permission to play football at South Melbourne during the coming season, but the board feared that the granting of the application might lead to numerous other similar requests, and refused it.*

**1936**

#### **Blacks as Concert Performers, South Melbourne**

*The Argus 26 June 1936*

*Descendants of King Barak, the last king of the Port Phillip blacks, provided part of a concert programme at the South Melbourne Town Hall last night. The concert, which was arranged by the Australian Aborigines' League, was held to raise money for the family of Mr W. Terrick, an aboriginal shearer. Terrick was killed in a road accident recently and his son, aged 10 years, later had his injured arm amputated at Prince Henry's Hospital. "Doug" Nicholls, the Fitzroy aboriginal footballer, was another member of the concert party. About 500 persons attended the concert.*

**1952**

**Boomerangs will fly at St. Kilda**

*The Argus 19 April 1952*

*Aborigine Bill Onus will give a demonstration of boomerang throwing at a big sports carnival in aid of the Women's Hospital Appeal at St Kilda Oval.*

*Note: William (Bill) Onus (1906-1968) was a craftsman and an Aboriginal civil rights activist. He played a leading role in the Aboriginal referendum movement and was President of the Aborigines Advancement League (Victoria). For many years he ran an Aboriginal handcrafts business. His son Lin Onus was a well known artist and activist.*

**1963**

**St Kilda's Boomerangs**

*25 July 1963*

*In 1963 St. Kilda, South Melbourne and Melbourne councils began removing hundreds of silver poplars and desert ash trees from St Kilda Road. Aboriginal craftsman Bill Onus stepped in with a chain-saw to make boomerangs from them as the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Sir Maurice Nathan, looked on. "My men will be here full time. I don't know how many boomerangs we'll get, but it will run into tens of thousands," said Bill.*

**2014**

**Forum over Aboriginal recognition**

*The Weekly Review Bayside and Port Phillip, Saturday 19 July*

*A public forum will be held in Port Melbourne over a national campaign to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Constitution. The forum called 'Constitutional Recognition: The Next Step' has been organised by Sacred Heart Mission in partnership with City of Port Phillip, Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation, Reconciliation Victoria and St Kilda Baptist Church.*

### **Appendix 2 - Boon Wurrung language**

At the time of colonisation there were an estimated 38 Indigenous languages spoken in Victoria. Today, the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) is working to retrieve, revive and strengthen these languages. Kulin vocabulary, including Boon Wurrung, is recorded in *Volume Four: Kulin Language. The Journal of William Thomas* published by VACL in 2014.

Author Marie Fels, in her book *'I Succeeded Once 2011'*, describes how William Thomas, the Assistant Protector and a devout Methodist, endeavoured to deliver daily services in Boon Wurrung language as he travelled and camped with the clans. Some translations were assisted by Metturananuk, a Boon Wurrung leader.

Verse 28-9 of Genesis has been described as highlighting differences between European and Kulin perceptions of the world i.e. humans dominant over all life forms as against humans as part of living nature.

## Genesis in Boon Wurrung

1	<i>In the Beginning God created the heaven and the earth.</i>	<i>Ganbronin Pundgyl Marman monguit woorworror bar beek.</i>
2	<i>And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.</i>	<i>Nier beek nowdin netbo, beek tandowring tarkate; nier boit, nier mill, nier taul, nier turrong, nier uungo; bar boorundara kormuk bumile. Bar Moorup Pundgyl warrebonuk narlumbanan parn.</i>
3	<i>And God said, let there be light, and there was light.</i>	<i>Bar Pundgyl Marman tombuk, womear yangamut, bar yangamut woman.</i>
4	<i>And God saw the light that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness.</i>	<i>Bar Pundgyl Marman nangeit yangamut, bar tombak boundup nge, bar Pundgyl Marman borungnergurk yangamut boorundara.</i>
5	<i>And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night; and the evening and the morning were the first day.</i>	<i>Bar Pundgyl Marman nerreno yangamut yellenwo, bar borundara borundut; bar krunguine bar banbaneram nerreno ganbronin yellenw .</i>
26, 27	<i>And God said let us make man in our image. And God made in his own image, man; in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.</i>	<i>Bar Pundgyl Marman tombak, mallun monkeit kooling tandowring murrumbuniek. Bar Pundgyl Marman monkeit tandowring kargeeiek koolinner, – nowdin kargeeiek monkeit munniger – kooling bar bagrook monkeit murrumnuler.</i>
28, 29	<i>And God blessed them, and said, increase and replenish the earth; and have power over the fish of the sea, and fowl of the air, and all living things. And God gave man every tree and herb bearing fruit and seed for man's food.</i>	<i>Bar Pundgyl Marman tombit boundup murrumnuler; geanboon koolinge bagrook bar wootunno bopup kuding beeker; bar umanaro umarko tuat kuding warreen, koyup worworror bar umarko yeareit togan. Bar Pundgyl Marman uminar koolin umarko turrung, bar umarko uungo tunganan koolinge bagrook.</i>



### **The 100th Psalm in Boon Wurrung**

*Sung to the melody of 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow'*

*1. Pund-gyl Mar-man, bar mar-na-meek*

*Nun-guk kub-ber-don mur-rum-beek*

*Mong-der-re-wat koo-lin net-bo*

*Tan-dow-ring koon-gee mur-rum-bo.*

*2. Mal-yeng-erk par-do-gur-ra-bun*

*Tu-duk yar-rite ko-dun-un-un*

*Ner-rem-bee bo-run, yel-len-wa*

*Nul-wor-then bo-pup Koo-lin-er.*

*3. Ner-doit ye-men-ner mur-rum-beek*

*Lack-boo-ding myng-ner kar-gee-iek*

*Bar ner-doit yan-na-ner war-reet*

*Kar-gee nger-ren-er mur-rum-beek.*

## A Boon Wurrung song

Kurburu or 'The Bear' was a famous Boon Wurrung doctor, dreamer and diviner in early Melbourne, named at birth for his gift for communicating with Koala bears. Koalas had important powers such as causing drought that required them to be treated in prescribed ways, for example they were never to be skinned. In 1904 William Howitt published a song in *The Native Tribes of South East Australia* provided to him by William Barak. In this song, Kurburu, possessed by the Murup or spirit of a bear, is singing:

'E---na gur-e-a nung ngal-ur-ma ba-reng  
gur-uk ba mirrnim mirrnim nge burun bangan bodha  
e-le-re mur-inga: e yam -yam mudhan guru bai wirge ngu-rak'

### KURBURU'S SONG.

Sounded as if in the key of B minor.

*Tempo moderato.* M ♩ = 100.

ē - - - na gur - é - a nung ngal - úr - ma bá - reng

gūr - - uk ba mirnín mirnín nge búrun bangan bódha<sup>1</sup>

e - lé - re mūr - ingá : ē yam-yam mūdhan guru bai wirge ngū-rak.

## APPENDICES

The Yalukit Willam trail celebrates the Indigenous custodians of the Boon Wurrung language group, who for 40,000 years or more occupied the landscape we now call the City of Port Phillip.

START  
TO  
FINISH

West Beach  
Natural History  
Reserve, corner  
of Pier Road  
and Beaconsfield  
Parade, St Kilda

LENGTH Four kilometres

TIME 60 – 90 minutes

### Trail Key

- 1 West Beach Natural History Reserve
- 2 Deakin Street
- 3 Albert Park
- 4 St Kilda Park Primary School
- 5 Ngargee (Corroboree) Tree
- 6 Junction Oval
- 7 Jackson Street
- 8 Wattle House
- 9 Cleve Gardens
- 10 Catani Gardens

### Appendix 3 The Yalukit Willam Trail

Yalukit Willam descendants, historical records of camping places, ceremonial sites, creation stories and burial places testify to the First Peoples occupation. Point Ormond hill in Elwood was the site of an Aboriginal midden and no doubt served as a strategic lookout. The large number of wetlands such as those at Lagoon Oval (Port Melbourne), Elster Creek (Elwood Canal) and Albert Park Lake provided a rich abundance of food.

A ngargee is a cultural and social gathering, sometimes referred to as a corroboree. These took place at sites including Emerald Hill, today the location of the South Melbourne Town Hall. The Ngargee Tree – an ancient ceremonial red gum – is the City's oldest living entity and overlooks what is now St Kilda Junction.

The St Kilda area was recorded as Euro-Yroke or the 'grinding stone' area that was originally formed of deep red cliffs along the bay shoreline. Grinding stones were used to sharpen stone axes, an essential tool of all adult males.

This trail includes a wetland, billabong, traditional camping place, a ceremonial tree, a memorial garden and a possum colony.





### **As it was once was**

Start the walk at the West Beach Natural History Reserve **(1)** on the corner of Pier Road and Beaconsfield Parade. The Federation bench, made from ancient trees, celebrates the rich Yalukit Willam history of Port Phillip where camping places, ceremonial sites and creation epics testify to the millennia of First People's occupation. The park is a re-creation of a typical saltmarsh landscape before European settlement. Cross the footbridge over Cowderoy Canal and explore the paths. Here can be found Indigenous plants used by the Yalukit Willam. Common 'pigface' has an edible berry, its juices are used as a painkiller for stings and it can be squeezed to provide water for drinking. Indigenous grasses were used to weave baskets, nets and ornaments.

Relax on one of the benches, one of the finest locations in Port Phillip to enjoy a sunset over Hobsons Bay. Yalukit Willam clan and people of the Boon Wurrung language group recalled Hobsons Bay as a 'kangaroo ground' before the sea broke through the Heads at the end of the last Ice Age up to 9,000 years ago. An early creation story tells how Bunjil, the ancestral creator, placed rocks in this part of the Bay to stop the approach of the sea during the great flood.

The Yalukit Willam Federation bench is located on the footpath at Beaconsfield Parade. Cross over Beaconsfield Parade with the pedestrian lights and proceed east up Cowderoy Street.

### **More than one Federation**

Walk east along Cowderoy Street and turn right into Deakin Street **(2)** at shady Jacoby Reserve. Alfred Deakin was a prime mover of Australian Federation. He served three terms as Prime Minister and is buried in St Kilda Cemetery. Less well known is his role in implementing racial policies such as the Victorian Half-Caste Act in 1886 and the White Australia Policy in 1901.

Prior to Melbourne's settlement, the area was occupied by an earlier federation of five language groups referred to as the Kulin people each of whom occupied clan estates they regarded as their own since the time of creation. In the 1840s George Robinson, the Aboriginal Chief Protector, recorded that the Yalukit Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung language group occupied the St Kilda area also known as Euro-Yroke. The City of Port Phillip, and in particular St Kilda today is a significant gathering place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all parts of Australia. The area is serviced by a range of community and cultural organisations such as the Boon Wurrung Foundation, Ngwala Willumbong and Inner South Community Health Service (Our Rainbow Place).

Turn right when you reach Canterbury Road and cross at the pedestrian lights near Mary Street. An underpass under the light rail line takes you into Albert Park.

## Hunting and gathering by the lake

Albert Park (3) is Victoria's most visited park occupying 225 hectares and includes Albert Park Lake. The lake, once a natural lagoon, is circled by five kilometres of walking track. Before settlement the park was an important wilum or camping place for the Yalukit Willam and guests to country. They were recorded hunting and gathering and building bark shelters beside the lagoon which teemed with *gunabi* (ducks) and *gunuwarra* (swans). The lagoon also provided plants with roots from which starch was extracted to make damper. Wildlife such as tortoises, eels, frogs, fish, and freshwater shellfish would have been harvested. The rich environment meant four or five hours of foraging each day was probably sufficient to meet family needs.

## Kids business

From the underpass, St Kilda Park Primary School (4) built in 1880 is on the rise to your immediate right. Take the right hand paths that lead you up to and around the school buildings (towards Fitzroy Street). Children from this school were involved in the development of this Aboriginal trail including planting indigenous flora.

## A living monument

Continue past the school following walking paths in the park parallel to Fitzroy Street until you reach St Kilda Junction. For safety, use the pedestrian lights at Lakeside Drive. The St Kilda Ngargee tree (5) is a red gum eucalyptus beside the kerb of Queens Road, 100 metres from its junction with Fitzroy Street. This gum tree, more than four hundred years old, is on the site where Yalukit Willam ceremonies occurred prior to European settlement in 1835 and later as a fringe camp by surviving Aboriginal people. It is a rare and living witness of the change from a hunter gatherer lifestyle to an urbanised society. The tree is listed on the National Trust Register. Note the memorial plaque near the base of the tree.

Yalukit Willam dance ceremonies such as *ngargee* and *gaggip* celebrated important events and meetings and promoted unity between communities. Dances were also used to tell traditional stories. The men often decorated their bodies with designs in white clay and coloured ochre. The women chanted and drummed on skins stretched tightly between their legs, clapped their hands and beat sticks and boomerangs together to provide the rhythm of the dance.

Cockatoos, galahs and possums still meet at the tree. Black ducks frequent the billabong. Sometimes a stick nest of *Waa* the crow, one of the two moieties of the Kulin nation, has been seen in the upper branches.

Many people see the protection of this living monument as an important contribution not only to reconciliation but to reciprocity and genuine acts of equal exchange. Local residents have created the native grasslands, billabong and a ceremonial circle in the vicinity to commemorate Aboriginal occupation and promote the health of this elder red gum. **Retrace your steps past Junction Oval towards St Kilda Primary School and then walk down Fitzroy Street.**

### **Marngrook**

Note Junction Oval **(6)** on your right as you return towards the school. This historic oval was the home ground of the St Kilda Football Club until the Saints moved to Moorabbin. James Wandin, a descendent of Barak, played at the ground for St Kilda in the 1950s.

The club was founded in 1873. Both Aboriginal men and women played forms of football prior to settlement. In 1839 Assistant Protector William Thomas recorded an Aboriginal game called marngrook in which a rolled ball of possum skin bound tightly with kangaroo sinew was kicked high in the air by two teams:

*There is general excitement who shall catch it, the tall fellows stand the best chance, when the ball is caught it is kicked into the air with great force...they will play at this game for hours and fine exercise it is for adults and youths.*

### **Seizing the land**

Continue down the north side of Fitzroy Street until it meets Jackson Street **(7)** on its south side. Samuel Jackson was a member of John Fawkner's syndicate. Aboriginal people had land ownership of Melbourne for up to 50,000 years or more before two rival Tasmanian syndicates led by Fawkner and Batman claimed ownership in 1835. Only fifteen years later, Samuel Jackson erected his prefabricated Wattle House at 53 Jackson Street **(8)**. Proceed down Jackson Street and continue left toward Grey Street to visit St Kilda's oldest home.

The occupying settlers built many colonial mansions on former Aboriginal lands in what is now called Fitzroy Street. Many shops are located in their former front gardens such as 83-97 Fitzroy Street. Glance between 91 and 97 to glimpse Brooklawn mansion.

### **A modern meeting place**

Cleve Gardens **(9)** designed by Sali Cleve in 1911, is located on the triangular reserve at the corner of Fitzroy Street and Beaconsfield Parade. Aboriginal people, including arrivals from interstate, used this reserve as a meeting place for many decades despite attempts to discourage their presence. Local by-laws were often used to restrict public meeting places in areas like Fitzroy. Residents remember Cleve Gardens as a gathering place for the 'parkies' and the well-known designs painted on the former ablution block: the Aboriginal flag, giant lizards and Uluru.

Media attention was focused on the site in 1996, when this block was bulldozed to 'clean up' the area for the Grand Prix. Native plants, heritage markers and wave-shaped seating have been constructed since in consultation with community members. The site is included on Aboriginal Affairs Victoria's Historic Sites Register. Note the memorial to Robbie Hunter, 'Chief', from the 'parkies'.

### **A home for marsupial Australians**

Cross Beaconsfield Parade to the Catani Gardens **(10)** on the foreshore. A night visitor to these gardens will often encounter semi-tame *walert* (brush-tail possum) which descend from the trees in search of food. Walert were an essential source of food and clothing for Aboriginal people. Walert-gurn or possum skin rugs were made of up to 80 skins that, despite their extraordinary lightness, were warm and waterproof. The skins were stretched and sewn finely together using sinew and needles made of pierced animal bones. The inner skin of the cloak was scored with shells to create striking designs and to make the skin supple.

Near St Kilda Pier is a 1914 sculpture of Captain James Cook who claimed eastern Australia for the British in 1770 ignoring its occupation by hundreds of indigenous nations and tribes.

Return to your starting point at West Beach by walking north along the paths in Catani gardens.



## PICTURE CREDITS

**Page 4** Victoria-Australia, Port Phillip. Hobson Bay and River Yarra leading to Melbourne 1865, Henry L. Cox, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 6** Boon Wurrung Traditional Owner Caroline Martin, Elder Aunty 'Jacko' Jackson, and community member Mark Williams at the opening of Our Rainbow Centre, St Kilda, courtesy Todd Condie.

**Page 10** Melbourne from the falls, 1837 ca. 1866, Eliezer Levi Montefiore, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 13** Fishing for eels. George Augustus Robinson Journals 1829-1849 vol.16 p.232, George Augustus Robinson drawings A 7037, Collection of State Library of New South Wales.

**Page 14** Site of The Melbourne Custom House 1839: Wood engraving published in *The illustrated Australian news for home readers*, December 31, 1872, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 17** Batman's treaty with the aborigines at Merri Creek, 6th June 1835 ca. 1888, John Wesley Burt, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 18** William Thomas, Assistant Protector, G H Haydon, c 1841, pencil sketch, La Trobe Picture collection, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 21** Louisa Briggs with grandson, courtesy Carolyn Briggs. Louisa Briggs (seated) and family, courtesy Carolyn Briggs.

**Page 22** Sandridge past and present, 4 September 1875. Melbourne: Hugh George for Wilson and MacKinnon, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 24** Sandridge from the Lagoon, Henry Burnca. 1870, State Library of Victoria.

**Pages 25, 98 (3)** Liardet's Beach and Hotel in their heyday 1875, W. F. E. Liardet, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 26, 98 (6)** A corroboree on Emerald Hill in 1840, 1875, W. F. E. Liardet, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 27, 58** Journey to Westernport. PROV, VPRS 11 Unregistered inward correspondence to the Chief Protector of Aborigines, Reports and Returns & VPRS 4410 Aboriginal Protectorate Weekly, Monthly and Annual Reports and Journals, reproduced with the permission of the Keeper of the Public Records, Public Record Office Victoria, Australia.

**Page 28** Melbourne from Emerald Hill, 14 March 1870, Robert Russell, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 29**, Performers at Yalukit Willam Ngargee Festival, courtesy Todd Condie.

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**Page 32 98 (8)** Albert Park Lake 1876 A.C. State Library of Victoria.

**Page 37** Courtesy Judy Freeman.

**Page 40, 99 (34)** Red Bluff St. Kilda: at present Point Ormond, Elizabeth Parsons,

c1874-1886, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 41** Red Bluff (Elwood before Levelling), Thomas Clark, c1860, pp1966.18.245;

Port Phillip City Collection.

**Page 45** Intertidal painting Julie Gough 2004 pp2004.3.47; Port Phillip City Collection.

**Page 46** Birds eye view of Melbourne, showing public office and gardens; St Kilda in the distance (extract), c 1875, courtesy Meyer Eidelson.

**Page 49** William Buckley (picture) Picturesque Atlas of Australasia. 1888, Volume 1024 NK5768, National Library of Australia.

**Page 50, 99 (24)** St Kilda Beach and Esplanade, from the Old Royal Baths, c. 1862. From a photograph taken about 1862 by Mr. Sydney W. Smith (then Surveyor to the Municipality) and presented to the Council by his son, Mr. Sydney W. Smith, in 1916. In the book, *The History of St Kilda 1840-1930* II Cooper, sk0652.1-3; Port Phillip City Collection.

**Page 51** Red Bluff, St. Kilda by L. W. Brown (postcard), State Library of Victoria.

**Page 55** Jimmy Dunbar and His Lubra - The Last of the Mordialloc Tribe, May 14, 1877. Melbourne: Ebenezer and David Syme, State Library of Victoria.

**Pages 56, 99 (9)** Emerald Hill and Sandridge from the Government Domain, 1857, Thomas Clark, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 62** Elders, community members and guests at launch of Our Rainbow Place, courtesy Todd Condie.

**Page 63** Aunt Alma's Seats bronze sculpture Port Phillip City Collection Julie Shiels 2005 pp2009.8.522; Port Phillip City Collection.

**Page 65** Ray Thomas, Cultural Marker 1997 (Cleve Gardens Aboriginal Arts Project) acrylic on wood, 430 x 120cm, pp2000.10.417© Ray Thomas/ Licensed Viscopy, 2014; Port Phillip City Collection.

**Page 66** Chief Derah Mat [Derrimut] of Port Philip 5 October 1836 Benjamin Duterrau, Dixon Galleries, State Library of New South Wales.

**Page 70** Benbow, King of Warnambool (A7078-2) Pencil & Ink sketch "6 1/8 X 6 1/8" unsigned title in pencil (In papers of G.A. Robinson Vol 57a Corres. & other papers Port Phillip Protectorate Misc.1845-1849 p.431), State Library of New South Wales.

**Page 71** The ferry and the falls on the Yarra, W. F. E. Liardet, 1875, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 72** John Batman's house W. F. E. Liardet, 1875, State Library of Victoria.

**Page 95** Performers at Yalukit Willam Ngargee Festival, courtesy Todd Condie.

**Pages 7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 23, 35, 36, 38, 42, 43, 44, 47, 51, 52, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 68, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77** Photos various, courtesy Meyer Eidelson.

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*Performers at Yalukit  
Willam Ngargee Festival*

# ABORIGINAL CULTURAL MAP OF THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP

**This Yalukit Willam cultural map celebrates the traditional owners who occupied the landscape we now call the City of Port Phillip for untold generations. The sites include archaeological sites, historic events from the past and important contemporary places. 'Willam' refers to remnant places that represent the home landscape of the Yalukit Willam prior to settlement.**

## **1. Nerm (Nairn) or Port Phillip Bay: The Lost Boon Wurrung Country**

Twice in the last 10,000 years, Port Phillip Bay has been dry land which the Yalukit Willam remembered as a 'kangaroo ground' where their ancestors hunted.

## **2. Sand Dunes willam: Sandridge Beach (Perc White Reserve)**

Four hectares of the original sand dune landscape of the Yalukit Willam.

## **3. Firestick farming: Bay Street foreshore**

In 1840 the Yalukit Willam were encountered near today's Port Melbourne Yacht Club, burning back country to foster food plants, access and pasture for kangaroo.

## **4. Yalukit Willam Camp: Lagoon Reserve**

Evidence of Aboriginal habitation has been found around Lagoon Reserve once a large inlet to the sea. The former shorelines are now East and West Esplanade.

## **5. Woodlands willam: Gasworks Park Bushtucker Trail**

A self guided trail around the park of the food, tool and medicinal plants harvested by the Yalukit Willam.

## **6. Ngargee (Corroboree) site: South Melbourne Town Hall, Emerald Hill**

Emerald Hill was a favourite Ngargee place of the Boon Wurrung and guests on country. The Boon Wurrung held Ngargee on full and new moons and meetings every three months.

## **7. Encounter place: Corner Park and Clarendon Streets**

Local resident Edward Armitage described Aboriginal people here in about 1860 performing boomerang throwing 'for the instruction and amusement of white invaders'.

## **8. Yalukit Willam Camps, Wetland and Hunting Ground: Albert Park Lake**

The Yalukit Willam built miams (huts) and camped around Albert Park lagoon. The lake was a source of waterfowl, fish and roots.

## **9. Camps and Ngargee: St Kilda Road**

Camping and Ngargee places were recorded along St Kilda Road between Domain Road and St Kilda Junction and in Fawkner Park. Approximately 18 historic sites have been recorded between St Kilda Road and the Yarra River.

## **10. Reconciliation Garden: Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church**

An Indigenous garden and glass window artwork by artist Vicki Couzens, cnr Richardson and Wright Streets.

## **11. Yalukit Willam journey route: Beach Road/ Beaconsfield Pde/Marine Pde**

The Boon Wurrung travelled annually down the Port Phillip Bay coastline to Kullurk (Coolart) at Balnarring, then inland to the Dandenong foothills, returning to Port Phillip in warm weather.

## **12. Woodlands and wetlands willam: Canterbury Road Urban Forest**

From Kerferd Road to Fraser Street this urban forest on the Canterbury Road verge contains surviving plants of the former Albert Park Lagoon and the Indigenous woodlands flora of Victoria.

## **13. Grasslands Willam: HR Johnson Reserve**

## **14. Yalukit Willam Camp: Albert Park Reserve**

The Boon Wurrung camped in the reserve area including at the southeast end of the lake.

## **15. Yalukit Willam Camp: Albert Park Reserve**

The Boon Wurrung camped in the reserve south of the lake including near Fitzroy Street and Junction Oval including August and September, 1847, November 1847, February 1848 and September 1848.

## **16. Marngrook Place: Junction Oval**

The Boon Wurrung were the first people recorded playing Marngrook, a form of football. James Wandin, descendant of William Barak played for St Kilda in the 1950s at their home ground Junction Oval.

## **17. Ngargee (Corroboree) Tree: Corner Fitzroy and Queen Streets**

Gatherings of the Boon Wurrung were held near this last living corroboree tree in Melbourne. Near the tree are the Yalukit Willam ceremonial circle, other remnant trees, a billabong and the important Ngargee grasslands.

### **18. Ngawala Nillumbong: Koorie provider**

One of Victoria's largest Aboriginal Co-operatives started in 1975 and provides an outstanding range of services to the Koorie community from 93 Wellington Street.

### **19. Yalukit Willam Trees: Alma Park (near Dandenong Road)**

5-6 pre-settlement trees including a possible canoe tree opposite Hammerdale Street (recorded 1995).

### **20. Yalukit Willam Walking Trail and Saltmarsh willam: West Beach Natural History Reserve.**

The four kilometre Aboriginal Walking Trail commences here. Salt marsh was an important Yalukit Willam habitat with 31 species at West Beach including strand sedge, salt-grass, hairy spinifex and seablite.

### **21. Walert (possum) willam: Catani Gardens**

A native brushtail possum population emerges here at night. Walert were a popular Yalukit Willam food and the favoured source of clothing.

### **22. Parkies memorial: Cleve Gardens**

This former meeting place since the 1940s includes artwork and plaques to respected elders William Forbes and 'the Chief' Robbie Hunter.

### **23. Yalukit Willam 'Supermarket' garden: St Kilda Sea Baths**

A bushtucker garden of food plants at the entrance.

### **24. Euro-Yroke axe-grinding place: St Kilda Beach and Esplanade bluff**

St Kilda was Euro-Yroke, the 'grinding stone place' where prized stone axes were sharpened on the red brown sandstone 'found along the beach of St. Kilda, in outcropping spurs, and ridges.'

### **25. Urban gathering place: O'Donnell Gardens**

A contemporary meeting place. Milk crate sculptures provide seating and celebrate the Parkies. The Yalukit Willam Ngargee Festival commences here annually.

### **26. Aboriginal gathering place: Our Rainbow Place**

The Cottage is the community recreation place for the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community at the rear garden of 18 Mitford St, St Kilda.

### **27. Wominjeka gathering place: Peanut Farm**

The reserve is a recorded Boon Wurrung willam (tool site) and a venue for the regular Wominjeka BBQ at Veg-Out as well as events such as Mabo Day, Sorry Day and NAIDOC.

### **28. Yalukit Willam Garden: St Kilda Botanic Gardens**

A garden and trail of flora of the Yalukit Willam landscape is at the southwest corner of the gardens (Herbert and Dickens Street).

### **29. Indigenous urban art site: St Kilda Town Hall**

The St Kilda Town Hall displays an Aboriginal Art collection as well as ongoing exhibitions at the Town Hall Gallery.

### **30. Yalukit Willam Camp: St Kilda Town Hall**

The Boon Wurrung were recorded camping by the wetland and creek on the triangular civic precinct which today includes St Kilda Town Hall, St Kilda Primary School, Bubup Nairn and Port Phillip Community Group.

### **31. Yalukit Willam Camp: Point Ormond Hill**

A lookout, camping and gathering place and the site of a shellfish midden uncovered in 1974 as well as bone awls. In 1840 Aboriginal women were collecting shellfish three times a week from Point Ormond.

### **32. Wetland willam: Elwood Canal**

The canal was a wetland up to 160 acres in size from Marine Parade to New Street which would have been a source of waterbirds, fish and plants for the Yalukit Willam. Elsternwick Park Lake is a remnant.

### **33. Dune Scrub willam: Point Ormond Reserve**

Important remaining Yalukit Willam landscape with 39 species such as she-oak, sea box, white Correa, boobialla and coast daisy-bush.

### **34. Woodland and Heath willam: Elwood Beach**

Historic landscape through which the Yalukit Willam travelled along the coastline, containing woodland and heath plants and wildlife.

### **35. Benbow and Derrimut historic markers: Head Street**

Panels commemorate two famous Boon Wurrung Arweets or clan leaders. These are the first of 15 Indigenous markers extending south from Elwood to Beaumaris beside Beach Road [www.bayside.vic.gov.au](http://www.bayside.vic.gov.au).

### **36. Ngargee (corroboree) place; Ripponlea Mansion**

In 1854 a Ngargee was witnessed at the site which later became Ripponlea mansion.





# HOBSONS BAY (NRM)







