



South Yarra Heritage Review

Volume 2: Aboriginal Cultural Values Assessment

Final Report

Prepared for City of Melbourne
August 2022



Acknowledgement of Country

We respect and acknowledge the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, their lands and waterways, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present. We are committed to truth-telling and to engaging with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to support the protection of their culture and heritage. We strongly advocate social and cultural justice and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Cultural warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this report may contain images or names of First Nations people who have passed away.

Report register

The following report register documents the development of this report, in accordance with GML's Quality Management System.

Job No.	Issue No.	Description	Issue Date
2607	1	Final Report	26 August 2022

Quality assurance

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality assurance policy and procedures.

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This is a redacted version of the full report. The full report has been reviewed and approved by Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

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Cover image

Remnant River Red Gum in the grounds of Old Fairlie, Anderson Street, South Yarra.
(Source: State Library Victoria, Accession No. H97.251/5)

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background to this volume.....	1
1.2	Key objectives.....	2
1.3	Terminology	3
1.3.1	General terminology.....	3
1.3.2	Botanical terminology.....	3
1.3.3	Glossary	3
1.4	Review area	5
1.5	Recognising Aboriginal heritage places.....	6
1.6	Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs).....	7
1.7	Methodology.....	9
1.8	Limitations.....	10
1.9	Authorship.....	10
1.10	Acknowledgements.....	10
1.11	Abbreviations and shortened forms	10
2	Existing Aboriginal cultural heritage places	12
2.1	Overview	12
2.2	Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.....	12
3	Understanding Aboriginal Cultural Values.....	17
3.1	Overview and approach	17
3.2	Identifying and assessing Aboriginal cultural values	17
3.3	Understanding Aboriginal cultural values	18
3.4	Sources for Aboriginal history and heritage.....	19
4	Consultation with Traditional Custodians	21
4.1	Overview and approach	21
4.2	Registered Aboriginal Parties	21
4.3	The consultation process	22
4.4	Outcomes of meetings	22
4.4.1	Boon Wurrung Land and Sea Council	22
4.4.2	Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.....	23

4.4.3	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	24
4.5	Applying Aboriginal historical themes and sub-themes	24
5	Identifying Aboriginal cultural values	27
5.1	Summary of Aboriginal cultural values	27
5.2	Discussion of Aboriginal cultural values	28
5.2.1	The importance and centrality of Country	28
5.2.2	Cultural practices	32
5.2.3	Governance and lore	38
5.2.4	Contemporary culture	40
5.2.5	Fighting for justice	40
5.2.6	Respecting Ancestors	41
5.2.7	Truth-telling	42
5.2.8	Resilience and survival	51
6	Recognising Aboriginal cultural heritage	55
6.1	Overview	55
7	Conclusions and recommendations	61
7.1	Outcomes	61
7.2	Recommended tasks	61
7.3	Additional recommendations	62
8	References	64
8.1	Primary sources	64
8.1.1	Archival sources	64
8.1.2	Maps and plans	64
8.1.3	Select newspapers and journals	64
8.1.4	Published sources: General	64
8.2	Secondary sources	66
8.2.1	Published sources	66
8.2.2	Unpublished reports	67
8.2.3	Digital resources	68

Volumes of the South Yarra Heritage Review

The findings of the Review are presented in four volumes:

- Volume 1—Methodology report

Volume 1 explains the methodology used to review and assess the heritage values of precincts and individual places. This Volume also presents the key findings and recommendations of the Review.

- Volume 2—Aboriginal Cultural Values (this volume)

Volume 2 summarises the outcomes of consultation with Traditional Custodian organisations and provides an assessment of the Aboriginal Cultural Values associated with the Review area. It provides an overview of Aboriginal heritage places in the area listed in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) and new information found during historical research and provided by Traditional Custodians during consultation. It provides a rationale in some cases for the potential nomination or change to the extent of Aboriginal heritage places in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR).

- Volume 3—South Yarra Thematic Environmental History

Volume 3 presents an illustrated thematic history of the South Yarra Review area, tracing its physical development and social history complementing the City of Melbourne Thematic Environmental History (Context, 2010). It develops each theme briefly and identifies examples of places for each theme. The thematic history adopts a shared values approach, recognising both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history and cultural values of the broader area and specific places within it.

- Volume 4—Citations

Volume 4 contains heritage assessments and recommendations for individual places and precincts. The material is in the form of citations suited to the recognition of a place in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Aboriginal heritage values have been identified for two places assessed in this Review.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to this volume

GML Heritage (formerly Context) was commissioned by the City of Melbourne in June 2020 to complete a heritage review of the South Yarra portion of the municipality that incorporates Aboriginal cultural values. This report is Volume 2 in the four-volume South Yarra Heritage Review.

The scope of the present volume is to understand and document the Aboriginal Cultural Values of the Review area through consultation with Traditional Custodians and through historical research.

In understanding the rich and layered history of the South Yarra area within the City of Melbourne, a Thematic Environmental History of the area has been developed that incorporates Aboriginal history and heritage (Vol. 3). Drawing on historical detail presented in the Thematic Environmental History, the present volume considers the Aboriginal cultural values of the South Yarra Review area and the assessment of places that have Aboriginal heritage values.

The report draws on documented historical and archaeological records in order to understand the Aboriginal cultural heritage of South Yarra. This volume is also informed by consultation with those Traditional Owner organisations that have a known interest in the area. Following the Registered Aboriginal Party determination of 1 July 2021, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) and Bunurong Aboriginal Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) have been consulted as representative Traditional Owner organisations for the area (see Section 4 of this report for more detail). Consultation with the Traditional Custodians of the Review area, and subsequently with the appointed Traditional Owners has assisted in understanding the Aboriginal cultural associations of the places identified.

This report finds that there are a number of places with Aboriginal associations in the South Yarra Review area. These places can be summarised as follows:

- Places listed on the VHR that have direct Aboriginal associations (12 places)
 - Government House and Grounds
 - Domain Parklands
 - Fawkner Park
 - Royal Botanic Gardens
 - Shrine of Remembrance
 - Melbourne Observatory
 - La Trobe's Cottage
 - Princes Bridge
 - Sidney Myer Music Bowl
 - Melbourne Grammar School

- St Kilda Road
- Alfred Hospital.
- New places being assessed for the HO in this review that have direct Aboriginal associations (2 places)
 - South Yarra Primary School
 - Fawkner Club Hotel.

In addition, there are a number of places that are found to have indirect Aboriginal associations. These include:

- Places listed on the VHR that have indirect Aboriginal associations:
 - Airlie
 - Robin Boyd House II.
- Places included on the HO that have indirect Aboriginal associations:
 - Poolman House
 - Melbourne Girls Grammar School (this place is also being re-assessed as part this Review).

This volume will remain an interim final report until all the relevant Traditional Owner organisations have reviewed and approved the report. The report has been reviewed and approved by BLCAC and has been reviewed by WWCHAC. Approval from WWCHAC will be sought after they have reviewed the final version (this report). The Traditional Custodian organisation BLSC has also been invited to review the report but has not taken up that offer to date.

1.2 Key objectives

The key objectives of the Aboriginal Cultural Values component of the South Yarra Heritage Review are as follows:

- Prepare an inclusive Thematic Environmental History of the South Yarra Review area within the City of Melbourne that incorporates Aboriginal cultural values (Volume 3)
- Identify Aboriginal themes and sub-themes that can be used to understand the significance of Aboriginal heritage places identified in the Review area. (Volume 2)
- Identify places of potential Aboriginal cultural heritage significance within the Review area through (a) previous studies; (b) documentary historical research; and (c) consultation with Traditional Custodians. (Volume 2)
- Report on places with Aboriginal cultural heritage significance by including this information in citations and Statements of Significance. (Volume 4)
- Provide recommendations for the protection of these heritage values, including the nomination of places to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR) and revising the extent for existing places on the VAHR. (Volume 2)

1.3 Terminology

1.3.1 General terminology

Historical terms or descriptions relating to Aboriginal people that are considered derogatory and not preferred usage have occasionally been used in quoted material in reference to Aboriginal people when such material contains important historical detail. These words should be read in the context of the historical period in which they were used.

Terms such as ‘settlement’ and ‘land-owners’, which are used in relation to non-Aboriginal people, are not used pejoratively but reflect the historical record.

The term ‘Traditional Custodians’ was used by the City of Melbourne to refer to those organisations that had a known interest in the area prior to there being Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) confirmed over the whole municipality. Since the RAP determination on 1 July 2021 the City of Melbourne uses the term ‘Traditional Owners’, as defined under the *Local Government Act* 2000, to refer to the members of RAPs in their respective areas. Note that in the context of RAPs, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* 2006 refers to ‘Traditional Owners’.

The term ‘South Yarra’ refers to the area of South Yarra that is within the City of Melbourne.

1.3.2 Botanical terminology

First references to vegetation will give the Bunurong and/or Woi-wurrung name, where known. The English name is given in roman type and the scientific name in Latin (italicised).

1.3.3 Glossary

Imperial measurements have been used in the context of historical discussion.

A number of Aboriginal words have been referred to in the text, which are listed below with their meanings (key references used are listed at the bottom of the table).

The East Kulin language groups that have a close association with the Review area are Woi-wurrung and Boonwurrung. Various spellings for each of these groups exist in the historical record and continue to be used today.

The following Aboriginal terminology has been adopted in this report. Note that some Aboriginal terminology has various formats owing to inconsistencies in the historical (documentary) records:

Arweet	Bunurong Elder (Boonwurrung).
Birrarung	Yarra River, meaning 'river of mists' (Woi-wurrung)
Boonwurrung	The language of the Bunurong, who are the Traditional Owners of part of the South Yarra area of the City of Melbourne and one of the five language groups of the Kulin (see map at Figure 1.2).
Bunurong	One of the five tribal groups of the Kulin nation. Also referred to as the 'coastal tribe' or the 'Westernport tribe'.
Dutigalla; Doutta Galla	A name used by John Batman (and other early settlers) in the mid-1830s to refer to the Melbourne area. The name was subsequently used by surveyor Robert Hoddle as a parish name (by 1840). The word is believed to derive from John Batman mistaking the name of an Aboriginal woman at Indented Head in 1835 for the name of the area (Barwick 1984: 122). (The language origin is possibly Wauthawurrung)
Gunaikurnai	Refers to the five tribes in Gippsland that together comprise the Gunai or Kurnai people, now referred to as the Gunaikurnai.
Kooyong koot	Refers to Gardiners Creek, a tributary of the Yarra that was named after squatter John Gardiner; the creek also gave its name to Gardiner's Creek Road (later Toorak Road).
Kulin	Refers to the confederacy of five tribal groups who share language and cultural connections. The word means 'people' in the Woi-wurrung and Boonwurrung languages. (The City of Melbourne occupies the Country of the East Kulin, which refers to Bunurong, Woi-wurrung and Taungurung)
Nakham	A term used to describe the Aboriginal Mission Reserve but with unknown origins (Hoddle via Langhorne).
Narm / Nerrm	Port Phillip Bay (in Woi-wurrung and Boonwurrung language respectively).
Nerre nerre Minum	South Melbourne area (area south of the Yarra / Birrarung)
ngargee	Traditional ceremony involving dance and song.
Ngurungaeta	Wurundjeri Elder (Woi-wurrung).
Prah-ra-ran, Pur-ur-ran (Prah-ran)	Almost surrounded by water (Langhorne 1889).
Taungurung	One of the five tribal groups of the Kulin Nation; also referred to by settlers as the 'Goulburn tribe'. Their territory is on the Goulburn River and the high country.
Turruk (Toorak)	East Kulin word for 'reedy grass, weed in lagoon' (Clark and Heydon 2002)
Tromgin	The large lagoon at the RBG; adapted to form the present-day lake.
Wadawurrung	One of the five tribal groups of the Kulin nation; also referred to by settlers as the 'Barrabool tribe'. Their territory is west of the Werribee River and includes Bacchus Marsh and Geelong.
Woi-wurrung	The language of the Wurundjeri who are the Traditional Owners of part of the South Yarra area of the City of Melbourne and one of the five language groups of the Kulin (see map at Figure 1.2).
Wurundjeri	One of the five tribal groups of the Kulin nation, the Wurundjeri were also referred to by settlers as the 'Yarra tribe'. Their territory is the country that is drained by the Yarra River and her tributaries.

References: Stephens 2014, Langhorne 1889, Blake 1977, Clark and Heydon 2002, Clark and Konstanski 2006

1.4 Review area

The area being considered for the South Yarra Heritage Review is shown below:

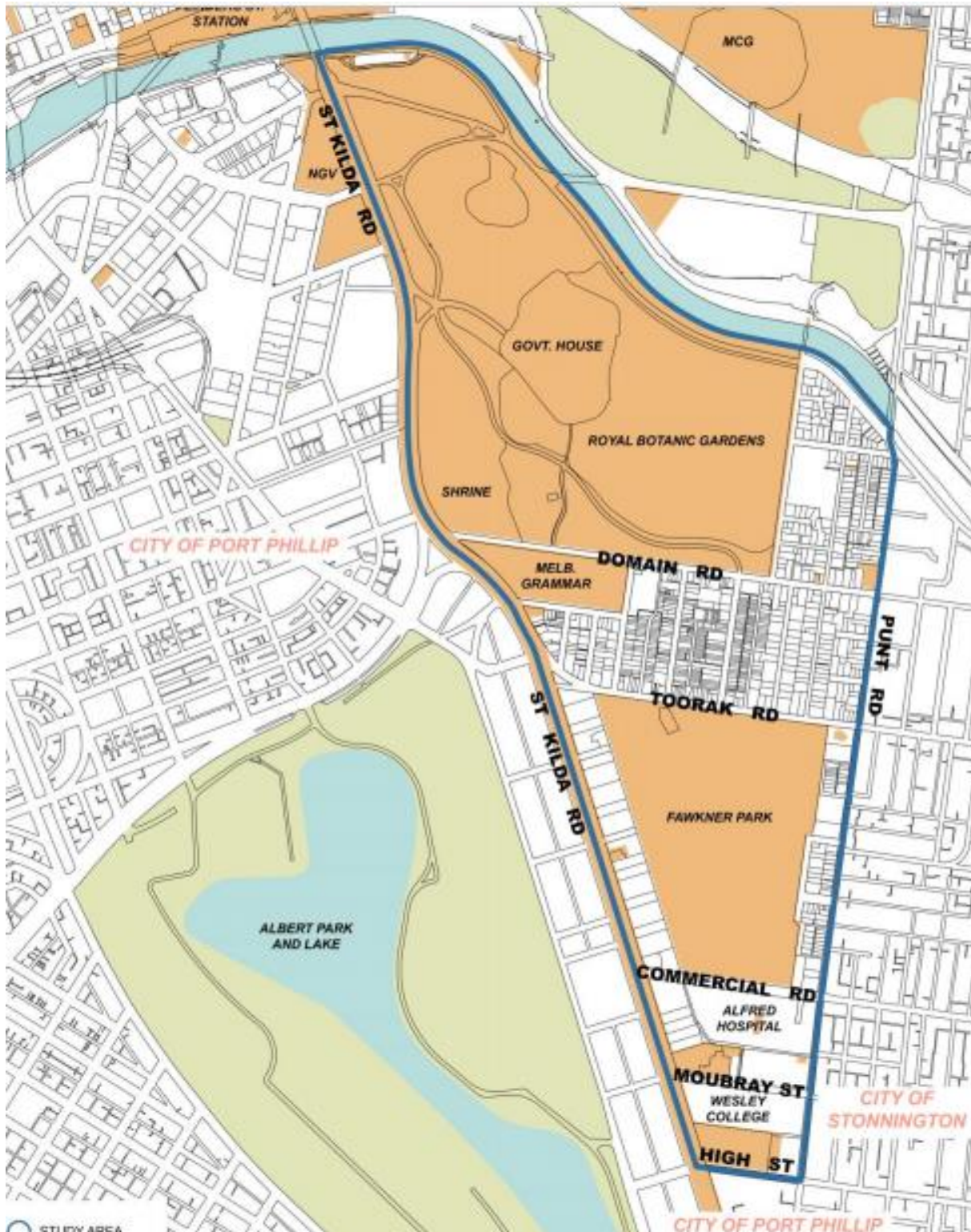


Figure 1.1 South Yarra within the City of Melbourne. (Source: City of Melbourne, 2020)

1.5 Recognising Aboriginal heritage places

Identifying the places associated with the Aboriginal history of South Yarra helps to provide greater recognition of the Aboriginal history of Melbourne — a history that extends back tens of thousands of years. Many places in the Review area with important connections to Aboriginal people have not physically survived, for example, the buildings at Langhorne's Mission (now the site of the Royal Botanic Gardens) and the former Industrial School on St Kilda Road (now the site of the Domain). A large amount of cultural knowledge about Aboriginal associations of the Review area has also been lost. There were many places within the area, however, that continued to be used by Aboriginal people after the arrival of British settlers at Port Phillip in the mid-1830s. Aboriginal knowledge about these places, and their cultural meanings and associations for Aboriginal people, remains an important part of the area's intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage. The findings of this report represent only a small fraction of a fuller story.

In terms of the heritage assessment for this project, the scope of the South Yarra Heritage Review (SYHR) excludes the Crown land reserves that are largely public parks and gardens. This includes a number of Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) places, including the Domain, the Shrine of Remembrance, Government House and Grounds, Fawkner Park and the Royal Botanic Gardens. While VHR places are not the direct focus of the present Review, it is nonetheless important to consider these places in understanding the Aboriginal history and ongoing Aboriginal cultural associations of the area, and in considering whether the Aboriginal cultural values associated with these State-listed heritage places are adequately recognised.

It is not possible to consider individual sites in isolation without considering their place within the wider landscape context — in this case the landscape of the lower Birrarung (Yarra River), which is a particularly important area of country to both Wurundjeri and Bunurong people for its deep and long-held associations and connections and also, more broadly, as a Kulin meeting place. For Aboriginal people, places and landscapes have complex, inter-connected meanings that require multi-dimensional cultural mapping that consider people, stories, movement, animals, birds and plants within a broader context of changing seasons, the wider cosmos, and the temporal and spirit worlds. The ways in which Aboriginal people read the country were not well understood by the settler population and were mapped very differently to the cadastral plans of government surveyors. They are still not well known by Melburnians today.

Aboriginal heritage places are vastly under-represented in local and State heritage listings in Victoria. Registered Aboriginal heritage places are protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* 2006. These places are listed on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR). The *Heritage Act* 2018, on the other hand, protects State-listed heritage places (on the VHR) for which Aboriginal heritage is not the primary form of heritage significance. The citations of places on the VHR can be reviewed for their Aboriginal heritage values, taking what is sometimes referred to as a 'shared values' approach. Many heritage places in the South Yarra area of the City of Melbourne that are listed on the VHR also have Aboriginal heritage values, but these values are generally inadequately represented in the VHR place citations or not mentioned at all. The VHR places in the South Yarra Review area that are deficient in this respect are discussed in Section 6.0.

In terms of local government protection for heritage the Victorian Government Guidelines in Applying the Heritage Overlay (PPN01, DELWP 2018) states that an Aboriginal heritage place can be recognised in

the schedule to the Heritage Overlay as an 'Aboriginal place'. For the purposes of this Review, it is recommended that where places are recommended for the HO, that the column for 'Aboriginal place' should be marked as 'Yes' in cases where there is a direct association with that place.

1.6 Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)

There had been no RAPs appointed for the Review area at the outset of the project in 2020. It was considered appropriate, therefore, to consult with the three Traditional Owner organisations that had a known interest in the area, including BLCAC, BLSC and WWCHAC.

Following a resolution by the VAHC on the appointment of RAPs within the City of Melbourne on 1 July 2021, WWCHAC and BLCAC are now recognised Traditional Owner representative organisations for their areas (see Figure 1.2), where the term 'Traditional Owner' is defined in terms of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Notwithstanding that each of these RAPs now have authority over certain areas, ongoing consultation for this project was not restricted to the RAP of particular areas of South Yarra but has been extended to other Traditional Owners that have a known interest in the area — that is, on land and waters for which they may not be the RAP but which they have a known interest. This means that for the Wurundjeri RAP area, that BLC and BLSC have also been consulted, and for the BLCAC RAP area, WWC and BLSC have also been consulted. Although BLSC has a known interest in the area, it was not possible to schedule an on-site visit with BLSC for this project.

A draft report was provided to the RAPs for their feedback and approval, and the offer to review the draft report was extended to BLSC for their information and to check accuracy of any comments attributed to it. Report findings must be read in light of the RAP decisions, and the implementation of any recommendations must take account of the RAP status for each area.

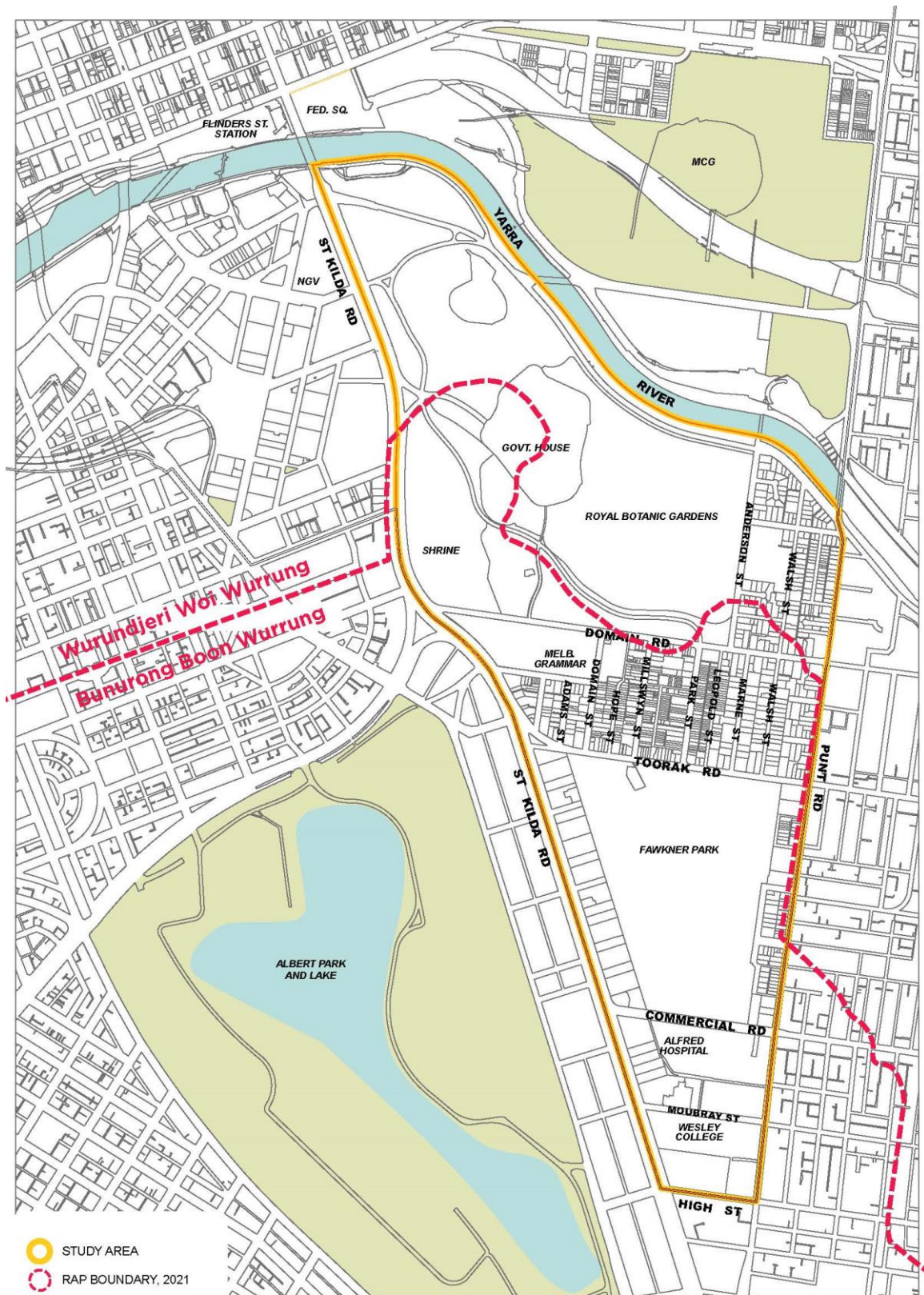


Figure 1.2 Map of RAP boundaries in the South Yarra Review area, following the RAP boundary decision in July 2021. (Source: VAHC, 2021 with City of Melbourne overlay)

1.7 Methodology

As part of the South Yarra Heritage Review the following tasks relating to Aboriginal cultural heritage and Aboriginal cultural values have been undertaken:

- An assessment of Aboriginal cultural values for the South Yarra Review area as a whole. (Note that the identification of Aboriginal cultural values is much broader than Aboriginal cultural significance, as discussed in Section 5.0)
- The recognition of Aboriginal cultural significance for places (individual places and precincts) that are being assessed for heritage significance as part of the present Review.
- The identification of other places in the Review area (including VHR and HO places) that have Aboriginal heritage values.

The following approach has been followed for this component of the Review:

- Consider the findings of the Thematic Environmental History for the South Yarra Review area, which incorporates both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history (Vol. 2 of this Review)
- Undertake a search of ACHRIS (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System) for the Review area, identifying VAHR places and Aboriginal Historical Places; also reviewing existing relevant archaeological reports
- Identify the relevant Aboriginal themes and sub-themes within the Review area. The themes adopted here will follow those used in the 'Hoddle Grid Heritage Review' (2019), which were drawn from Context, 'Acknowledging Places with Shared Heritage Values' (2015)
- Drawing on detailed historical research, identify places within the Review area that have associations with Aboriginal history and heritage and / or are likely to have potential cultural significance to Aboriginal people. This research draws on a range of sources, including primary and secondary historical resources; historical maps, plans and images, and other reports and information sourced from local groups and selected stakeholders
- Collaborate with Traditional Owners about the Aboriginal history of the area, the Aboriginal cultural values associated with the area, places with cultural associations, and the methodology proposed for how these values should be recognised, recorded and reported on
- Incorporate the Aboriginal cultural associations of places being assessed within the Review area, including those places that may have already been identified through documentary research — for example, previous heritage reports, ACHRIS, and primary source material
- Report on places that emerge from Traditional Owner consultation as having Aboriginal cultural values, including places that are already listed on the HO or the VHR, noting the Aboriginal history and cultural significance of these places
- Consider how best to recognise and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Review area, including the nomination of any Aboriginal heritage places to the VAHR. Note any relevant corrections to the information provided on the VAHR.

1.8 Limitations

COVID-19

Victorian Government public health requirements associated with the COVID-19 pandemic restricted access to archival resources and some libraries between July and October 2021. As a result, historical research was largely restricted to online resources and what could be sourced through local libraries.

1.9 Authorship

This report was written by Dr Helen Doyle, with assistance from Leah Tepper, Chairim Byun and Rosalie Mickan.

1.10 Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of the following organisations and individuals:

- The City of Melbourne project team: Jackie Donkin, Molly Wilson, Ros Rhymer and Tanya Wolkenberg
- Aboriginal Melbourne: Kate Bocker and Rebecca Morphy
- Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council – Boonwurrung Elders and Ruth Krawat
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation – Bunurong Elders and Dr David Tutchener
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation – Wurundjeri Elders, Dr Justine Philip and Klara Hansen.

1.11 Abbreviations and shortened forms

The following abbreviations and shortened forms are used in this report.

ACHRIS	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System
ARP	Air Raid Precautions
BLCAC	Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
BLSC	Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council
BPA	Board for the Protection of Aborigines
CBD	Central Business District
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation
FPSR	First Peoples — State Relations (formerly Aboriginal Victoria)
DELWP	Department of the Environment, Land, Water and Planning
HO	Heritage Overlay
LDAD	Low Density Artefact Distribution
MMBW	Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works
n.d.	no date
NLA	National Library of Australia
PROV	Public Record Office of Victoria
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
RBG	Royal Botanic Gardens
RHSV	Royal Historical Society of Victoria
RVIB	Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind
SHC	Stonnington History Centre
SLV	State Library Victoria
SYHR	South Yarra Heritage Review (this report)
VAHC	Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council
VAHR	Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register
VGG	Victorian Government Gazette
VHI	Victorian Heritage Inventory
VHR	Victorian Heritage Register
VPP	Victorian Parliamentary Papers
VPRS	Victorian Public Record Series
WWCHAC	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

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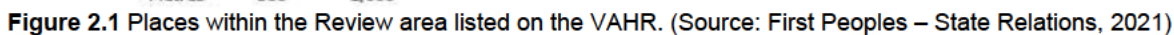
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3 Understanding Aboriginal Cultural Values

3.1 Overview and approach

It is important for Aboriginal cultural values to be recognised and considered as part of the broader and ongoing heritage assessment of places and precincts. There has not previously been a dedicated assessment of the Aboriginal cultural values associated with the South Yarra area of the City of Melbourne.

Recognising the Aboriginal cultural values that are associated with identified heritage places honours broader principles that underpin Aboriginal heritage management, namely: the recognition of Indigenous rights, self-determination, reconciliation and truth-telling. This concurs with the proposal for a 'Declaration of Recognition', as part of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which would articulate 'Australia's shared history, heritage and aspirations' (2018).

There are currently no established guidelines for assessing Aboriginal cultural values in Victoria. Likewise, there is also currently no standard accepted method of addressing and incorporating Aboriginal heritage values into the broader management of heritage places at local government level in Victoria. The broad recognition of Aboriginal heritage values, however, is enshrined in key supporting heritage guidelines, notably the Burra Charter (2013) and The Burra Charter and Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management Practice Note (2013). The Schedule to the Heritage Overlay on the Melbourne Planning Scheme also allows for the recognition of places that have Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The vast majority of places currently on the HO in the South Yarra area of the City of Melbourne have not been considered in terms of their Aboriginal cultural values or Aboriginal heritage significance. Those places that have been found to have Aboriginal cultural values and Aboriginal cultural heritage implications are more likely to be Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) places, which this review is not directly addressing.

Broad outcomes of the identified Aboriginal cultural values for places in the Review area are noted in this volume of the SYHR. They are also integrated into Volume 3 (Thematic Environmental History) and Volume 4 (Citations) of this report.

3.2 Identifying and assessing Aboriginal cultural values

Aboriginal cultural values can be attributed to recognised Aboriginal heritage places as well as to other unrecorded places and areas. Some places that are considered to have Aboriginal cultural values are listed on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register, but most are not.

The accompanying Thematic Environmental History (Volume 3), which addresses the Aboriginal history of the area, both before and after British colonisation, is an important document in understanding Aboriginal cultural values in the Review area. This provides a context for the Aboriginal history of the area, set against the story of broader development and change.

Drawing on discussions with the Traditional Owner organisations that took place during consultation in 2020–21 and underpinned by the detailed history of the Review area within the context of the wider Melbourne area, a summary of the Aboriginal cultural values has been prepared.

In the absence of established guidelines in Victoria for the preparation of Aboriginal Cultural Values assessments, a set of guiding principles has been developed for this component of the South Yarra Heritage Review. In the case of a complex and highly developed urban landscape like South Yarra the following points are important to note:

- To recognise that Aboriginal cultural values relate to all connections and associations with the land and water, from Deep Time to the present, and that this is not restricted to archaeological or potential archaeological sites.
- To recognise intangible heritage, such as stories, memories, cultural traditions, knowledge and language associated with a place.
- To recognise that cultural values can be attached to commemorative sites of the past and places that were the location of an historical event, such as *ngargee*, which may be identified through documented records or oral knowledge.
- To understand that the legacy of settler colonialism caused a significant disruption to Aboriginal culture in the area, through social, political and economic subjugation, dispossession and desecration, and disconnection, Stolen Generations, and the return and repatriation of cultural material.

The process of preparing an assessment of Aboriginal cultural values included the steps below:

- Identifying the Traditional Owner organisations with a known interest in the area. (This project commenced prior to the 1 July 2021 RAP boundary decision by the VAHC)
- Providing the Traditional Owner organisations with background archaeological and historical material to inform their understanding of the settlement history of the area
- Listening closely to the matters raised by Elders during consultation meetings
- Providing the Traditional Owners with a summary of the consultation meetings to confirm that what was documented was a reasonable representation of what was discussed
- Following up any questions raised by Elders relating to the history of the area, where possible.
- Providing a copy of the draft report to each Traditional Owner organisation
- Reviewing feedback on the draft report from each Traditional Owner organisation; and
- Seeking endorsement of the report from the Traditional Owner organisations.

3.3 Understanding Aboriginal cultural values

On the land that now comprises the South Yarra area of the City of Melbourne, people have walked for thousands of years. Culture was practised. The places in the landscape had names and meanings. The land was interwoven with spiritual life. Language was passed down the generations. People were laid to rest on this Country. The Bunurong and Wurundjeri people are the custodians of that heritage today. From the 1840s onwards, the Review area became a place of significant wealth and power, in terms of colonial governance, military and policing, and pastoralism. The impact of colonialism on Aboriginal people in Melbourne was profound. Historically, the legacy of colonialism left a desecrated and

damaged landscape and a culture disrupted and sometimes displaced. This report seeks to recognise the impacts on and the shaping of Aboriginal cultural values within that context.

Aboriginal cultural values can co-exist with other recognised heritage values and significance, such as natural values, archaeological significance, historical heritage significance and social significance. This is a typical situation in a built-up urban area such as the South Yarra Review area. Places that are found to have both Aboriginal heritage significance and historic heritage significance may be said to have 'shared heritage values'. Shared values, in such instances, relates to a place being valued by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; it does not necessarily follow, however, that the same value is held by both parties. Places within the Review area, such as the Royal Botanic Gardens or Fawkner Park, could be determined to have shared heritage values for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal cultural values might include or relate to any of the following:

- Tangible elements associated with a place (e.g. place, built forms, trees, and landforms)
- Cultural associations, stories, and memories concerning Aboriginal people
- Natural elements, including land, water and sky; and all living things, e.g. plants, birds, animals and fish
- Language, music and song
- Cultural practices and traditions
- Traditional knowledge
- Contemporary cultural practices
- New knowledge about Aboriginal history from archaeological and historical records

3.4 Sources for Aboriginal history and heritage

As background material to the Cultural Values report, a range of historical sources and previous heritage reports have been drawn on that address Aboriginal heritage places in the Review area, including:

- Cannon, Michael (ed.) 1982. *Historical Records of Victoria, vol. 2A: The Aborigines of Port Phillip 1835–1839*. Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office.
- Cannon, Michael (ed.) 1983. *Historical Records of Victoria, vol. 2B: Aborigines and Protectors 1838–1839*. Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office.
- Clark, Ian D. and Kostanski, Laura 2006, 'An Indigenous History of Stonnington'. Prepared for the City of Stonnington.
- Context 2015, 'Acknowledging Shared Heritage Values'. Prepared for the Heritage Council of Victoria and the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council.
- Presland, Gary 1983. 'Archaeological report for Metropolitan Melbourne'. Victorian Archaeological Survey.
- Presland, Gary 2001. *Aboriginal Melbourne*. Ringwood: Penguin.

- Eidelson, Meyer 1997. *The Melbourne Dreaming: A guide to exploring important places of the past and present*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Stephens, Margherita (ed.) 2014. *The Journal of William Thomas*, 4 volumes, Fitzroy: VACL.

4 Consultation with Traditional Custodians

4.1 Overview and approach

The Aboriginal cultural values associated with the South Yarra Review area were assessed initially through consultation with three Traditional Custodian organisations with a known interest in the area: Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC), Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC), and Boon Wurrung Foundation (now Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council). It was not possible, however, to schedule an onsite visit with Boon Wurrung Foundation.

The first objective of the Traditional Custodian consultation process was to understand and identify tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural values associated with the Review area. The second objective was to incorporate these values in the citations and Thematic Environmental History.

As of 1 July 2021, for consultation and decision-making regarding the South Yarra area, either BLCAC or WWCHAC must be consulted in line with their legislative responsibilities under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act*, and the City of Melbourne's responsibilities under the *Local Government Act* contingent on which RAP area (either BLCAC or WWCHAC) the subject place falls into.

In terms of the standard consultation requirements stipulated under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, these were not specifically addressed because these are directed towards development activities, and the South Yarra Heritage Review does not propose any development or ground-breaking activities. The requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* for consultation and other statutory requirements for future development activities remain, however, should such future development activity be planned in South Yarra.

4.2 Registered Aboriginal Parties

The status of Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) is awarded by the Victorian Heritage Aboriginal Council. The RAP is acknowledged as the primary guardian, keeper and knowledge-holder of Aboriginal cultural heritage in a designated area. From the commencement of discussions with Traditional Custodians for this project in August 2020 and until 31 June 2021 there was no Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the City of Melbourne, including for the area of South Yarra. Traditional Owners with a known interest in the area were identified as the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC), Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC), and Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council (BLSC).

The VAHC made a formal ruling for an updated RAP boundary for the Melbourne area, which was made public in June 2021 and then formalised on 1 July 2021. As of this date, BLCAC and WWCHAC were formally recognised by the State of Victoria as Traditional Owners — each being responsible for a designated area within the South Yarra Review area. As consultation for this project began in early 2021, prior to the RAP boundary decision, all three Traditional Custodian organisations with a known interest in the Review area were consulted with for this project prior to 1 July 2021.

Following the RAP decision in July 2001, the two RAPs have been consulted as the representative Traditional Owner organisations. BLSC has been offered a copy of the draft report for information and to confirm the accuracy of comments attributed to it. To date, BLSC has not provided any feedback regarding this report.

4.3 The consultation process

Consultation with Traditional Custodians was carried out in two phases. The first phase involved initial consultation about the Aboriginal cultural values of the Review area with the three Traditional Custodian organisations that were recognised as having an interest in the area. These initial consultations took place in early 2021 and were conducted in an online video-conferencing format due to Victorian Government public health restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the initial consultation, onsite meetings were held in May and June 2021. Onsite meetings involved a sit-down discussion for each organisation followed by a vehicle and pedestrian visit to select locations throughout the South Yarra Review area. Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council were contacted to participate in onsite meetings, however scheduling a meeting was not possible. A record of these onsite meetings was sent to each Traditional Owner organisation for approval.

The dates of the initial meetings and site visits with the three Traditional Custodian organisations are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Schedule for consultation with Traditional Custodian organisations for the South Yarra Heritage Review

Traditional Owner organisation	Initial meeting	Site visit
BLSC	7 June 2021	unable to schedule
BLCAC	22 April 2021	10 May 2021
WWCHAC	27 May 2021	24 June 2021

Discussions from the consultation meetings have been used to shape the discussion in this report (see Section 5). Direct quotes have been used to indicate direct quote from the Elders.

A copy of the draft Aboriginal cultural values report has been provided to each Traditional Owner organisation (BLCAC and WWCHAC) for their approval before being finalised for incorporation into the South Yarra Heritage Review.

4.4 Outcomes of meetings

At each of the initial meetings with the three Traditional Owner organisations, an overview of the South Yarra Heritage Review was provided, along with how the Aboriginal cultural values assessment would inform the broader project and, in turn, any implications for the assessment / registration of Aboriginal cultural heritage. A summary of the history of the Review area was also presented through a framework of draft historical themes for South Yarra, with an emphasis on its Aboriginal history. Historical maps, photographs and plans of the area along with the timeline were also tabled at these meetings. In addition, there was a preliminary discussion about what broadly constituted Aboriginal cultural values and what the assessment might consider in the context of South Yarra.

4.4.1 Boon Wurrung Land and Sea Council

GML held an initial meeting with Boon Wurrung Land and Sea Council (formerly Boon Wurrung Foundation) on 7 June 2021 which was also attended by representatives of the City of Melbourne. Following an overview of the project, and the area's archaeology and history, there was discussion regarding expectations of the project. Boon Wurrung Elders highlighted a number of issues of concern to

them in the initial meeting. It was not possible to schedule an onsite meeting with Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council.

4.4.2 Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

GML held an initial online meeting with Bunurong Land Council on 10 May 2021. Following an overview of the project, the Review area, the archaeology and history, this meeting included discussion about expectations.

A site visit was held on 10 May 2021, which was attended by Bunurong Elders, representatives from the City of Melbourne and GML team members. The central base for the consultation was the community centre in Fawkner Park. Bunurong Elders highlighted several issues of concern at the outset of this onsite meeting, including the need for truth-telling and the concern that the input from Elders may not result in any tangible output with the project. One Elder asked, ‘When everything is approved, is that the end of consultation?’. This was followed by discussion about the possible outcomes of the Review for Traditional Owners, and the potential for an ongoing role of the Traditional Owners in recognising and protecting cultural heritage in the Review area. Bunurong representatives were in favour of the Aboriginal places associated with Aboriginal history in the area to be properly documented and nominated to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.

As part on the site visit, the following places in the South Yarra Review area were visited, or noted in passing

- Fawkner Park – site of living area and corroboree ground
- South Yarra State School – a former camping area
- Fawkner Club Hotel, Toorak Road West
- Fairlie Hill, Anderson Street – view from high ground
- Royal Botanic Gardens – site of former Langhorne Mission (the precise area cannot be determined)
- Separation Tree, Royal Botanic Gardens
- Ornamental Lake, Royal Botanic Gardens - formerly Tromgin (lagoon)
- Royal Botanic Gardens - River Red Gum near Ornamental Lake with large, well-developed burls
- Domain Reburial of Ancestors (1985) – this site was noted in passing
- Gates of Government House – site of a former Bunurong *ngargee* (corroboree) ground – this site was noted in passing.

Places that were not visited on account of time constraints included the lower area of the Botanic Gardens ornamental lake and the Shrine of Remembrance. The bus drove to the entrance gates of Government House and past the Domain Reburial site and these places were noted.

4.4.3 Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

An initial meeting was held with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung on 27 May 2021. Following an overview of the project, the Review area, the archaeology and history, there was discussion about the expectations of the project.

A site visit was held on 24 June 2021, which was attended by Elders and representatives of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, representatives from the City of Melbourne, and GML team members. The meeting place for this consultation was the former Mission Hall in Millswyn Street. This meeting involved discussion of the history and the draft themes, and visits to some key places within the Review area. It was not possible to visit the various places in a minibus due to COVID-19 restrictions so separate vehicles were used. The following places were visited, or noted in passing:

- Fawkner Park – the site of a living area and corroboree ground
- South Yarra State School – site of a former meeting place and historic tree (not extant)
- Fawkner Club Hotel, Toorak Road West
- Fairlie Hill, Anderson Street
- Royal Botanic Gardens, including the Separation Tree
- Royal Botanic Gardens Lake (formerly Tromgin lagoon)
- General area of the Royal Botanic Gardens that was the former Langhorne Mission
- Plaque commemorating Langhorne's Mission and burials, Royal Botanic Gardens
- Shrine of Remembrance and view of Wurundjeri-willam Elder William Barak on the Grocon building (GML team members were not present for this visit – this visit was communicated to the GML project team by Helen Officer, WWCHAC, on 24 June 2021).

4.5 Applying Aboriginal historical themes and sub-themes

The framework of Aboriginal historical themes and sub-themes that has been drawn on in this report and used to provide historical context for places of Aboriginal heritage significance, was developed for a previous project, 'Acknowledging Shared Values' (Context, 2015), that was prepared for a Joint Committee of the Victorian Heritage Council of Victoria and the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council. As part of the 'Acknowledging Shared Values' report, a set of State-wide themes was developed that can be applied to the City of Melbourne. The 'Shared Values' thematic framework was also used in the 'Hoddle Grid Heritage Review' (Context, 2019). Aboriginal heritage places identified in this report align with one or more of these themes and sub-themes.

Table 4.2 Aboriginal historical themes relevant to the South Yarra Heritage Review. This framework has been taken from 'Acknowledging Places with Shared Values', prepared for the Heritage Council of Victoria and the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (Context, 2015).

Aboriginal historical theme	Historical sub-themes
1. Living on Country	1.1 Creating the land and its people 1.2 Ceremonies and celebration 1.3 Dwelling places and managing and harvesting resources 1.4 Changing landscapes
2. Making contact with newcomers	2.1 Encounters and negotiating access to Country 2.2 Kidnappings, disease and violence 2.3 Exchange
3. Defending Country	3.1 Conflict 3.2 Frontier warfare 3.3 Military service
4. Segregation, incarceration and institutionalisation	4.1 Loss of land and livelihood 4.2 Becoming British subjects and Australian citizens 4.3 Punishment and incarceration 4.4 Being forcibly moved to missions, reserves and protectorate stations 4.5 Forced removal of children
5. Collecting and exhibiting Aboriginal cultural material, and its repatriation	5.1 Collecting Aboriginal cultural material 5.2 Being put on public display 5.3 Being represented in museum exhibits and cultural collections 5.4 Repatriation of cultural material and Ancestral remains 5.5 Appropriation of art/music/ artefacts by non-Aboriginal people 5.6 Developing and managing collections of Aboriginal cultural material
6. New types of work	6.1 Working as labourers 6.2 Working as police 6.3 Exploring 6.4 Domestic service (private homes and hotels) 6.5 Forced labour 6.6 Tour guiding/ interpreting cultural heritage places 6.7 Playing professional sport 6.8 The Arts 6.9 Health Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whaling and sealing camps • Pastoral stations, outstations and homesteads
7. Expressing cultural and spiritual life	7.1 Respecting and acknowledging spiritual places and maintaining ceremonial practices 7.2 Adopting and adapting Christianity 7.3 Commemorating the past 7.4 Honouring significant people 7.5 Performing (music, dance, song, film) 7.6 Producing art and crafts 7.7 Engaging the tourist (e.g. art sales and boomerang throwing) 7.8 Educating

Aboriginal historical theme	Historical sub-themes
8. Taking political action and overcoming disadvantage	8.1 Fighting for land 8.2 Campaigning to keep communities together and for civil rights 8.3 Achieving positive political and legal changes, including self-determination (e.g. land rights, native title, land management, control over Aboriginal organisations and policies) 8.4 Fighting racism 8.5 Establishing health and welfare organisations, and legal services 8.6 Education 8.7 Creating political organisations
9. Remembering and rediscovering the past	9.1 Repatriation grounds 9.2 Erecting monuments and memorials 9.3 Remembering and re-enacting historic events 9.4 Protesting against past wrongs 9.5 Recognition of Aboriginal people as Traditional Owners and First Peoples

5 Identifying Aboriginal cultural values

5.1 Summary of Aboriginal cultural values

A set of eight draft cultural values has been identified that relate to the South Yarra Review area. This has been developed through consultation meetings with Traditional Custodians and draws on historical and contemporary records of Aboriginal cultural associations in the area. These values are summarised below.

Table 5.1 Summary of Aboriginal cultural values for the South Yarra Heritage Review

Aboriginal cultural values	Particular areas
The importance and centrality of Country	This addresses the central significance and profound importance of Country to Aboriginal people: of land, water and sky. All of the Review area. Places of interest include the large areas of Crown land reserves and places known to have been important, such as the area between Anderson Street and Punt Road.
Practising traditional culture	There is a rich documented history and oral history of the practice of Aboriginal culture in the Review area. This relates to both the historical and contemporary periods. All of the Review area, especially in the areas known to have been occupied in the period 1830–1860s.
Governance and lore	This area of Melbourne, the country of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri, was a traditional meeting place for a number of other Aboriginal groups of the East Kulin. Especially the south bank of the Yarra River. The significance of Government House Reserve as a Bunurong meeting place and <i>ngargee</i> ground.
Contemporary culture	Aboriginal people asserted their political rights more strongly from around the mid-twentieth century. There have been many public demonstrations of contemporary Aboriginal culture in the Review area. This is ongoing. Especially in the Domain, the Botanic Gardens and on the Yarra bank.
Fighting for justice	Aboriginal people in the Melbourne area have advanced their rights and interests since their Country was first invaded by settlers in the mid-1830s. Places of protest such as the Domain, Alexandra Gardens and St Kilda Road.
Respecting Ancestors	Recognising the Ancestors of Bunurong and Wurundjeri people of the South Yarra area and their ongoing importance to Aboriginal people today. Birrarung (Yarra River) and river bank, the Botanic Gardens, the Domain, Fawkner Park, and the Shrine of Remembrance
Truth-telling	Redressing the past by acknowledging the injustices that Aboriginal people have been subject to is an important step towards reconciliation. All of the Review area, especially the Royal Botanic Gardens, Fawkner Park, the Domain, Government House Reserve and the Shrine of Remembrance

Resilience and survival	Recognising the strong political and cultural presence of Bunurong and Wurundjeri people today.	The Yarra Bank and other known living places, including the Domain and Fawcner Park.
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5.2 Discussion of Aboriginal cultural values

5.2.1 The importance and centrality of Country

The Aboriginal people of Melbourne have occupied the land since time immemorial. To them the formation of the land and waters and the life it sustains are intimately connected. This involves local knowledge, obligations of care and reciprocity toward the environment that are guided by a deep spiritual connection to the land and waters and to the sky and cosmos. They have established relationships with the animals and birds that are sacred and serve as totems. For Aboriginal people it is important *‘[not to] forget about who is connected to place. There is a record, our grandchildren will read about it. We’re connected to place.’* (Bunurong Elder, 2021)

During the pre-colonial period, people lived in small bands in the Melbourne / South Yarra area, moving to seasonal camps as necessary, and coming together with other groups at certain times and for purposes such as trade, marriage ceremonies and general meetings. Resources from the land, the river, the wetlands and lagoons were a key source of food and provided most of their needs, but other resources were obtained through trade arrangements with other groups. Many plants and animals had other special uses. The area was the habitat of many marsupials, including possums, kangaroos, wallabies, and native cats (quolls), as well as invertebrates. The now rare water rat was also common in the Yarra River and nearby lagoons and still can be seen in the Royal Botanic Gardens. The skins, bones and fibres from animals had a wide range of uses. Foods such as fish, including blackfish and eels, and freshwater shellfish, including freshwater crayfish (yabbies) and mussels, were regularly consumed. There was a wide range of birdlife in the area, including ducks and swans. Birds and birds’ eggs were sourced from the river flats, lagoons and wetlands. Some of the plant species characteristic of the area included a range of eucalypts such as River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*); wattles (*Acacia* sp.), including Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) and Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*); as well as tea tree, heath plants and river reeds. Trees and other plants provided both nourishment and medicine, and were also used for practical purposes, for example in making shelters, canoes, and a range of tools and weapons. *‘The burls would be cut off, following the grain, to make bowls, water holders and vessels for carrying babies. The fallen branches around the base of the tree are good for insects and reptiles and help new growth.’* (Wurundjeri Elder, 2021) While there are no surviving scar trees in the Review area, it is likely that a number of such trees survived in the nineteenth century (a painting of one such tree is shown in Figure 5.15). The ‘Separation Tree’ is a River Red Gum located in the Botanic Gardens and remains an important place for Aboriginal people as a tangible connection to culture.

The landforms of the Review area recall not only the pre-settlement landscape but a much more ancient past, when sea levels were higher and the coastal edge approximated the course of St Kilda Road. The rise of higher ground on the eastern side of St Kilda Road stands in contrast to the low-lying western side of the road which was formerly inundated by the sea and remains flood-prone today. Within the Review area a key area of significance is the site now occupied by the Royal Botanic Gardens and the area of residential development immediately east of Anderson Street (relating to the former Anderson

and Ogilvie estates), which occupied rising ground on the south bank of the river. This was set aside in 1837 for the purpose of an Aboriginal mission because it was a place that was favoured by Aboriginal people for its siting on the river, its views over the landscape, and its use for *ngargee* (Clark and Konstanski 2006; Christie 1979: 83). A large part of this area that remains Crown land is largely undeveloped, and apart from modifications to the course of the river and the conversion of Tromgin to a lake, it retains the contours and high points of the land (for example, Fairlie Hill) that contributed to the importance of this place for Aboriginal people. Other areas of high ground were the Government House Reserve and the site of the Shrine of Remembrance. For Aboriginal people, *'Landscape is important. At the Shrine of Remembrance, the land is steep and high, Aboriginal people looked for high land.'* (Wurundjeri Elder, 2021)

With the intrusion and disruption and dispossession of land, water and resources as a result of colonisation, local resources were rapidly compromised, diminished and denied to Aboriginal people. The resources that they relied on, including clean water, timber, and a range of plants and animals, were now in great demand by British settlers and hence supply was reduced. Patterns of living, moving, hunting and gathering were disrupted because certain areas of Country were no longer accessible to Aboriginal people, or were no longer resource-rich on account of being depleted by livestock, cropping or poor management. The destruction of the local ecology was central to Aboriginal dispossession. Native species were killed and removed, and then replaced with introduced crops, cattle and sheep. The destruction of native grasslands by sheep and cattle was a cause of many early tensions and conflicts between Aboriginal people and settlers.

Within a short time after the arrival of permanent British settlers in the mid-1830s, Aboriginal lands and waters were desecrated and polluted. Aboriginal identity, spiritual life and wellbeing is deeply tied to Country, so this created a stressful and catastrophic situation. Aboriginal people were forced to adapt to new ways of life. Introduced diseases took a catastrophic toll, with poor nutrition and exposure to alcohol impacting negatively on Aboriginal health and survival. Another critical and related impact of settlement was the limited opportunity for cultural expression, as this was strongly discouraged by the authorities. The manifold difficulties that Aboriginal people were confronted with, as well as a prohibition on many forms of cultural expression, affected people's physical, mental and emotional health, and affected women's reproductive life.

The marginalisation of Aboriginal people was rapid over the first twenty-five years of the British occupation of Melbourne. Access to the central city was restricted, while outside of the urban area traditional hunting grounds were rapidly assigned to pastoral and agricultural production. Some Aboriginal people adapted to these changes by moving away from central Melbourne to find work in return for food and basic provisions. Others continued to return to the South Yarra area at least until the 1860s to hold dance ceremonies (*ngargee*). As early as 1862, laws were imposed on the British community to restrict hunting and preserve remaining populations of native bird species in the Melbourne area, including the Brolga (which is now listed as endangered in Victoria). The large areas of Crown land in South Yarra, including Fawkner Park and the Domain, effectively served to preserve remnant bushland close to Melbourne on the south side of the Yarra. These areas of public parkland provided places that Aboriginal people continued to maintain as living spaces and hold *ngargee* until they were driven out in the 1860s.

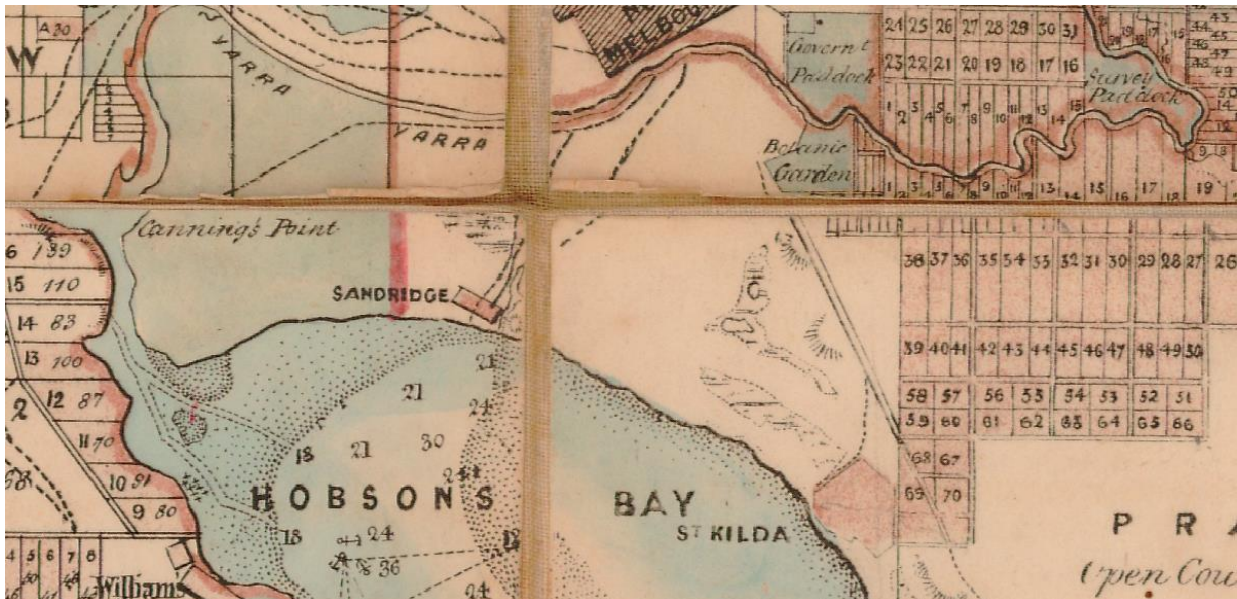


Figure 5.1. A plan of Melbourne by Thomas Ham shows the extent of unallocated (Crown) land south of the Yarra in the early 1850s, including the Review area itself and the large area between St Kilda Road and the Bay. (Source: State Library Victoria)

New legislation further prevented Aboriginal people from access to essential resources. The passing of the *Preservation of Fish Act 1859*, for example, outlawed the use of fishing nets in estuaries and oceans for three years. This followed the introduction of European fish into the waterways, to give the new species time to establish, and also out of concern for public health due to the increasing contamination of the waterways. This would have greatly impacted on food availability for Aboriginal people and on their cultural practices. By 1881, the Yarra River was so heavily contaminated with industrial and domestic waste that it was an increasing public health concern.

While much of the Review area has been significantly modified, including the course of Birrarung (the Yarra River), the extent of vegetation, the contours of the land and important viewsheds, there nonetheless remains large areas of public open space that invite a reimagining of the pre-settlement landscape. Important features include the river itself, albeit now following an altered course, the former lagoon known as *Tromgin* (now the Botanic Gardens ornamental lake), the high ground at Fairlie Hill/Punt Road Hill, the high ground of the Government House Reserve, and the Shrine Reserve within the Domain.

Since the c.1970s, the Royal Botanic Gardens has developed an indigenous garden around the lake, where some remnant vegetation has survived. New legislation to protect the Yarra River, the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrum) Act 2017*, recognises the importance of the river for Wurundjeri people.



Figure 5.2 Large River Red Gum tree with well-developed burls located near the ornamental lake (formerly Tromgin), Royal Botanic Gardens. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 5.3 Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), which was used to make jewellery, according to a Wurundjeri Elder. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

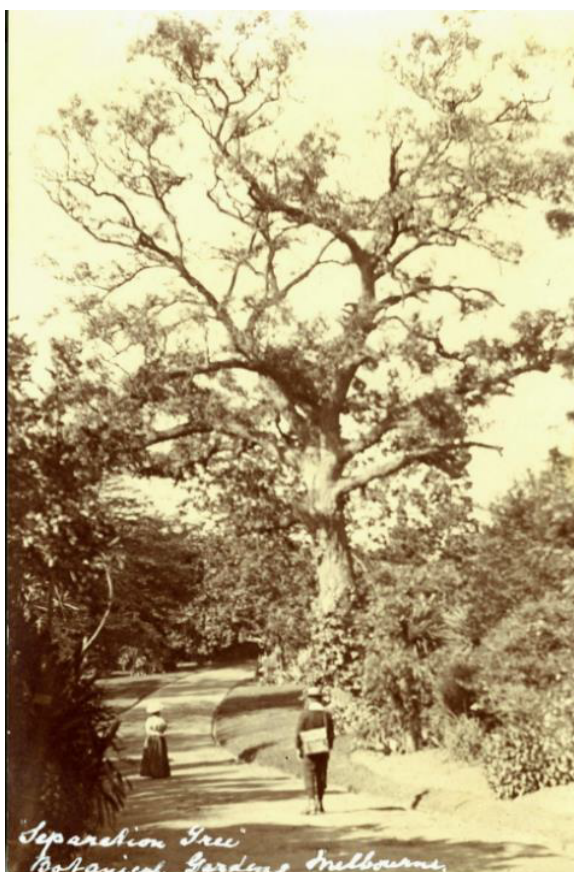


Figure 5.4 The Separation Tree, Royal Botanic Gardens, 1907. (Source: State Library Victoria, Accession No. H96.200/587)



Figure 5.5 Separation Tree and plaque, Royal Botanic Gardens. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 5.8 'View from Domain Reserve Lagoon — looking towards Melbourne', showing the riverine environment c.1870s, before it was heavily modified. (Source: State Library of New South Wales)

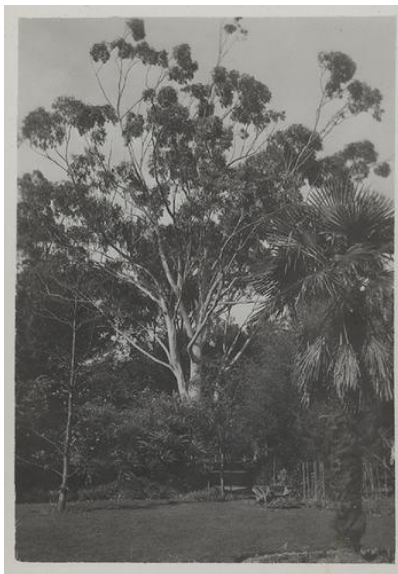


Figure 5.9 Large Manna Gum in the grounds of the Melbourne Observatory, 1933. (Source: Museum Victoria)



Figure 5.10 Remnant River Red Gum on the Fairlie estate, 1882. (Source: State Library Victoria, Accession No. H97.251/5)

5.2.2 Cultural practices

The detailed accounts of Aboriginal protectors G.A. Robinson and William Thomas, covering the period from 1839 to the 1860s, record details of the rich cultural life of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people in the Review area, as well as other Aboriginal people. These accounts are supplemented by government

records and other settlers' accounts, historical images, as well as more recent archaeological records and documented cultural objects associated with the Review area.

The documented history of the Review area records that it was a gathering place of a number of different groups of Aboriginal people in the late 1830s and through the 1840s; primarily Bunurong and Wurundjeri people, but also Taungurung ('Goulburn') and Wadawurrung ('Barrabool') people and Gunaikurnai people from Gippsland. The records of William Thomas provide details about which groups were present and sometimes the locations of these meetings.

Aboriginal people fished on the river and at Tromgin, where they also caught eel in abundance. They held tribal meetings and *ngargee*. They followed traditional burial practices (for example in the Mission area) and used healing techniques for the sick and injured. They sourced food and continued traditional practices such as tool-making and basket-making. They also used the river for transport, and fashioned bark canoes using the mature trees that grew in the area (see Figure 5.14).



Figure 5.11 Aboriginal people swimming in the Yarra, depicting a landscape not dissimilar to parts of the riverbank in the South Yarra Review area. (Source: Gary Presland, *First People*)

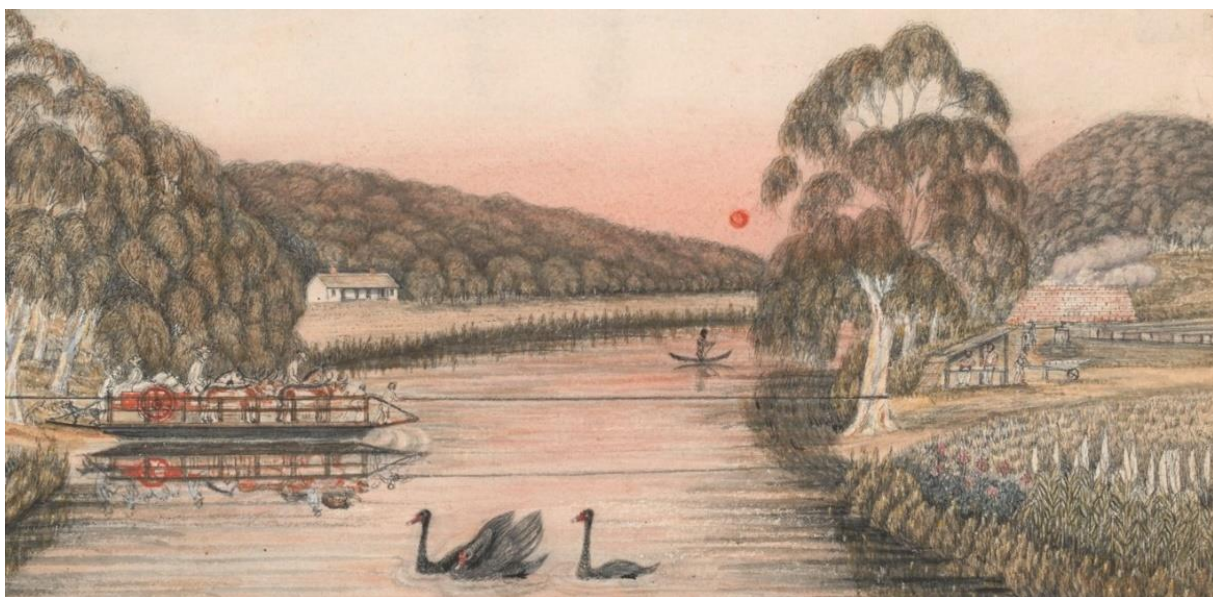


Figure 5.12 Detail from watercolour by W.F.E. Liardet titled 'The First Punt', which was painted in 1875 based on his memories and drawing on his earlier sketches of Melbourne in the early 1840s. This shows an Aboriginal figure in a bark canoe, the brickfields and the high ground on the south side of the river. (Source: State Library Victoria, Accession No. H28250/18)

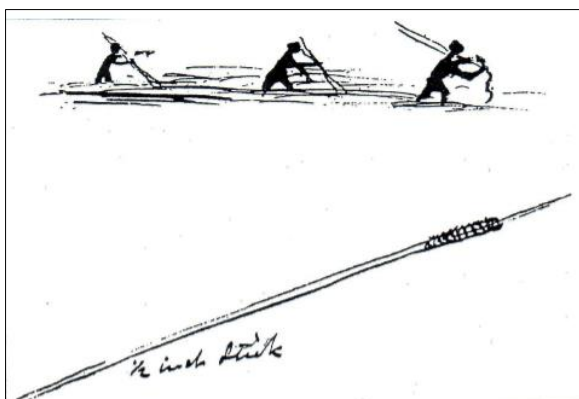


Figure 5.13 Sketch by G.A. Robinson of eeling at Tromgin in the Royal Botanic Gardens. (Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)



Figure 5.14 Bark canoe made from Mountain Ash and used on the Yarra River; acquired at Kew in the 1850s. Attributed to Wurundjeri. (Source: Museums Victoria)



Figure 5.15 River Red Gum with a scar beside the Yarra River near Princes Bridge, painted by Charles Bennett in 1880. (Source: State Library of New South Wales)

From the 1870s, by which time many Aboriginal people from the Melbourne area had moved to the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve, there was a diminished Aboriginal presence in the South Yarra area. This culture was kept alive at Coranderrk and other Aboriginal reserves. Aboriginal people from Coranderrk were sometimes brought to Melbourne for special events such as football matches and other sports days where they performed boomerang-throwing and fire-making.

Places for meeting and living, and holding *ngargee*

A number of places in the Review area are recorded as Aboriginal living and meeting places. It is likely that these were established places of living and meeting prior to settlement and continued to be used for this purpose because the places remained Crown land and retained some elements of the pre-settlement landscape, such as vegetation and access to water. These places include the following:

- Yarra Bank
- The Domain
- Royal Botanic Gardens
- Government House Reserve

- Punt Hill / Fairlie Hill
- Fawkner Park
- South Yarra Primary School

For Aboriginal Elders it is important to record these places. The camp in Fawkner Park that was occupied by Aboriginal people periodically until the 1860s could be recorded in greater detail and with a greater extent on the VAHR, by examining new historical information. Knowledge about the former historic tree (no longer extant) in the grounds of South Yarra Primary School, where Aboriginal people met until at least the mid to late 1850s, is also important to record and acknowledge: *'It is such a shame that the tree was lost, it should have been protected. Even to go to the place where it was means a lot to us Elders, it's special.'* (Wurundjeri Elder, 2021)

Living heritage

It is important to recognise living heritage – to understand where the breeding grounds are of important totem animals and plants, and to know their migratory pathways across Country and their popular feeding grounds. This is important knowledge that encourages an awareness of active living culture (where resources can be harvested, what plants are used in food and medicine, etc.)

Practice of gift-giving

There was an extensive practice of gift-giving among Aboriginal people, which included gifts of artwork, weapons, baskets and other cultural items. Aboriginal Elders bestowed significant gifts upon the various Governors of Victoria (including George Bowen and Lord Hopetoun) on various occasions, as well as Queen Victoria and members of the British royal family. The Governor of Victoria resided at Government House from 1876.

Practices associated with death and burial

Assistant Protector William Thomas makes many references in his journal to traditional cultural practices associated with death and burial as practised in the South Yarra area. A number of burials are recorded in the area now occupied by the Royal Botanic Gardens or the area immediately east of Anderson Street. For example, a woman known as Toollemanene died on 27 May 1839 and was buried the following day. Clark and Konstanski noted that the site of this burial was 'presumably at Langhorne's establishment' (Clark and Konstanski 2006: 43). Thomas details other practices carried out at the graves of the deceased, including inserting standing sticks beside the grave, visiting the grave as part of mourning tradition, and having a fire burn for a prescribed number of days after a burial (Stephens 2014, vol. 1).

For Aboriginal Elders the Botanic Gardens is a very important place that many people occupied, where culture was practised, and where some Aboriginal people are recorded to have been buried; Aboriginal Elders believe that the history of this place should be more widely known. There is a small plaque in the Botanic Gardens, not far from Gate H on Alexandra Avenue, which records that there were burials in the area. During the onsite consultation for this project, representatives from Wurundjeri were very pleased to see this plaque. It was difficult to find, however, as it is hidden amongst overgrown vegetation. *'It is good to see acknowledgement [of this site]. There needs to be more education.'* (Wurundjeri Elder, 2021)

Other Aboriginal burials also appear to have taken place at the site of the Shrine of Remembrance, although this is more likely to have occurred in the pre-settlement period. The number of burials at the Shrine and the date of the burials is not known (*Argus*, 13 November 1929: 10; *Herald*, 14 November 1929: 1).

A contemporary burial site in the Domain is associated with the recovery of the Ancestral Remains of 38 individuals of unknown provenance that had been kept at the Melbourne Museum. These Ancestral Remains were buried at a special Reburial Stone in the Domain in 1985. A plaque on the reburial site reads as follows:

*Rise from this Grave
Release your anger and pain
As you soar with the winds
Back to our homelands
There find peace with our
Spiritual Mother The Land
Before drifting off into the
Dreamtime (cited in Eidelsen 1997: 8).*

Language

Some words (or possibly phrases) that are Anglicised derivations of East Kulin language, including Prahran, Yarra and Toorak, have been preserved in some of the placenames recorded for the South Yarra area and the immediate surrounds. Many of these placenames were recorded by William Thomas during the period he was serving as the Assistant Protector of Aborigines for the Western Port District from 1839. Other placenames were provided to surveyor Robert Hoddle by George Langhorne who recorded language and local placenames while he was operating the Anglican mission on the south bank of the Yarra (1837–38). Documented East Kulin words and their meanings are shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Aboriginal placenames in the South Yarra Review area

Aboriginal placename	Translation / meaning (if known)	English placename	Reference
Birraring	River of mists (Woiwurrung)	Yarra River	John Wedge, 1836
Dutigalla; Doutta Galla	n.k. (believed to be the name of the wife of one of the Kulin 'chiefs')	Melbourne	John Batman [believed to have been taken from Hovell]
Nakham	n.k [presumed to be an Aboriginal placename]	Botanic Gardens	Tibbits 1983; Clark and Konstanski 2006.
Nerre Nerre Minum	n.k.	South Melbourne area	William Thomas map, 1840; Stephens 2014, vol 4' Eidelson 2014
Prah-ra-ran, Pur-ur-ran (Prah-ran)	'almost surrounded by water' (Woiwurrung)	Prahran	Langhorne 1889; Blake 1977: 220
Turruk (Toorak)	'reedy grass, weed in lagoon' (Boonwurrung / Woiwurrung)	Toorak	Clark and Heydon 2002
Yarra (from 'yarro yarro')	Hair; flowing (Boonwurrung / Woiwurrung)	misnomer for Yarra River	John Wedge, 1836
Tromgin	n.k.	NA	G.A. Robinson, c.1839

5.2.3 Governance and lore

Many places in the present-day City of Melbourne — the Country of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri — are documented as traditional meeting places for a number of other Kulin groups. The dual function of the place — as a place where the Kulin met and deliberated about lore, and as a place that was central to the British colonial administration — was fundamentally at odds and Aboriginal people found themselves in a conflicted position in terms of authority.

The imposition of British laws and governance threw Aboriginal society into turmoil. Aboriginal people were subject to the new foreign laws of the British colonial authorities while being also bound by the established lore of their people. These two systems were fundamentally at odds, and one of the results of a conflicted society was conflict between groups. Aboriginal lore was critical to cultural survival and remains an important value, as one Elder explained: *'Lore is intricate, important to us'* (Bunurong Elder, 2021).

In the period following the arrival of the British, Aboriginal leaders were under pressure to maintain order among their own people and to facilitate positive outcomes for their people through negotiations with the colonial authorities. They made efforts to assert their rights to land, and the right to use the land, during a period of untold loss and suffering, dispossession, and ecological and cultural desecration.

Documented ceremonial places like Fawkner Park and the Government House Reserve retain important meanings for Aboriginal people because they are a tangible connection to Aboriginal lore and cultural tradition. The Government House Reserve, set aside in the 1850s, was a high point in the area and was used by the Bunurong people as a place of *ngargee* in the 1850s and 1860s. This site was levelled in the early 1870s prior to the construction of Government House. As the residence of the vice-regal representative of the British Crown, Government House represents a place that directly opposed Aboriginal sovereignty, but at the same time also represented the hope of regal intervention during times of acute distress and loss for Aboriginal people during the mid to late nineteenth century.

Aboriginal Elders, including Benbow, Derrimut (Deremut), Billibellary and his son Simon Wonga, William Barak and others, advocated for the recognition of Aboriginal lore, including rights to land and hunting rights. Barak led a number of deputations of Elders to Government House and to meetings with Victorian politicians to defend the sanctity and intactness of the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve, which they considered to have been personally granted to the Aboriginal people of Melbourne by Queen Victoria for their specific use.



Figure 5.16 G.A. Gilbert, painting of the Yarra River east of the Review area (between Punt Road and Forrest Hill, South Yarra) in April 1847, showing Aboriginal people fishing from a canoe and a view of Turnet (or Terneet), the residence of George Augustus Robinson, shown in the background on the south side of the river. (Source: State Library of NSW, Ref No. 446912)

La Trobe's Cottage, relocated to the Domain from Jolimont in the 1960s, is a place associated with Superintendent (later Lieutenant-Governor) C.J. La Trobe who made a number of decisions that failed to recognise and protect the civil rights and wellbeing of Aboriginal people during the period 1840–52. His rulings, for example, included banning Aboriginal people from the Melbourne township in 1840 (Broome 2005: 31; Boyce 2011: 186).

The site of the former Airlie Bank, home of early settlers David Ogilvie and his wife Elizabeth, also has tenuous links with government law-making that disadvantaged Aboriginal people. Upon his arrival at Port Phillip, Ogilvie was appointed to the position of Crown solicitor and presumably would have been involved in providing legal advice that impacted on Aboriginal people.

5.2.4 Contemporary culture

From around the mid-twentieth century, Aboriginal people in Melbourne asserted their rights more strongly and there have been many demonstrations of contemporary Aboriginal culture that have taken place in the Review area. This is ongoing and includes events such as involvement in musical events and concerts, and social and political gatherings. Some examples include:

- 1935: an Aboriginal Gum Leaf Band found an audience on the Princes Bridge during the Victorian Centenary Celebrations in Melbourne (Attwood with Doyle 2009: 221; *Herald*, 1935)
- 1950s and 1960s: Yorta Yorta Wiradjuri man and advocate of Aboriginal rights Bill Onus was a leading figure in the renaissance of Aboriginal culture in Melbourne. Onus secured the use of felled poplars on St Kilda Road, for example, for carving boomerangs.
- 1973: A Catholic Mass for Aboriginal people was held at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl as part of the 1973 Eucharistic Congress, which included Aboriginal liturgical dancers and an Aboriginal choir (*Age*, 12 July 1973: 34).
- 1988: Invasion Day protest events
- 2000: Sea of Hands Reconciliation Event
- Recent: NAIDOC hosts a Day of Mourning Dawn Service each year, held at the Domain. A Wurundjeri Elder has performed the Acknowledgement of Country at this event in recent years (Wurundjeri Elder, 2021).
- 2021: Bunurong Elder Eric 'Mik' Edwards gave a Welcome to Country at the Remembrance Day service at the Shrine of Remembrance

5.2.5 Fighting for justice

Aboriginal people in the Melbourne area have advanced their rights and interests since their Country was first invaded and occupied by British settlers in the mid-1830s. During the early period of settlement they often showed active defiance of the authorities. In the early 1840s, for example, they amassed guns, which La Trobe had forbidden them to have in their possession (Stephens 2014, vol 1, 1840).

In the face of the rapid and catastrophic change, significant efforts were made by Aboriginal leaders to achieve a better outcome for their people, including Wurundjeri ngurungaeta Billibellary around 1840; Wurundjeri ngurungaeta Simon Wonga in the 1850s and 1860s; Wurundjeri ngurungaeta William Barak in the 1870s and 1880s (including meetings with the Governor and the Premier). The loyalty to settlers shown by Bunurong Elder Benbow and Bunurong Elder Derrimut, who had defended the safety of settlers in Melbourne in 1836, were not suitably recognised or rewarded in the provision of land. The small reserves set aside in 1841 for the Bunurong at Mordialloc and in 1849 for the Wurundjeri at Warrandyte were inadequate and short-lived (Caldere and Goff 1991: 27).

Advances made by Aboriginal people in Melbourne (and Victoria) have been achieved through dissent and from speaking out. Change has been slow. There have been many protests in more recent times including the 'Pay the Rent' campaign on the occasion of the bicentenary of the arrival of the First Fleet in 1988 and during the Melbourne Commonwealth ('Stolenwealth') Games in 2006, where a protest camp (known as Camp Sovereignty) operated in the Domain for many weeks.

5.2.6 Respecting Ancestors

For Aboriginal people it is important to know where the Ancestors walked. It is important to know their story and to keep the culture strong. This is a source of pride. There are tangible connections with the Ancestors in the Review area, including the following:

- Being aware of the Aboriginal meeting places and *ngargee* places that were used in the nineteenth century and which are recorded in local histories, including the historic tree (not extant) at South Yarra State School, areas within Fawkner Park, the site of Government House and grounds, the broader Domain and the Botanic Gardens.
- The Separation Tree (now dead but preserved *in situ*) is a pre-settlement River Red Gum situated in the Botanic Gardens that was chosen as the place where Separation was officially declared by La Trobe in 1850. Members of the Native Police Corps were present for this official occasion. The tree is a tangible connection with Aboriginal history, of both the pre-settlement and post-settlement periods.
- An Aboriginal burial ground on the land now occupied by the Shrine of Remembrance was uncovered during the construction of the Shrine in 1929. According to a newspaper report, the uncovered Ancestral Remains were sent to the University Museum at the time of excavation, but nothing more is known about them (Context 2015).
- A small plaque near the ornamental lake at the Royal Botanic Gardens was installed in 1985 to recognise the place as an Aboriginal meeting place and burial ground. This is located close to Gate H on the northern boundary of the Royal Botanic Gardens. The text on the plaque reads:

This tablet commemorates those Aborigines who used to meet in this vicinity (then a billabong of the old Yarra River) before the site was chosen for the Botanic Gardens in 1845. A number of Aborigines were buried near here in the old Yarra Banks during the late 1830s. The course of the river was straightened in 1900-1 and this lake system was developed.



Figure 5.17 Plaque at the Royal Botanic Gardens, installed in 1985, commemorating the importance of the place for Aboriginal people, including as an Aboriginal burial site. (Source: GML Heritage)



Figure 5.18 Plaque honouring Indigenous servicemen and women at the Shrine Reserve, St Kilda Road. (Source: Anzac Centenary 2014–2018 website: <http://anzaccentenary.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-servicemen-women-honoured/>)

- A small plaque within the Shrine reserve (near St Kilda Road) was installed in 2014 to honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women.
- The view of the William Barak building at the top of Swanston Street, which is designed in alignment with, and to face, the Shrine of Remembrance, is significant to Wurundjeri people who honour their Ancestor, the prominent Elder, William Barak (1824–1903). Architects from Grocon engaged with Wurundjeri to make sure that the design was right and that it showed William Barak—*‘the eyes are right. When you see it, that’s it, that’s him. Us Elders are very proud of that’*. (Wurundjeri Elder, 2021)

5.2.7 Truth-telling

From the late 1830s, when pastoralists began to push into this area, Aboriginal people experienced catastrophic change to the world they knew. From this time Aboriginal people were subjected to manifold and enduring injustices, imposed by the British colonial authorities. The British settlers took possession of Aboriginal Country and displaced Aboriginal people. They brought with them foreign diseases, alcohol and firearms, all of which proved detrimental to Aboriginal people.

It is important to tell the truth about the enormous extent of injustices that Aboriginal people in Melbourne were subjected to and that this pattern of systemic injustice had its origins in an established settler colonial mindset of racial difference and British superiority and entitlement. These injustices included dispossession, exploitation, discrimination, physical and sexual abuse, legal inequity and cultural denial. In the early period of settlement, Aboriginal people in Melbourne were subject to cruel and violent attacks, including sexual exploitation of women and girls. Aboriginal men were plied with alcohol and made a spectacle of for the sake of settlers’ entertainment.

The effects of this manifold forms of injustice and often inhumane treatment across generations of Aboriginal people, and at the hands of government, welfare organisations, the police and individuals, has contributed to extreme and ongoing trauma for Aboriginal people that continues to the present time.

For Traditional Owners telling the truth about the past is critical and urgent. This is recognised in the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Since the British invasion of their Country Aboriginal people have been displaced, oppressed, subjugated and silenced; their civil rights and cultural identity have been denied. The conventional historical accounts of Melbourne and Victoria have long followed a British colonial narrative that whitewashed the past by largely excluding the Aboriginal story and framing Aboriginal culture within the settler colonial mindset of a ‘dying race’. Truth-telling is about setting the record straight. *‘[We] don’t want people to be written out of things ... We need to be inclusive how we write things for future generations.’* (Bunurong Elder, 2021) Truth-telling is about acknowledging the unjust treatment of Aboriginal people in the past, as spelt out in one of the objectives of the Yoo-rook Commission in 2021:

First Peoples across Victoria want the Commission to explore the full scope of its mandate, to examine and acknowledge the range and diversity of injustices they have endured and survived. They want proper attention to local histories as well as common patterns or trends. These include massacres, Stolen Generations, slavery, sexual violence, intergenerational trauma, cultural loss, land theft and forced dislocation from home and land (First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria 2021).

Aboriginal culture was not simply misunderstood or ignored but actively opposed and denigrated as inferior and ‘primitive’, as part of the wider discriminatory language of settler colonialism. Underpinning and over-riding settlers’ value of land and water was the language of possession and purpose, utilitarian

or otherwise. The colonial mentality of progress and expansion, promoted within the structures of 'civilisation' and the doctrines of Christianity, ultimately defined and justified the settlers' outlook. In relation to the history of the South Yarra Review area, and in response to discussions with Traditional Custodians during consultation, some important truths about the Aboriginal past in South Yarra (and Melbourne more broadly) need to be acknowledged as part of broader efforts to redress the past. This includes the following issues, which are discussed briefly below:

- Unlawful invasion of sovereign Country
- Dispossession and exile
- Settlers' wealth earned on stolen land
- Significance of the area 'south of the river'
- Poor health and inadequate medical treatment
- Stolen Generations
- Loss, destruction and mistreatment of cultural heritage
- Role of the Christian churches
- Contribution to colonial enterprise
- Recognising participation in military life
- Absence of public memorials
- Aboriginal astronomy and weather knowledge
- Whitewashing the past

Unlawful invasion of sovereign Country

Britain took possession of Port Phillip (Victoria), as part of a wider land grab of the eastern part of the Australian continent on the premise that the land was *terra nullius* (terra nullius was a pseudo-legal doctrine employed by the Britain that regarded Australia as unoccupied). Aboriginal people were not considered to have any recognised form of land title to their Country even though they had occupied it for tens of thousands of years.

Dispossession and exile

From the 1830s and through the 1840s, many Aboriginal people were forced to leave central Melbourne and the lower Yarra, which was their long-established home and their traditional Country. Langhorne's mission on the Yarra was closed in 1839. This rare place in the City of Melbourne that was granted for Aboriginal use was taken away because it was a prime area of land that was coveted by settlers for other purposes. It was considered superior farming land and surveyed for the purpose of irrigation blocks in the early 1840s. A Wurundjeri Elder explains the systematic displacement, removal and dispossession of her people from South Yarra (and central Melbourne). They left the mission area because it was turned into a botanic garden. They initially went to Bullen Bullen (Bulleen) but when they were not allowed to stay there they went to Coranderrk: '*Squatter's removed Wurundjeri. 200 of my*

people, men and women, came back to Bulin Billabong but were told to move. We're still here. Descendants of our cultural Ancestors, we're still practising culture.' (Wurundjeri Elder, 2021)

Likewise, the Bunurong people were pushed out of the South Yarra area where they had lived and held ceremonies for thousands of years. They were allocated a Crown reserve at Mordialloc from 1841 but continued to move between Mordialloc (Mordy Yallock), Brighton and the Prahran–South Yarra area through the 1850s and 1860s. Bunurong Elder Jimmy Dunbar (Yam-mer-book; also known as 'Big Jemmy') died in 1877 and the Mordialloc Aboriginal Reserve was closed the following year.

The Bunurong and Wurundjeri people were subsequently controlled by a range of rules and regulations written into Victorian legislation and enforced by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. This prevented them from returning, according to their will, to their traditional Country in the Review area.

Settlers' wealth earned on stolen land

The South Yarra Review area, being one of the wealthiest residential areas of Melbourne, is built on significant wealth that was acquired through the colonial period. *'There's a lot of old money lying around in this area'* (Bunurong Elder, 2021). Much of this 'old money' that built the mansions of South Yarra and enabled the opulent lifestyles of the upper middle class in Victoria, was amassed through pastoralism. This relied on the exploitation of vast areas of Aboriginal land, defined by the colonial authorities as Crown land, through the operation of pastoral licences. An example is the Fairlie estate in Anderson Street. This was purchased from the Crown by Colonel Anderson, a retired British military officer who had served in the Napoleonic Wars and was a former Commandant of Norfolk Island (where he authorised the execution of 13 convicts who had revolted). In 1838, Anderson took up a pastoral run of 85,000 acres in northern Victoria named Mangalore (Barry 1966). Anderson's pastoral holding, classified as 'Crown' land by the British colonial authorities, occupied Taungurung country. The rapid pastoral occupation of Aboriginal country across Victoria was enabled initially by a licencing system of Crown land and later through freehold title. This effectively dispossessed Aboriginal people, who received no compensation for the loss of their land, water and resources while pastoral settlers, in contrast, accumulated substantial personal wealth. Many Aboriginal people worked on pastoral runs for rations rather than for proper wages. The exploitation of Aboriginal labour contributed to pastoral wealth.

Following the closure of Langhorne's mission in 1839 the area was taken up by, or absorbed into, a pastoral run operated by E.A. Walpole.

Significance of the area 'south of the river'

The area south of the Yarra River, comprising the riverbank, the various lagoons, the high ground of Punt Road Hill and parts of the Domain, and stretching southwards through Fawkner Park and beyond, was an established place for meeting and living for Bunurong and Wurundjeri people at the time of British settlement in the mid-1830s. G.A. Robinson described the site of the Aboriginal Mission as occupying the south bank near a large lagoon and stretching southwards to high ground beyond the river (Cooper 1924: 5). An indication of the elevation of the area at the high end of Anderson Street can be seen in an 1882 photograph, taken from the grounds of Fairlie House, that shows Port Phillip Bay in the distance (see Figure 5.19).



Figure 5.19 View from the grounds of Fairlie House, 1882. (Source: State Library Victoria, Accession No. H97.251/3)

The area south of the Yarra was the main Aboriginal living and meeting area within the City of Melbourne from the late 1830s until the early 1860s. It was occupied and used by Aboriginal people in the same way that the Government Paddock (now Yarra Park) was used on the north side of the river — as an important administration centre and where a number of key figures among the settler population were periodically based. The area ‘south of the river’ continued to be occupied through the late 1830s, the 1840s and 1850s, and was regularly visited in the 1860s by Aboriginal people. This part of Melbourne remains an important place for the Aboriginal people of Melbourne (and for other Aboriginal people who came to Melbourne and made camps here from the 1830s to the 1860s). This important association is not publicly acknowledged (for example there is no visible signage) and has been largely forgotten by the broader community.

There is a small and somewhat elusive bronze plaque hidden in dense vegetation on a wall at the Royal Botanic Gardens (near Gate H), which recognises the site of Langhorne’s Aboriginal mission (1837–39) and a place where Aboriginal people were buried (see Figure 5.17). Not far from this small plaque there is a large stone monument akin to an honour board that is built into the cliff face, which lists the names of all the directors of the Botanic Gardens from 1846 up to the present day. Regardless of the recognised and significant contribution of these men to the development of horticulture in Melbourne and Victoria, the juxtaposition of these two memorials to the past presents a stark contrast in terms of the public recognition shown to the former directors of the Botanic Gardens compared to that shown to the local Aboriginal people.

There is no acknowledgement of Aboriginal Country in a prominent place in the Review area and there is no acknowledgement that parts of Fawkner Park and the Domain were occupied by Aboriginal people into the 1860s.

Poor health and inadequate medical treatment

During the period of Langhorne's mission (c1837–39), and during the subsequent period of the 'encampment' on the south bank of the Yarra (c1840–46), there was widespread illness among the Aboriginal population. The medical attention provided to Aboriginal people was poor and there were inadequate provisions available for their care. Governor George Gipps, who from 1838 to 1846 was the governor of NSW (of which the Port Phillip District was initially a part), adopted the inhumane position of not permitting the expense of medical treatment for Aboriginal people with infectious diseases because, he argued, no funds had been allocated for the purpose (Sidney 1852: 164)

Stolen Generations

Many Aboriginal children were taken away from their families and placed in institutions. Within the Review area, Aboriginal children were sometimes taken to the Immigrants' Depot on St Kilda Road (Stephens 2014, vol. 3: 336), which operated from c1853–64. This building was established as an Industrial School in 1864, following the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*, and Aboriginal children were also likely to have been placed here periodically from 1864 until the 1880s. The removal of Aboriginal children from their families by government authorities, welfare agencies and church groups has been a cause of heartbreak and trauma for Aboriginal people over many generations.

Loss, destruction and mistreatment of cultural heritage

The practice of cultural traditions by Aboriginal people declined markedly as British settlement progressed. The availability of the necessary resources for particular practices also steadily diminished in the Review area through the 1840s as land was cleared and repurposed. In the 1850s and 1860s Aboriginal people are depicted and described as wearing government-issue blankets rather than possum-skin cloaks. A reference to Mr Man in the 1860s, for example, noted that he 'generally had a blanket wrapped about him' (*Herald*, 18 November 1930: 6).

Tangible cultural heritage, including artefacts and Ancestral Remains, were acquired (sometimes stolen), collected and traded by colonial authorities and individuals. Cultural sites were routinely destroyed and desecrated by settlers (Griffiths 1996). Unlike the case today, when major developments in the Review area took place on areas known to be occupied by Aboriginal people, such as the construction of the Melbourne Observatory (1862–63), the construction of Government House (1874–76), the conversion of Tromgin into a lake (1870s), the Yarra River improvement works in 1899–1900, or the construction of the Shrine of Remembrance (1927–34), there was no requirement to report on cultural material that was uncovered in the course of earthworks. Historical documents that had significance to Aboriginal people were also traded. Local resident of South Yarra, Dame Mabel Brooks, who was a collector of Australiana, owned a copy of the 'Batman treaty', which she sold in 1968 (Attwood 2006: 279).

Ancestral Remains were collected, traded and studied by many highly respected and leading scientists in Melbourne in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including people who lived in the Review area. Members of Melbourne 'Society' and members of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, including Robert Brough Smyth, collected Aboriginal cultural material that included Ancestral

Remains. Some collectors had this material on display in their homes. The practice of phrenology, a pseudo-scientific study of the human cranium to understand character traits and mental ability, was regarded as a legitimate endeavour in the nineteenth century and among its practitioners was Joseph Doubleday of Millswyn Street, South Yarra (although whether Doubleday studied or practised in the specific area Aboriginal phrenology is not known). The practice of phrenology has no proven scientific merit.



Figures 5.20 and 5.21 Aboriginal stone hatchet head marked with a paper label identifying its source location as 'the Boulevard, South Yarra'. (Source: Stan Mitchell Collection, National Museum of Australia, object number 1985.0101.1203)

Role of the Christian churches

Several of the Christian churches active in the Review area provided welfare for Aboriginal people but did this with the broader objective of proselytization rather than through a respect for Aboriginal cultural and spiritual life. From the late 1850s, the Church of England was the dominant Christian denomination in the South Yarra area. While the first Aboriginal mission in Melbourne was run by the Anglican Missionary organisation, this was short-lived. The Anglican Church in Victoria later operated an Aboriginal Mission for which it raised funds in local parishes, including among parishioners at Christ Church (South Yarra). This body managed and funded the Aboriginal missions at Lake Condah, Framlingham and Lake Tyers from the 1860s and into the twentieth century.

The Melbourne Church of England Grammar School was established in 1858 as a private school modelled on the British Public School system. The school was built on a 15-acre Crown reserve, granted free of charge by the Government in 1856, at a time when Aboriginal people were still living in the area. Melbourne Grammar School had little direct association with Aboriginal people until the late twentieth century. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, however, many schoolboys recalled passing Aboriginal people in the Domain on their way to school. In the mid-1860s, the guardian of the Aboriginal boy Thomas Bungaleen requested that he be permitted to attend the school. The school denied this request (Edgars 1865; Stephens 2014, vol. 3).

It was the Non-conformist denominations, notably the Wesleyan Methodists (for example through William Thomas) and the Presbyterian Church (notably through lay minister John Green), that provided the most practical support to Aboriginal people in the Melbourne area, noting however that this welfare was framed in Christian dogma. Early settler and solicitor David Ogilvie, who settled at Airlie Bank in the Review area in the 1840s, was a member of the board of the Yarra Mission and was also an Elder of the

Collins Street Presbyterian Church. In an historical painting dating to the 1840s, Aboriginal people are shown in the grounds of this church.

The founder of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Gerard Tucker, was born at Christ Church South Yarra, where his father Horace Finn Tucker was the vicar (Carter 1990). Following his father into the Anglican ministry, Gerard Tucker contributed enormously to Aboriginal welfare through his work in Fitzroy and Collingwood.

The Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, which relocated to the Review area from central Melbourne in 1930, established a connection with Yorta Yorta Elder William Cooper in 1938 after Cooper led a deputation to the German consulate in central Melbourne, denouncing Nazi Germany's persecution of the Jewish people.

There are possible associations at the Victorian School for the Blind with Aboriginal children who were sight impaired, but no evidence has been found to date of any direct associations.

Contribution to colonial enterprise

Aboriginal people contributed in many ways to the colonial enterprise in the Melbourne area, for which they are rarely acknowledged. As well as working for settlers, usually for very low wages or no wages, they provide a range of services that assisted the 'progress' of settlement in the early 1840s, such as carting water, chopping wood, and providing fish and other foods when supplies in the settlement were low. Over 50 Bunurong and Wurundjeri men assisted with policing and 'keeping order' by serving in the Native Police Corps from c1837 until 1852/53 (Fels 1988).

Aboriginal men were employed as guides for various exploratory and scientific expeditions into the bush that departed from the Review area. For example, a group of Aboriginal guides that included Derrimut, Yammabook (or 'Hawk's-Eye') and Benbow (Benbo) departed for Western Port in 1839 with the naturalist Daniel Bunce; they crossed Princes Bridge and headed south-east, following the Yarra River (Bunce 1857: 64). The director of the Botanic Gardens, Ferdinand Mueller, was also assisted by Aboriginal guides on his exploratory botanical expeditions in the Great Dividing Range and Gippsland in the late 1850s (Clarke 2008).

Aboriginal men also assisted with police work as expert trackers, with Aboriginal trackers based at Victorian Barracks on St Kilda Road (outside the Review area) in the 1880s (add ref).

Recognising participation in military life

The South Yarra Review area has a long connection to the military history of Melbourne, Victoria and Australia. The Shrine of Remembrance was erected as a 'national' war memorial, and various monuments and memorials in the Domain refer to military campaigns and military leaders. These memorials are silent, however, about the participation of Aboriginal men and women in military life. They not only fail to recognise Aboriginal participation in military life but also fail to acknowledge the racial discrimination Aboriginal people faced both in their efforts to be recruited in the World War I and in the disrespectful treatment they received upon their return to civilian life. Aboriginal trackers who were recruited to assist Britain in the South African Anglo-Boer War were denied repatriation to Australia and some were instead left stranded in South Africa (Kerwin 2013). Aboriginal soldiers who served in World War I and World War II were not accepted as applicants in soldier settlement schemes to obtain land for farming on returning to Australia.

Absence of public memorials

The public parks and gardens in the Review area, particularly the Domain and the Royal Botanic Gardens, contain a heavy concentration of public monuments and memorials that do not represent Aboriginal people. Many of these are military related but they also recognise the British monarchy, civic leaders, immigrant groups (the Hellenic Memorial), and the Victoria Police (the Police Memorial). They are dedicated predominantly to white men, and they are largely silent about Aboriginal people and the significant Aboriginal history of this part of Melbourne. The wealth and elevated social status of many of those honoured in various monuments in the Review area was achieved as a direct result of the dispossession of Aboriginal people and the exploitation of Aboriginal land. An example is the memorial to the philanthropist Lady Janet Clarke née Snodgrass (1851–1909), widow of W.J.T. ‘Big’ Clarke, who was generally acknowledged as the wealthiest pastoralist in late nineteenth century Victoria. Lady Janey Clarke was the daughter of squatter Peter Snodgrass, who had complained to Superintendent La Trobe in the 1840s about Aboriginal people attacking the sheep on his pastoral run on the Goulburn River (Christie 1979: 65) and had pressured the authorities in removing the Taungurung people from Acheron Aboriginal Reserve in 1859 (Patterson and Jones 2020: 24; Barwick 1998: 48–49).

There are only a few examples of public memorials in the Review area that honour Aboriginal people or remember Aboriginal history. This includes the memorial to Indigenous servicemen and women in the grounds of the Shrine of Remembrance (c2013) and the small plaque in the Royal Botanic Gardens (1985) that recalls Langhorne’s mission.

Aboriginal astronomy and weather knowledge

The Melbourne Observatory was established in the Domain by the Victorian Government in 1863; this coincided with the period that Aboriginal people were still making camps in the area. The site was chosen because it was on high ground and a good distance from the lights of the city, which enabled a clearer view of the night sky. The Melbourne Observatory was also used as a weather station in the colonial period and into the twentieth century. Throughout the period of its use, the Observatory failed to recognise the knowledge of Aboriginal people about astronomy and the cultural traditions that were closely connected to understanding the stars and the moon. Similarly, Aboriginal knowledge about weather forecasting, including warnings to settlers about the impending flooding of the Yarra River, was largely ignored.

Whitewashing the past

The history of the Review area, as recorded in colonial narratives and in much of the historiography of the twentieth century, whitewashed the past by excluding and/or misrepresenting Aboriginal people and assuming their demise as a result of settlement. Historical narratives of settlement saw Aboriginal people in terms that reflected the derogatory attitudes and the ignorance of the time. In these narratives Aboriginal people were deemed invisible, or denigrated as ‘lazy’, ‘idle’ and ‘uncivilised’, or regarded as quaint and picturesque figures in the landscape.

To mark the 1934–1935 Victorian centenary celebrations, an Australian postage stamp was issued in 1934 that depicted a traditional Aboriginal figure standing on the south bank of the river (in 1834), looking across to the modern city of Melbourne (of 1934) as an incongruous (and anachronistic) figure of the past. This image highlighted the prevailing view of settler society that the Aboriginal people of Melbourne existed only in the past. This sanitised view both failed to acknowledge the truth about the

colonial past and settlers' treatment of Aboriginal people and denied the survival of Bunurong and Wurundjeri people and culture.



Figure 5.22 Australian postage stamp issued in 1934 to mark the occasion of the Victorian centenary celebrations. An Aboriginal figure is standing on the south bank of the Yarra looking towards the modern city skyline. (Source: private collection)



Figure 5.23: Poster produced for the Victorian Centenary Celebrations in 1934–35. Artwork by Percy Trompf; published by Troedel & Cooper Pty Ltd for the Australian National Travel Association. (Source: State Library Victoria, Accession No. H90.105/29)

The colonial narrative of Melbourne's foundation is anchored with the story of Batman and Fawcner and the statement by Batman of 'This will be the place for a village'. This was a key message of the lavish Victorian centenary celebrations of 1934–35 that took place in the City of Melbourne, including in the South Yarra Review area. A poster depicting a giant-like John Batman standing on the south bank of the Yarra was produced for the centenary celebrations, which denied the Aboriginal occupation of the land and evaded the truth about invasion and dispossession (see Figure 5.23). What was not acknowledged was the remainder of this sentence, as it appears in Batman's 1835 diary, which was 'the natives on shore' (Batman 1835). Given the extensive use and promotion of the statement, 'This will be the place for a village', not only in 1934–35 but also in historical works before and after, the exclusion of the other critical words of this sentence ('the natives on shore') obfuscated the fact that Batman was claiming country that was already occupied.

It is important to understand that Aboriginal people have a strong culture and to recognise that they show resilience and fortitude in the face of dispossession and injustice.

A critical aspect of truth-telling is reconciliation and a significant public event for reconciliation, 'the Sea of Hands' event was held in the Alexander Gardens in 2000. This was a public demonstration of support and acknowledgement of the suffering of Aboriginal people.

5.2.8 Resilience and survival

Aboriginal people appeased the authorities by briefly attending Langhorne's Mission (1837–39) and sending their children to the mission school. While Christianity was taught and encouraged, many Aboriginal cultural traditions were strongly discouraged. Aboriginal people nevertheless preserved traditional knowledge through language, songs, food sourcing, land management and other cultural means.

From the beginning of permanent British settlement in Melbourne the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people opposed the loss of their land and the other injustices wrought by settlement, but at the same time they sought to adapt to European ways in order to survive. In some cases, as with the Bunurong Elder Derrimut in 1836, Aboriginal people protected settlers from the potential threat of attack by other Aboriginal groups. They found ways of surviving — for example, by working for settlers in exchange for food. Some Aboriginal people would have worked as servants in the South Yarra area. It was not uncommon for settlers in Melbourne to employ Aboriginal servants in the period of the c1840s–1870s. As he moved around the wider Melbourne area on his regular routes in the [1840s], 1850s and 1860s, checking on the whereabouts and welfare of Aboriginal people, William Thomas made frequent observations of Aboriginal people who were 'in service'. It is likely that he saw Aboriginal people on the main roads during that time, which included St Kilda Road and Toorak Road West (see Figures 5.24 and 5.25).

Superintendent La Trobe prohibited Aboriginal people from entering the central area of the Melbourne township in early 1840 (Broome 2005: 31; Boyce 2011: 186), but they continued to camp on the south bank of the river. Settlers, including G.A. Robinson and William Thomas, referred to this area as the 'Native Encampment'. The camp became notorious for unruly behaviour, largely fuelled by settlers providing the camp with alcohol. Seeking a place to relocate and establish themselves with sufficient food and freedom, the Wurundjeri moved to a traditional area for eel-fishing at the Bullen Bullen lagoon (Bulleen, northeast Melbourne) in the early 1840s. They were soon forced to move on, however, as the land had recently been taken up under 'special survey' provisions. The Aboriginal population declined

dramatically through the 1840s and 1850s, and many Aboriginal people moved away from Melbourne in search of better access to land and resources. The government allocated two reserves for Aboriginal people: one for the Wurundjeri at Pound Bend, Warrandyte, in 1849, and another for the Bunurong near the beach at Mordialloc in 1841 (Wright 1989). Bunurong people had long occupied Mordialloc as well as other places along the coast, including Brighton Beach. In 1836 their numbers were significantly less than the Wurundjeri, and this group moved between the coastal camps and the public parks around South Yarra and Prahran in the 1850s and 1860s. Some Bunurong people continued to occupy the South Yarra area — for example, Bunurong Elder Mr Man (aka Mingaragon or Mongarra) who lived in the grounds of Miss Payne's house and frequented the South Melbourne Hotel (now the Fawkner Club Hotel) in the early 1860s (see Figure 5.27) (Stephens 2014; *Herald*, 18 November 1930: 6).



Figure 5.24 An Aboriginal group outside Melbourne painted by Melbourne artist Eugène von Guérard in 1855. The location is not identified but the image may represent the area south of the river, possibly near St Kilda Road. A hint of blue on the horizon on the far right suggests a view of the Bay. The Aboriginal people depicted here are wearing government-issue blankets rather than possum-skin cloaks. (Source: National Gallery of Australia, Accession No. NGA 2012.1812)



Figure 5.25 Detail from a sketch titled 'Holiday time, St Kilda Road', published in the *Illustrated Australian News* in 1867 shows two Aboriginal people on the east side of St Kilda Road, possibly in vicinity of the Domain or Fawkner Park. (Source: State Library Victoria, Accession No. IAN28/01/67/9)

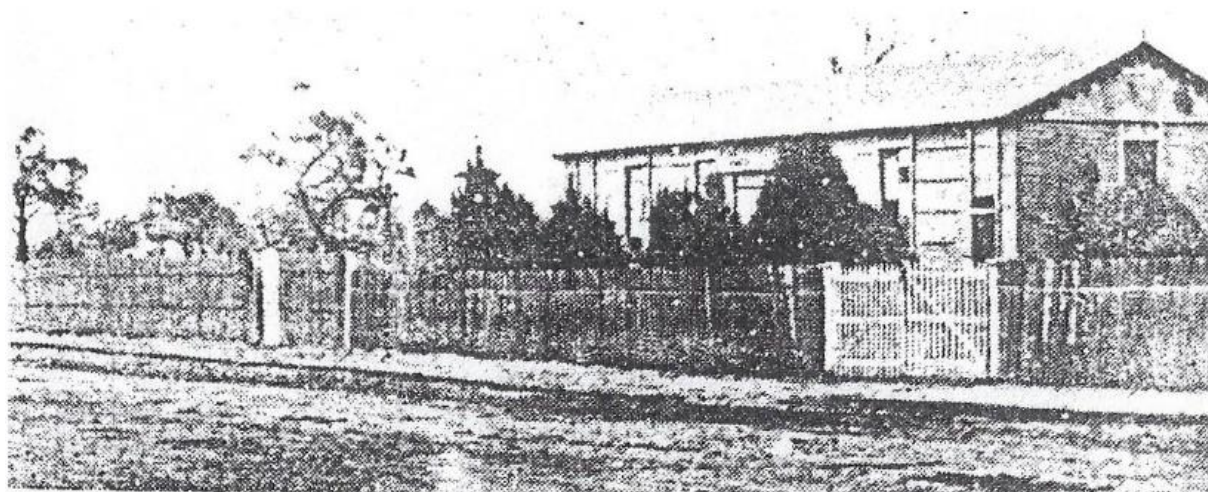


Figure 5.26 Photograph of the earliest school building erected on the site of the South Yarra State School on Punt Road, c1856. An 'historic tree' was formerly in the school grounds, which is noted as having been an Aboriginal meeting place. (Source: Coulson 1985)



Figure 5.27 Fawcner Club Hotel, Toorak Road West, photographed by John T. Collins in 1965. This building has associations with Bunurong Elder ‘Mr Man’ (aka Mingaragon or Mongarra). (Source: John T. Collins Collection, State Library Victoria, Accession No. H98.251/941)

From the early 1860s, once relocated to missions and reserves, the lives of Aboriginal people were heavily regulated. Their liberties were constrained by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. Aboriginal people were not permitted to move about freely and required a permit from the BPA to leave an Aboriginal reserve for any purpose; they also required permission to marry. Many Aboriginal people of mixed background were forced to leave the reserves following the *Aborigines Protection Act* (‘Half Caste Bill’) of 1886, which resulted in the break-up of families and led to distress about finding work and accommodation. When the Coranderrk reserve was closed by the Victorian Government in 1924, all the remaining residents of Coranderrk were moved to Lake Tyers in Gippsland with the exception of Wurundjeri Elder Jemima Wandin Donolly, also known as Granny Jemima, who was granted permission to stay on account of her advanced age.

Many Aboriginal people returned to Melbourne in the 1920s and 1930s after the missions and reserves closed down. This included Bunurong and Wurundjeri people and other Aboriginal people who fought to improve conditions for Aboriginal people. It also included people (mostly Yorta Yorta) who were involved in the Cummergunga Walk-off in 1939, which was a protest against the poor conditions endured by Aboriginal people on the Cummergunga Mission.

6 Recognising Aboriginal cultural heritage

6.1 Overview

Recognising the Aboriginal heritage values of the South Yarra Review area is important both for acknowledging the importance of this area to Aboriginal people and also as a way of further protecting the heritage values of the area, particularly as they pertain to Aboriginal heritage.

While the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* requires that the relevant RAP is consulted regarding matters concerning Aboriginal heritage within the City of Melbourne, including the South Yarra area, this is not the case with the *Heritage Act 2017*, which deals broadly with ‘post-contact’ cultural heritage that can also include Aboriginal heritage places.

In Victoria the separation of Aboriginal cultural heritage and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage rests with the foundation of Aboriginal cultural heritage being strongly based in archaeology. As such there is a long-established focus of Aboriginal cultural heritage on Aboriginal archaeology. In terms of the protection of Aboriginal heritage in Victoria, the original responsibility of the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs — later Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and Aboriginal Victoria, and now renamed First Peoples—State Relations (FNSR) — was purely archaeological. Aboriginal cultural heritage was first regulated in Victoria through the *Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972*, and this was superseded by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

The operation of two separate heritage ‘systems’ in Victoria is further inhibited by the situation of non-Aboriginal cultural heritage being primarily assessed under the *Heritage Act 2017* (and its predecessor of 1995), the provisions of which do not apply to a place or object where cultural heritage significance rests solely on the grounds of its association with Aboriginal tradition.

The Aboriginal places identified in this Review should be put forward to the VAHR. As they have other non-Aboriginal heritage attributes, they should also be assessed for the HO.

This section presents a revised assessment of the places within the Review area that have been identified as having Aboriginal cultural values.

As noted, a number of places in the South Yarra Review area are already registered Aboriginal heritage places. These places include:

- Existing registered archaeological places (currently on the VAHR)
- Places with historical associations listed on the VAHR. This includes places occupying land of a former known use – for example, Langhorne’s Mission. (Note that this also includes places already listed on the VAHR that are misnamed or poorly identified)

A number of other places have identified Aboriginal heritage values but these are not currently listed on the VAHR. Most places with Aboriginal cultural values are also not recognised in existing VHR citations and on the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay or in the HO citations. These places include:

- Potential archaeological places, including places located in cultural sensitivity zones
- Places with historical associations
- Places with contemporary Aboriginal cultural associations

In addition to places in the Review area that are listed on the VAHR, these places can be categorised as:

- Places listed on the VHR and identified in this report as having direct Aboriginal associations, but where little or no acknowledgement of this is given in the existing VHR citation (11 places; see Table 6.1)
- Places listed on the HO and identified in this report as having Aboriginal associations (3 places; see Table 6.2)
- Places recommended for the HO by this Review and identified in this Review as having direct Aboriginal associations (2 places, see Table 6.3)

Other places in the Review area recommended for the HO (see Figure 6.4).

It is possible that additional places may emerge through further consultation with Traditional Custodians. (This would be additional work and is outside the scope of this report.)

Table 6.1 Places listed on the VHR and identified in this report as having direct Aboriginal associations, but where little or no acknowledgement of this is given in the existing VHR citation (11 places)

Name of VHR place	Location	Brief summary of associations
Royal Botanic Gardens VHR H1459	Anderson Street, South Yarra	<p>Remnant vegetation, including mature River Red Gum.</p> <p>Location of <i>Tromgin</i> (former lagoon), since modified as the ornamental lake.</p> <p>1837: Langhorne's Anglican Mission established at this site, including a schoolhouse, dwellings and other structures.</p> <p>1838: The mission was closed but the wider area continued to be used by Aboriginal people. Thomas had a tent / hut in this vicinity. Burials of Aboriginal people also took place here although the exact locations of burials are not known.</p> <p>1839: 300-400 people gathered to welcome G.A. Robinson.</p> <p>1839+: Aboriginal burials are described by William Thomas in 1839 and 1840 (Stephens 2014, vol. 1); fires were burnt at the grave for a designated number of days.</p> <p>Gellibrand died c1841 and was buried at South Yarra at an unknown location (Cotter 2005: 12).</p> <p>1850: Native Police were present for La Trobe's announcement of Separation in November 1850 which took place at the Separation Tree in the Royal Botanic Gardens.</p> <p>Progeny of the Separation Tree now growing at RBG is now around 60 years old. The Billabong area has some remnant vegetation.</p>

Name of VHR place	Location	Brief summary of associations
Domain Parklands VHR H2304	St Kilda Road, Melbourne	<p>1830s-1860s: Aboriginal occupation of wider area, ceremonial use.</p> <p>This area of the Alexandra Gardens (now part of the Domain) adjoined a large lagoon alongside the Yarra Bank. From the late 1830s it was occupied by brickmakers' huts, some of which were visited by Aboriginal people occupying the south bank of the river.</p> <p>The former Immigrants' Depot on St Kilda Road has associations with Aboriginal people; at least one Aboriginal child was placed here in the early 1860s (Stephens 2014).</p> <p>Aboriginal people camped in the Domain through the 1850s and early 1860s.</p> <p>1914-18: military use; possible Aboriginal associations through military involvement.</p> <p>1934-35: Selby and the centenary; celebrating history.</p> <p>1955: Moomba celebrations were held in this area; Aboriginal associations with the name and the boomerang motif. The name Moomba was inspired by the event <i>Out of the Dark</i>, produced by Bill Onus at the Princes Theatre in 1951. 1985: Ceremonial Reburial of Ancestral Remains.</p> <p>Various protests and Aboriginal cultural events have taken place here, including the Sea of Hands event in the Alexandra Gardens in 2000/2002 and the 'Stolenwealth Games' protest in 2006.</p>
Fawkner Park VHR 2361	Toorak Road West, South Yarra	<p>1830s-1860s: Aboriginal occupation of parklands. Ceremonial use; corroborees held here until the 1860s.</p> <p>Association with a former historic tree that was located in the school yard of South Yarra Primary School.</p> <p>Location of former creek that flowed south / south-west) through Fawkner Park (since drained).</p>
Shrine of Remembrance and Shrine Reserve VHR HO848	St Kilda Road, Melbourne	<p>A large Aboriginal burial site was uncovered during building works in preparation for construction of the Shrine in 1929.</p> <p>2014: Memorial unveiled to Aboriginal servicemen and servicewomen, Shrine Reserve, St Kilda Road.</p>
Sidney Myer Music Bowl VHR H1772	St Kilda Road, Melbourne	<p>Site of various events that have included performances by Aboriginal people, including a Catholic Mass in 1973 that involved Aboriginal liturgical dance and an Aboriginal choir.</p>
Government House and grounds VHR H1620	Birdwood Drive, South Yarra	<p>1849: noted as a Bunurong camp.</p> <p>1860s: noted as a site of an Aboriginal camp (Bunurong).</p> <p>Government House was erected in 1872-76 on the highest point in the Review area. The site was formerly an Aboriginal camp, which was noted in the 1860s.</p> <p>Visits to Government House by William Barak and others in the 1870s and 1880s.</p> <p>Painting by Barak sent to the Governor of Victoria, Lord Hopetoun, in 1886.</p> <p>Various other later associations.</p>

Name of VHR place	Location	Brief summary of associations
Princes Bridge VHR H1447	St Kilda Road, Melbourne	<p>1838: a punt was operating across the Yarra.</p> <p>1841: Georgiana McCrae noted that she crossed on the punt with three Aboriginal people. There was a toll charged for crossing the Yarra River but this was waived for Aboriginal people (McCrae 2013: 77).</p> <p>c.1840-44: Magistrate William Hull noted that the last corroboree he witnessed took place on the punt from Swanston and Flinders Streets (Select Committee 1859).</p> <p>1845: first bridge built across the Yarra River.</p> <p>1850: Native Police were present in an official capacity at the opening of the Princes Bridge in 1850.</p> <p>1934-35: A gum leaf band provided entertainment on Princes Bridge as part of the Victorian centenary celebrations (Attwood and Herald 1935).</p>
La Trobe's Cottage (Domain) VHR H1076	Birdwood Drive, South Yarra	<p>1839: arrival of Superintendent C.J. La Trobe.</p> <p>1840: house named 'Jolimont' erected next to Yarra Park on freehold land.</p> <p>1840-52: La Trobe occupies cottage; proximity to the Yarra encampment; the Native Police trained nearby. Many associations with statutes, meetings, etc.</p> <p>1960s: La Trobe's Cottage is moved from Jolimont to the Domain.</p>
Melbourne Observatory VHR H1087	Birdwood Drive, South Yarra	<p>1850s: Aboriginal people are still occupying the Domain.</p> <p>1862: Observatory is established on high ground in the Domain.</p> <p>In the context of this place being used for astronomical purposes, it is noted that the night sky was a critical aspect of Aboriginal cultural life, for example in influencing the timing or physical orientation of <i>ngargee</i>.</p>
St Kilda Road VHR H2359	St Kilda Road, Melbourne	<p>c.1837: a track had been formed from the crossing point opposite Swanston Street, leading to the south-east (towards Western Port and Gippsland).</p> <p>c.1830s-60s: Bunurong people used this route as they moved between Mordialloc and Brighton and the city / South Yarra area.</p>
Alfred Hospital (Linay Pavilion) VHR H2295	Commercial Road, Prahran	<p>1850s: a site opposite the hospital (in Fawkner Park) was used as an Aboriginal camping place.</p> <p>1877: Bunurong Elder Jimmy Dunbar (Yam-mer-book; also known as 'Big Jemmy') was admitted to the Alfred Hospital in 1877 where he passed away.</p> <p>It is likely that other Aboriginal people from the Melbourne area would have been admitted to the Alfred Hospital.</p>

Table 6.2 Places listed on the HO and identified in this report as having indirect Aboriginal associations (3 places)

Name of place	Location	Brief summary of associations
Melbourne Church of England Girls Grammar School Proposed as individual heritage place in this Review	Anderson Street, South Yarra	The school site occupies an area that was associated with the encampment on the south side of the Yarra and with the Aboriginal Mission (1837–39). The school occupies the area of high ground that was used as a corroboree ground.
Poolman House Significant within HO6	Domain Road, South Yarra	The site occupies an area of high ground that was associated with the encampment on the south side of the Yarra from 1836 and with the Aboriginal Mission (1837–39); the high ground was used for corroborees
South Yarra Precinct HO6	Various, South Yarra	Associated with the encampment on the south side of the Yarra from 1836, and with the Aboriginal Mission (1837–39). The area of high ground in the vicinity of Punt Road Hill was used for corroborees.

Table 6.3 Places recommended in this report for adding to the HO that have direct Aboriginal cultural values (2 places)

Name of place	Address	Associations
South Yarra State School No. 583 Proposed as individual heritage place in this Review	Punt Road, South Yarra	Occupies Crown land. Adjoins Fawkner Park, which was occupied by Aboriginal people into the 1860s. Site of the former Presbyterian Free Church school, c.1854+, which became the South Yarra State School. There was a 'magnificent gum tree' in the school yard where Aboriginal people used to camp. The school was first established in 1854 so presumably Aboriginal people occupied the site at this tree prior to 1854. 1830s – 1860s: occupation of Fawkner Park by Aboriginal people and recorded use of the park for ceremonial purposes, <i>ngargee</i> and dance. Camping place noted as being near the South Yarra State School (Slater 1987). A relic of the old tree was retained by the school for a period of time [1951 ref] but has since been lost.
Fawkner Club Hotel (former South Melbourne Hotel) Proposed as individual heritage place in this Review	Toorak Road West, South Yarra	The South Melbourne Hotel opened on what was then Gardiners Creek Road (Toorak Road) in 1854 at which time Aboriginal people were camping in the area. The hotel was built on Toorak Road West facing Fawkner Park. In the late 1860s the hotel was frequented by Bunurong Elder Mr Man (aka Mingaragon or Mongarra). William Thomas recorded that Mr Man was at the South Melbourne Hotel in 1863 (Stephens 2014, vol. 3). 1830s – 1860s: occupation of Fawkner Park by Aboriginal people and recorded use of the park for ceremonial purposes, <i>ngargee</i> and dance.

Table 6.4 Other places (NOT on the VHR or the HO) with Aboriginal associations (1 place)

Name of place	Address	Associations
Punt Road	Punt Road, Prahran / South Yarra	Punt Road was a route used by Aboriginal people travelling between Mordialloc and South Yarra / Melbourne, and also between South Yarra / Melbourne and St Kilda / Brighton. This was a route used by the Bunurong. This road also linked up with the Punt Road crossing place and was used by Aboriginal people crossing between the south and north sides of the Yarra.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Outcomes

The South Yarra Heritage Review provides the following:

- A detailed Thematic Environmental History that recognises the Aboriginal history of the Review area.
- A set of Aboriginal themes and sub-themes.
- The recognition and consideration of Aboriginal history and heritage in the assessment of heritage places in the Review area.

7.2 Recommended tasks

In acknowledging the Aboriginal cultural values and associations relating to the Review area, a number of recommendations are made. Implementation of these recommendations need to take into account the RAP decisions of 1 July 2021 that relate to the Review area.

1. Where HO places are found to have direct Aboriginal associations, the column headed '*Aboriginal place?*' in the Melbourne Planning Scheme Schedule to Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay should be changed to 'Yes'. This applies to all the places identified in Table 6.1 and Table 6.3 of this report.
2. Recognise Aboriginal cultural values in the citations for two of the heritage places recommended for inclusion on the HO, namely:
 - South Yarra State School
 - Fawkner Park Hotel.
3. A number of heritage places should be nominated for listing on the VAHR. These include:
 - Shrine of Remembrance (burial place)
 - South Yarra State School (meeting and living place; *ngargee* place)
 - Fawkner Park Hotel (historical associations).

In addition, the extent of one place currently listed on the VAHR could be broadened to recognise documented historical information about these places:

- [REDACTED] to be extended to include the former lagoon and the high ground extending to Domain Road and Punt Road; this recommendation would be supported by documented historical information.
4. The documented Aboriginal burials noted at point (3), above, (concerning the Shrine of Remembrance and the former Aboriginal mission at the RBG site) should be referred to the Ancestral Remains Unit at First Peoples – State Relations.

7.3 Additional recommendations

In addition to the key objectives of this component of the South Yarra Heritage Review, the following additional recommendations are proposed to better recognise Aboriginal heritage more broadly in the Review area:

1. Propose to Heritage Victoria that the citations for 12 VHR places in the Review area should be amended and updated to better acknowledge their Aboriginal values. Sufficient historical information has been identified and is available to prepare these amendments. This includes the following VHR places:
 - Government House and Grounds
 - Shrine of Remembrance Reserve (Already assessed as part of the 'Acknowledging Shared Values Report', Context 2015)
 - Fawkner Park
 - Domain Parklands
 - Royal Botanic Gardens
 - Melbourne Observatory
 - Sidney Myer Music Bowl
 - Princes Bridge (Also assessed as part of the 'Hoddle Grid Heritage Review', Context 2019)
 - Melbourne Grammar School
 - St Kilda Road
 - La Trobe's Cottage
 - Alfred Hospital.
2. Give greater and more visible acknowledgement of Country and First Peoples within the Review area. The following could be considered:
 - Incorporation of Boonwurrung and Woi-wurrung language in signage
 - Use of Boonwurrung and Woi-wurrung language in place-naming in public areas where opportunities arise
 - Developing heritage interpretation in the public areas of the Review area to better communicate the Aboriginal history and heritage.
 - The relevant RAP / RAPs should be consulted and be a party to any of these initiatives.
3. Consider ways in which there might be greater remediation of the landscape in public areas, including the public parks and gardens, and riverbank, through increased planting of suitable indigenous species in consultation with the Traditional Owners and the possible remediation of some of the former lagoon areas along the Yarra River. These plantings could also promote living culture and Aboriginal food sources.

4. Consider the relevant RAP being given a defined role in the management of Fawkner Park and the Domain Parklands (noting that certain areas including, the Government House Reserve, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sidney Myer Music Bowl and the Shrine Reserve are not managed by the City of Melbourne).

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