

# **CITY OF PORT PHILLIP ABORIGINAL RESOURCE PRIMER**

## **PREFACE**

### ***Why does the City of Port Phillip need an Aboriginal Resource Primer?***

In 1988 White Australia celebrated the 200th anniversary of the first European settlement in Sydney. What was seen by many white people as a celebration of their contribution to the development of this country was, for aborigines, no cause for celebration. They believed the occasion to be a commemoration of the stealing of their lands and the murder of their people. Over the last thirty to forty years, beginning with the Charles Perkins led freedom rides for aboriginal citizenship rights of the late 1960's, there has been an attempt made by academics and other interested parties to gain a more critical understanding of Australian history.

This process gained momentum through the period of the 1988 bicentennial when many people decided to commemorate and mourn the loss of traditional aboriginal culture and heritage. The Muirhead Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1987 recommended the establishment of the National Council for Reconciliation – a body which was represented by civic and community leaders – from both aboriginal and non-aboriginal Australia. The aim of the council was to gather a broad range of input from across Australia about how to best achieve true, meaningful and long-lasting reconciliation between aboriginal people and other Australians.

The reconciliation process has not progressed without its obstacles. Several issues have emerged over the last decade which have embodied the fundamental gulf between these two cultures, potentially derailing the journey towards meaningful dialogue. The main obstacle that has impeded better relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people has been the issue of land rights. That is to say, if we, as non-aboriginal people, are genuine about reconciling our past and acknowledging the demands being made by aboriginal people, how do we resolve the fact that aboriginal land was taken? This issue came to a head with the Mabo decision of 1992 in which the High Court decided that, where aboriginal people can demonstrate continuous occupation of their traditional lands, native title exists. The first test case for this decision occurred two years later when the Wik people took their claim to the courts. The Howard government decided that some parts of the original Native Title act were unconstitutional and set about a process of devolving, or winding back the rights won under the Native Title act.

The consequences of this decision for aboriginal people were devastating. For years they had fought for their rights to land ownership – rights other Australian citizens take for granted. Indigenous Australians had finally won these rights, in law, only to find that a new government was determined to see them substantially diminished. It was at this time that the aboriginal leader Patrick Dodson, the inaugural chairperson for the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, the man dubbed “the father of reconciliation” decided he could no longer be a part of the reconciliation process.

Since the native title disputes of the mid 1990's another issue has emerged, which calls to question the very nature of European perceptions of aborigines. In April 1996, the government of Prime Minister John Howard released the *Bringing them Home* report, about the state-sanctioned, forced removal of successive generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. From the late 1860's until the 1960's Australian governments had removed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. There has, over the ensuing years, been much debate generated about this policy and practice, specifically about whether it was well intentioned or not. In other words, could the policy have been all bad when the government thought it was doing the right thing by the children? This argument quickly became debased as the voices of those taken became heard more frequently on the national stage. The heartbreak and pain these people and their families still feel is immeasurable. *Bringing them Home* concluded with several key recommendations which were deemed necessary if the pain of the children and their families was to be eased. One of these key recommendation was that the Federal government make a formal apology on behalf of the nation, to the children and their families—in other words, say *sorry*.

That Prime Minister Howard was and is still unable to make the apology, so dearly required by the children and their families, has again highlighted a fundamental gulf of understanding between aboriginal people and some sections of Australian society. The criticism faced by the current federal government about its handling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, brings to the national stage fundamental conflicts which have been with us from the time of first contact between the European invaders, and the aboriginal custodians of this country. How, for instance, do we as a nation redress the incredible inhumanity inflicted upon aboriginal people during the period of invasion - and how do we understand the claims for fundamental human rights still being expressed by present day Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

The first step along this road is for non-Aboriginal Australia to acknowledge its own immigrant past. For the better part of 212 years, our formal history and collective psyche has reinforced the myth of peaceful settlement. An image of up-country rural stoicism has underpinned this mythology. A critical look at Australia's history since the first contact between Europeans and Aborigines, tells a different story. Writings from across the land produced by Aboriginal storytellers, critical historians and sociologists are presenting histories which challenge the notion of peaceful settlement. They also contribute a vast wealth of information, which informs non-aboriginal Australia about life here before Europeans arrived, about the complexity and diversity of the many aboriginal nations and about their interaction with this land.

The City of Port Phillip is committed to the strengthening of links between its aboriginal and non-aboriginal citizens. To assist this process it is necessary to make available a concise discussion of the history and issues at the centre of this task—information contained in this kit. It is written for those who seek basic knowledge of the Aboriginal history of this region. It should be said at this stage, that the work is not a definitive Aboriginal history of the Port Phillip region. It has been written by a person of European decent, who does not presume to have any innate aboriginal knowledge or ancestry. Nevertheless it is hoped that it will facilitate further discussion and research within schools, seminars, over the dinner table or at reconciliation group meetings. It is a work aimed at the grass-roots community level. It is written for a broad audience, hence the conscious inclusion or exclusion of certain information. The final point to make is that, where possible, it has been written in consultation with aboriginal people from this region specifically, and across Victoria generally.

Please enjoy the work, the City of Port Phillip hopes it generates much interest in the broader community, because it is at the community level that national harmony begins.

## INTRODUCTION:

### *What is the City of Port Phillip Aboriginal Resource Primer?*

This work has been written to increase the knowledge of people living in the city of Port Phillip, of the Aboriginal history of this region. For a community knowledge is power and power is the ability to change a situation for the better. It is hoped that in some small way, this work will empower the people of Port Phillip, to explore the Aboriginal history of this area. Further research or facilitated discussions at the local, community or school level, based on the contents of this work can only add to the community's understanding of issues of history and reconciliation.

The work has been designed for a broad audience, however it is anticipated that it will stir a specific interest in late secondary students, adults and early tertiary students.

**Chapter One** introduces archaeological evidence which dates the aboriginal occupation of Victoria generally and Port Phillip specifically. The first chapter also aims to show the complexity of Aboriginal economic and social organisation through an examination of archaeological evidence that indicates how aborigines related to the environment.

**Chapter Two** first presents critical histories of Portland Bay, Victoria's European birthplace and discusses the period of frontier conflict in that region, between 1834 and 1848. The first ongoing contact between Aborigines and Europeans occurred in this area and was the precursor for the violence experienced by other Aborigines at Port Phillip. The chapter then discusses Port Phillip, and acknowledges that the original owners of Port Phillip were the Kulin confederacy, comprised of different aboriginal nations, with their associated clans and bands of social groups. In this section the infamous treaty put at the Merri Creek bend by John Batman is discussed, in order to show that the Woi wurrung and Bun wurrung had never conceded to their land being taken, and that the whole area we now know as greater Melbourne was stolen through a thinly veiled act of land theft.

**Chapter Three** discusses the political nature of European colonisation. It outlines the ways in which the Europeans saw themselves in relation to the aborigines - for example, what were the dominant understandings the Europeans had of land use, skin colour, spirituality and social order which put them at odds with the aborigines. The chapter deals with the politics of invasion exploring the relationships between politics, power and ideology, as expressed in the value systems or world views that existed at the time of first contact.

Ideologies that were used over and against aboriginal people at the time of first contact will be discussed, including *social darwinism*, *eugenics*, *capitalism* and *imperialism*. Land rights and Native Title issues are traced to *imperialism* and *social darwinism*. This discussion demonstrates how the policies that created the Stolen Generations resulted, in large part, from adherence to the flawed 'science' of *eugenics* and *social darwinism*. Other policy issues, including Aboriginal deaths in custody and mandatory sentencing reflect a lack of cultural and historical understanding on the part of white Australia. Likewise, the current federal government's refusal to offer a formal apology for the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders children from their families, reflects an historical ignorance which as Australians, we should be trying to undo. It is through an

understanding of political issues, which we can all learn about the contemporary barriers between aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia; chapter three aims to break down some of these barriers.

**Chapter Four** discusses cultural representations of Aborigines in broader Australian society. It asks the question, 'How do non-aboriginal Australians become informed about *aboriginal issues*?' The chapter then discusses some voices from aboriginal (and non-aboriginal) Victoria, who, through their music, are trying to undo some of the negative representations of aboriginal people, which circulate through the mass media, education system and political institutions.

**Chapter Five** raises issues for discussion about each of the chapters in this work.

Attached to the discussion chapter, is a critical bibliography of texts which can be consulted, if the reader is motivated to further explore the issues raised in the work.

## CHAPTER ONE - A CRITICAL LOOK AT OUR HISTORY

In this chapter I want to discuss the archaeological evidence which dates the aboriginal occupation of both the Portland Bay and Port Phillip districts. The point of first interaction between the aborigines and Europeans in both these districts will also be discussed in order to show the devastating impact European invasion had on the aboriginal nations of both the Portland Bay and Port Phillip districts.

### (I)

#### **Victoria's first people:**

The arrival of aborigines to Australia began with a process of southern migration from the Asian mainland. Archaeologists Edmund Gill and Peter Coutts were the first to undertake detailed studies of the western district of Victoria or the Portland Bay district as it was known at the time of European colonisation. Their work has uncovered much evidence of aboriginal occupation throughout the Portland Bay district and provides an illuminating insight into both the physiography and the original settlers of the district - the aborigines.

Establishing the context for the consideration of human settlement in Australia, Gill states that

‘man (sic) was born in Africa a few million years ago when the flood basalts were changing the face of south west Victoria. It was not until about a million years ago when modern man (homo sapiens) had evolved that people were in south east Asia, and so within striking distance of the unknown island continent of Australia, ready for the time when the need and the technology caused man to make his way to Australia’ (in Sherwood et. al 1985 p.13).

The author then muses that perhaps at this point and for the first time human populations began to travel by sea. The time in which Aborigines first came to Australia has long been a point of scientific conjecture. Dr. Gurdip Singh of the Australian National University has conducted deep core tests on Lake George near Canberra and

‘by means of pollen analysis and other tests, is acquiring a remarkably long history of events there. He states that only since the Last Interglacial about 120,000 years ago there is relatively plentiful charcoal, and on this basis suggests that aborigines have been there for that length of time’ (1985 p.3).

Singh's estimate seems to be at the extreme end of scientific estimates regarding the length of aboriginal occupation of Australia. The ‘archaeologists with sites reaching back 40,000 years and considering sea-level changes, prefer an estimate of about 53,000 years.’ (Flood, 1983, in Sherwood 1985 p.3).

Whatever the scientists may argue, Aborigines have been in Victoria for at least 53000 years. What is certain, is that the aborigines' use of the land did not accord with European post-Enlightenment notions of human progress, with its associated belief that nature is a force to be conquered, subjugated and exploited for economic ends. The Europeans who settled Victoria generally, and Port Phillip specifically, looked to the future—to the grand plan of emancipation conceived in economic terms. The aborigines conceived their country, their land and their place within it very differently. Aborigines (as argued by Gill) did not seek to change their environment, but to be at home with it.

Peter Coutts notes that in 1984 Victorians celebrated their sesqui-centenary, commemorating 150 years of colonisation by Europeans. He points out that 'it is fitting to remember that we are merely celebrating the most recent colonising event in the history of this state' (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.21). Coutts argues that the extent and breadth of European colonisation led to the dispossession of aborigines and the emaciation of their culture. This has led

'to the fact that in the sesqui-centenary year, the Aboriginal population of Victoria (about 15,000) is still less than it was in 1834 (about 20,000) [and] is an indication of the dramatic and lasting effects of the European invasion on the Aborigines of Victoria' (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.21).

Although Coutts' estimation of the Victorian aboriginal population in 1834 is fairly accurate, with most scholars agreeing on an approximate figure of somewhere between 15,000 - 23,000 Victorian aborigines pre-contact, his 15,000 figure needs to be read in its context. Coutts wrote the article upon which this piece of research is based 15 years ago, at the time when aboriginal self-determination was gaining momentum resulting in many aborigines discovering their heritage and acknowledging their Aboriginality. Census figures, over the last ten years bare this out. That many aborigines were previously unaware of their Aboriginality, can be understood if one considers oppressive state policies, such as those which resulted in the stolen generations. Many aboriginal children were raised in white families and were led to believe that they were white. It is only in recent years that a large number of aboriginal adults have traced their heritage and family lineage back to their aboriginal origins.

## (II)

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF ABORIGINAL PRESENCE IN VICTORIA**

#### **The Evidence – Portland Bay and Port Phillip Bay**

There is a good deal of archaeological information available on the Aborigines of Portland Bay and Port Phillip Bay, although it varies in its qualitative and quantitative nature.

Amongst the first people to study the historical / contemporary aspects of Aboriginal life at Portland Bay, were free settler James Dawson and Chief Protector of Port Phillip Aborigines, George Augustus Robinson. These early Europeans provide anecdotal evidence of Aboriginal inhabitation. Both made great efforts to gain first hand knowledge of local Aborigines through personal interaction with them. Indeed Robinson had a great love of writing and his journals have been used by contemporary historians (and others) to glean a richer understanding of the local Aborigines. Robinson made some attempt to learn aboriginal languages but it was Dawson's daughter Isabella, who perhaps invested the most time and effort in this endeavor.

Robinson was the first person to conduct an archaeology of the Portland Bay district when, in 1841 he made 'detailed records of fishtraps and weir systems as well as mounds' (Coutts in Sherwood et. al. 1985 p.30). For the next 100 years there was no systematic scientific research of any significance until Edmund Gill conducted detailed studies of Aboriginal middens in the Tower Hill area. More research was carried out in the 1950's by D.J. Mulvaney and associates along the Glenelg river, and they also carried out excavations in two small rock shelters at Glen Aire - Cape Otway (Coutts 1985 p.31). With the formation of the Victorian Archaeological Survey (V.A.S.) large scale surveys were undertaken at various sites in the Warrnambool, Wilaura

and Ararat areas. Surveys and excavations have also been carried out in the Discovery Bay area near Portland by academics from V.A.S., Sydney and Latrobe Universities.

There is evidence of Aboriginal occupation at Port Phillip, although the quality of the finds has been affected by several factors, primarily the fact that the rapid European expansion at Port Phillip and surrounding regions has destroyed much evidence which still remains in country areas. This is not to say that there is no remaining evidence of Aboriginal occupation of greater Melbourne; rather, that the evidence has been built over or was never recognised or appreciated by Europeans when they first arrived at Port Phillip over 160 years ago. Evidence also exists in other forms – in the hearts and minds of the Aboriginal descendants of the *Bun wurrung* and *Woi wurrung* Aboriginal nations who first came to this region thousands of years ago. Where possible, the following discussion will allude to the Aboriginal occupation of both Portland and Port Phillip Bays, bearing in mind of course that most archaeological finds have been made in Western Victoria.

The archaeological study of six sets of constructions made or at least in part made by humans prior to the arrival of Europeans in 1834 supports the continuous occupation of the Portland Bay District by Aborigines. The relevant constructions are *Mounds*; *Lithic Scatters*; *Stone Houses*; *Fishing Complexes*; *Rock Shelters* and *Coastal Middens*.

### ***Mounds:***

#### Mounds

‘are prominences on the landscape comprising artificial accumulations of grey and black sediments mixed with occupation debris. Mounds are circular to oval in shape, vary from circa 3 to 30 meters in diameter and from approximately 0.3 to 1.5 meters in height. They are frequently located in natural rises and on high ground, often with good vantage of the surrounding countryside’ (Coutts in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.31).

The mounds are probably not much older than 5,000 years with the remaining mounds being unoccupied by the time Robinson went through the district in 1841. The mounds provide archaeologists with evidence of continuous occupation of specific areas in western Victoria. From the standpoint of sociology, the mounds indicate a highly developed economic and social order maintained by societies that existed in proximity to each other, while remaining autonomous and independent of each other. Coutts illuminates this point by demonstrating that mounds served a number of purposes depending on where they were located eg. by rivers, streams and lakes; and by their size (indicating the number of people or families they were intended to serve).

Coutts classifies mounds by describing their function and the type of social arrangement (eg. family, small group, large group) they were intended to serve.

Based on his analysis, Coutts concludes that:

- a) in areas that would have offered reliable seasonal food resources for small groups, possibly at a family level (say up to 10 persons) large single mounds are found;
- b) in areas that would have offered reliable seasonal food resources for small groups and which occasionally would have allowed several families or bands (up to say 50 persons) to aggregate in exceptional seasons, at least one large mound and several smaller ones tend to occur;
- c) in areas that would have offered reliable seasonal resources allowing several families or bands to aggregate in the same area during the year, large mounds, often in clusters in close proximity, tend to occur;

d) in areas that would have offered intermittent resources that were highly dependent on precipitation or other factors or where resources were highly ephemeral, small and intermediate sized mounds would occur in isolation or in clusters. Such resources could have been exploited most appropriately by small groups, possibly at family level (in Sherwood et. al.1985 p.33).

The mounds demonstrate the a variety of communal, social activities that took place in the area in which they were located. For example, Coutts has gleaned information which tells us how the local Gunditjmara and Djap Wurrung Aborigines cooked there food, what food they ate and the implements they used to collect their food:

‘Excavations have shown that the mounds variously contain simple hearths (comprising circular to rectangular arrangements of basalt pebbles and charcoal), cooking pits (holes up to a meter deep and a meter in diameter), debitage from stone tool manufacture, stone tools of various types, burials, post holes and the remains of animals and shellfish. Faunal evidence from the larger mounds suggests that Aborigines hunted a wide range of fauna including freshwater crayfish, turtle, bird, bandicoot, wallaby, kangaroo and native rat, as well as collecting birds eggs (including emu) and freshwater mussels. All these fauna are known to have been hunted by Aborigines just prior to the European invasion’ (in Sherwood et. al.1985 p.37).

### ***Lithic Scatters:***

Lithic scatters consist of large clusters of stone artifacts. They are hard to date with any precision but are located throughout the Western District. They range in size from a few square meters to a few hundred square meters and

‘almost without exception, these sites are associated with hydrological systems, and the larger sites are frequently found adjacent to perennial resources. Consequently I would argue that the larger sites were probably occupied during the warmer months of the year, when such locations would have been more comfortable and convenient than alternative venues’ (in Sherwood et. al. 1985 p.38).

The contents of the lithic scatters tend to vary depending on size and function. On the larger lithic scatters a wide variety of materials comparable to those found on mounds are evident. Tools, burnt remains of mussels, charcoal, bone, ochre, human remains, European artifacts, burnt basalt, and worn pebbles are amongst the many items found on the larger lithic scatters.

It is possible to glean a general picture of what the lithic scatters were used for. Coutts deduces a number of possible functions including stone tool manufacture and repair; axe making; ochre and plant food processing; campsites; trade/exchange meeting places; curing of implements. Coutts states that the larger lithic scatters were frequented regularly and were significant locations in the seasonal schedule. There is an exception to the uncertainty about dating Lithic scatters at Lake Bolac, 70 kilometres north of Warrnambool: ‘This is a very large site that stretches over a distance of more than half a kilometer. Excavations in the vicinity of Lake Bolac have shown that Aborigines were camped by its shores some 12,500 years ago’ (in Sherwood et. al. 1985 p.40).

Lake Bolac musician and founding member of the Warumpi Band, Neil Murray laments the loss of traditional Aboriginal culture and knowledge from the area. Murray’s song *Bulukbara Man* resonates with his wish that the Bulukbara, a Lake Bolac clan of the Tjap wurrung nation, survived the European invasion which, through wholesale murder, decimated their population

with the remaining Bulukbura people rounded up on mission stations. I have included the lyrics to Bulukbura Man, because Murray describes passionately the impact of colonisation on the Aboriginal nations of western Victoria, particularly Murray's country around Lake Bolac.



### BULUKBARA MAN

Far away from here out on a great volcanic plain  
In the land I was born a hundred years  
before I came  
There's a lake on a dreaming line where there's good  
fishing all the time  
There's a man who sets the stones  
and eels that run with the moon

Swimming to the arms of a Bulukbara man  
a Bulukbara man

Ghost riders came and with the power of  
a gun they took his world  
People had to run, they tried to fight this  
brutal scourge  
So many fell just a few remained  
Rounded up in mission shame  
Gathered up their tears and gone  
Leavin' their sweet water holes  
Full of the dreams of a Bulukbara Man  
Full of the dreams of a Bulukbara Man

Moon over fresh water  
And the frogs are calling

As a child I played and the seasons blew  
right across my face  
I ran where feet had trod, I swam in  
water that had been loved  
Stone tools upon the ground  
I picked them up and I couldn't put them down  
So many questions on my mind  
I wish I could go back in time  
And see for myself A man  
See for myself a Bulukbara man  
Yeah yeah yeah

In the shadows of my days, I feel a  
company in a strange way  
And I wonder could it be a Bulukbara Man  
Could it be a Bulukbara man?  
Could there still be a Bulukbara man?  
Well is that me, is that what I am?  
A Bulukbura man, a Bulukbara man

Well that's me, a Bulukbara man.



Neil Murray at Lake Bolac

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### ***Stone Houses:***

Throughout the stony rises of the Western District

‘large numbers of stone structures have been located around the margins of extensive swamps such as Lake Condah, Condah Swamp and Louth Swamp. Archaeological investigations have demonstrated they were stone houses, circular to U-shape in plan, some 2-12 square meters in area and in general orientated so that their entrances were away from the prevailing winds’ (in Sherwood et. al. 1985 p.41).

At Lake Condah 100 kilometres north west of Warrnambool, two large structures have been investigated in detail and Coutts has concluded that they are houses which ‘occur singly and in clusters, and from their disposition, they have the characteristics of “village” sites seen by early European observers and around wetlands on the basalt plains’ (in Sherwood et.al.1985 p.42).

### ***Fishing Complexes:***

Surveys and excavations have uncovered vast networks of sophisticated fishing complexes at Lake Condah and at Toolondo (200 kilometres north-north west of Warrnambool). The structures are impressive both for their ingenuity and the effort it must have taken to construct them. The Toolondo system ‘comprises 4 kilometres of earthen channels joining two swamps through a series of crab-holes, a radiocarbon date from a piece of river red-gum found in one of the channels suggests that the complex is older than 210 BP’ (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.43). The Lake Condah system is even more impressive. It was built using huge pieces of basalt which would be used to construct free standing stone walls and canals.



During the winter months, the lake would fill sending water and marine life rushing over the top of the rocky walls and canals, but once the water level began to recede, huge numbers of fish, eels and other marine life would be trapped in the pools created by the placement of basalt boulders. Coutts states that the placement of the stone walls and canals, constructed from basalt boulders 'can be seen as attempts to manage aquatic resources' (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.44). As mentioned earlier, the eel was a staple food from late autumn onwards and the systems would catch enough eel to sustain large communities for an extended period of time, perhaps as long as several months of the year. Coutts states that 'during the eel runs, it was only necessary to construct barriers across the streams leading to the sea to enable immense numbers of these animals to be caught' (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.23).

The eel was an important food source for the Gunditjmarra, Djap wurrung and Girai wurrung aboriginal nations of the western district. Coutts notes that eels were available all year round but were much easier to catch during late autumn when they migrated downstream to the sea to breed. The cultural significance of the eel still has resonance in the Gunditjmarra and Girai wurrung country of South West Victoria, whose country contains the Merri and Hopkins rivers.

The place of the eel in the aboriginal history of this region has been acknowledged in music and art produced in South West Victoria. One musician to gain national prominence for his songwriting, Shane Howard (former lead singer of the Goanna Band) wrote *The River Knows (Eel Song) Kunyang*, with ideas from Neil Murray and Girai wurrung elder Banjo Clarke. Clarke drew upon his cultural and spiritual knowledge of his country to inform Howard about the life cycle of the eel and its place in the spirit and culture of local Aboriginal people.

Howard writes:

'In the Gunditjmarra country of South West Victoria, the passing of summer is marked by the arrival of the autumn rains. With the coming of these rains, the rivers, streams and lakes fill and allow the mature eels to make their way down river to the estuaries where, after mating, they escape into the Southern Ocean. They travel far. It is now believed that they travel as far as the Coral Sea to spawn. The tiny elvers then drift on the ocean currents and the survivors eventually find their way back up the rivers and streams to the freshwater inland waterways. Here they will grow fat and sleek until, in time, they make their own way back into the ocean to continue their great cycle. For the Gunditjmarra people, the eel, (Kuuyang), is not only a staple food, but also a powerful cultural symbol' (taken from Howard 1996).

The eel is given a mythology and spirit in *The River Knows* and the song lines dance with the imagery of the eel's life cycle, informing us that life evolves and the spirit of a people is sustained through the metaphor of the eel. The song invites the listeners to evoke their own imagery of Western Victoria as they may not have perceived it before. That a man of Irish ancestry such as Howard could write such a song attests to Uncle Banjo Clarke's willingness to share his culture and spirit. I have included the lyrics to *The River Knows*, because they paint a picture of intrinsic love for country, conceived in spiritual terms.

#### **THE RIVER KNOWS**

Who's going to save this country now  
Who'll protect its sacred power  
Listen to the south-west wind  
Listen can you here the spirits sing  
See the wild birds fill the sky  
Here the plovers' warning cry  
Feel the wind and feel the rain  
Falling on the river once again

The river knows  
The river flows  
That old river knows  
Watch us come and go  
The south-west wind brings autumn rain  
To fill the rivers once again  
The eels will make their journey now  
Longing for that salty water

Down the Tuoram stones they slither  
In their thousands down the river  
Headed for the river mouth  
Fat and sleek and slowly moving south

The river knows  
The river flows  
That old river knows  
Watch us come and go

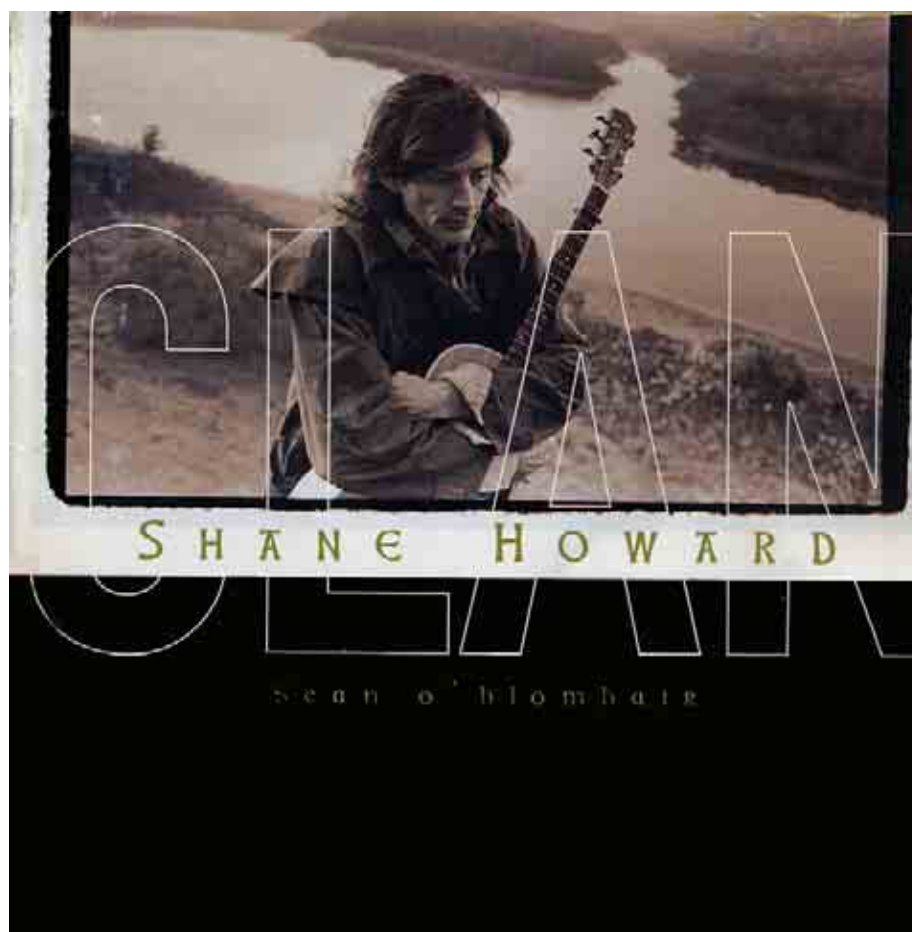
All the tribes will gather here  
Travel in from everywhere  
Food to share and things to trade  
Song and dance until it fades

Here the stories being told  
Handed down to young from old  
See the fires burning there  
Here the voices echo through the air  
The river knows  
The river flows  
That old river knows  
Watch us come and go

Listen can you here their song  
Singing as they move along

Moving through that country there  
All the stories gathered here

The Kuuyang move into the ocean  
Restless motion  
Even though they go away  
The spirits all return to here again



### ***Rock Shelters & Art Sites:***

There are about 82 known art sites in Victoria with the majority of them being in Gariwerd (the Grampians) in Central Western Victoria. Red ochre appears to be the most common medium for transcribing stories and symbols, but yellows and whites were also used. Coutts states that the art tends to be highly stylised and symbolic, but it matters not what descriptions we place upon the work. He has found the chronology of the work hard to solve but states that radiocarbon dates from archaeological deposits in the floors of three rock shelters in the Grampians

‘have demonstrated that they were used during the period circa 3,300 BP to 780 BP ... Overall, the archaeological evidence available from the Grampians indicates that the area was visited intermittently, essentially for ceremonial and spiritual reasons rather than economic ones’ (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.47).

### ***Coastal Middens:***

Coastal Middens are campsites used by Aborigines along the coastline. They are visible even today nestled away, yet within walking distance of modern car parks catering for tourists and local people taking in the picturesque Southern Ocean. The coastal middens contain a mixture of shellfish, bone, and stone discarded into a central pile of refuse. Aborigines ‘showed a strong preference for camping in sandy environments and where possible they collected rock platform species of shellfish, particularly Wavy Turbo (*Subnirrella Undulata*) and Limpet (*Cellana* spp) (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.47). The campsites were divided into two types: base camps and temporary camps. The temporary camps were used primarily for the consumption of food whereas the base camps, which were located further inland, were used for a variety of purposes such as repairing tools, making tools and hunting fauna. Base camps are rare by comparison to the many temporary camps scattered along the coastline of the South West: so much so that only two have been investigated in detail. These are located at Armstrong Bay near Warrnambool and Seal Point at Cape Otway. Coutts states that:

‘There is evidence at these two sites of shellfish gathering involving a number of strategies, the hunting of terrestrial animals such as kangaroo and wallaby, as well as smaller animals such as possum, of sea mammals such as seals, and of burrowing animals such as bandicoot. At Seal Point there is also evidence of fishing. Both sites are associated with bone points and the manufacture of throw away stone tools’ (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.48).

Several circular depressions found at Seal Point have been interpreted as stone houses. A variety of stone including flint, quartz and quartzite have been located at the site as have a number of 'scrapers' which were probably used for 'light duty woodworking and for the manufacture and maintenance of wooden tools' (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.48). Two other significant sites have been located, significant in the sense that they provide rich archaeological information. These are located at Glenaire rock shelter near Cape Otway (circa 370 BP) and more recently in a cave overlooking the Bridgewater Lakes (probably less than 2,000 years old) (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.49). The significance of these sites is that they contain evidence of a vast array of tool assemblage.

The Glenaire II site falls somewhere between a base camp and a temporary camp and the tools found there can be divided into several 'kits' as follows:

- **bone working kit** comprising artifacts known as burins, graters and bi-polar tools used in conjunction with bone and wooden billets;
- **woodworking kit** consisting of scrapers, adzes and stone hatchets;
- **plant processing kit** consisting of cutting and scraping tools; and
- **stone tool manufacturing kit** comprising hammerstones, cores and anvils.

On the basis of ecological analysis, Coutts posits that the best time to be on the coast was during spring and summer because during winter resources were particularly poor—about half those available during the summer (in Sherwood et. al. 1985 p.49).

Much of the western district was characterised by one or other of two vegetation associations - *Savannah woodland* or *grassland*. The major food sources available to Aborigines within these vegetation associations (inclusive of aquatic environments which are found in both) include: kangaroos; rats; emus; wallabies; shellfish; a variety of aquatic birds; possums; daisy yams; bird's eggs; eels and a wide variety of aquatic plants (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.23). Like the eel, daisy yams grew all year round, but they were much easier to locate during spring when they were flowering. When Major Mitchell passed through the area in 1836, he saw 'large areas covered in a sea of yellow - the daisy yam in flower; 'Aboriginal women collected the tap roots of the plant in large quantities and these were normally baked in ovens'(in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.24).



Shelter for the local Aborigines was derived from the vast resources of useful stone in the South West. Much of this stone would have been spewed from volcanoes thousands of years ago, and vast quantities of volcanic rock (basalt) can be seen through the Stony Rises, between Camperdown and Colac as well as on the coastal foreshore at Port Fairy. Coutts states that there was

‘a superabundance of basalt which was used to line fire places; there were several sources of diorite to make stone axes, silecretes, cherts, quartz and chalcedonies for making flake tools, and sandstones for use as grindstones. A shortage of timber in many areas led Aborigines to improvise as well as building shelters from bark, they used turf blocks and basalt boulders’ (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.24).

The coastal peripheries of the Western District produced an abundance of seasonal foods and other commodities. Although gaining food and commodities from the coastal environs, the local Aborigines, according to Coutts did not seem to be ocean-going people: ‘so far there is no convincing evidence from the many middens that dot the shoreline that Aborigines exploited offshore marine resources’ (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.26). The middens Coutts is referring to are still visible today. Middens were meeting places where people would eat large quantities of local foods such as shellfish, and they would then discard the shell or bone by throwing it onto a central pile, possible where a campfire had been built. As more refuse was discarded the pile would, over a period of time grow bigger.

The remaining middens at Thunder Point in Warrnambool appear to attract little local attention. That little has been done to preserve these middens attests to a lack of local shared knowledge about the Aboriginal occupation of the area prior to the first Europeans in 1834. It could also be argued that the lack of community knowledge about the middens attests to the way Aboriginal culture was suppressed in the period between 1834 -1900 resulting in the ongoing ignorance of successive generations of Europeans to Aboriginal culture(s) in western Victoria.

Aborigines in western Victoria made canoes although these were mainly used on rivers, lagoons, estuaries and lakes. However:

‘there is evidence (archaeological) of recent Aboriginal occupation of Lady Julia Percy Island 13 km off Port Fairy which does suggest off-shore journeys were made there from time to time. But overall, it seems that the oceans off-shore resources remained largely untapped by Aborigines’ (in Sherwood et.al 1985 p.27).

Coutts points out that trees which would have been suitable for building sturdy sea craft, were only found several kilometres inland from the shore, so it was, perhaps, impractical for Aborigines to carry canoes the long distances necessary to reach the shore.

The work of Gill and Coutts has been used here to provide some archaeological and scientific detail as to the extent and length of Aboriginal occupation of South West Victoria. By any estimate, the Aboriginal advancement into the Western District occurred somewhere between 40,000 and 120,000 years ago with most happy to settle on an approximate date of some 53,000 years ago. Gill and particularly Coutts lend weight to the view that Aborigines have occupied various parts of South West Victoria on a continuous basis for as long as 5,700 years without interruption - that is, until the arrival of European sealers on the shores of the South West at the beginning of the 1830's. The first acknowledged 'settlers' of the South West were the four Henty brothers who arrived at Portland Bay in 1834.

## CONFLICT IN WESTERN VICTORIA

A view of Aborigines was established from the outset in some quarters that they were to be feared and where necessary, dealt with by whatever means necessary to ensure that the pastoralist's land was held. This attitude and ideology, under the pretence of Darwinian science, presumed that Europeans were *naturally* superior to Aborigines. Personal accounts of such attitudes are many including the wife of a pastoralist who took pity on the Aborigines declaring, "poor things—they really don't remind me scarcely of human beings" (Critchett 1990 p.31). Such thinking was common amongst the wealthy, landed aristocracy.

The initial conflict between the Europeans and the Aborigines was sparked by tensions over two commodities central to the existence of each respective group; land and sheep. The Aborigines realised very early on the importance and value of sheep to the livelihoods of the Europeans. The financial outlay on one sheep was sizable at the time; pastoralists spent great sums of money on these animals in the hope and expectation of reaping great profits from the sale of the fleece. Aborigines sought to undermine European occupation of the Portland Bay district by killing, maiming or stealing sheep. Much conflict ensued between the laboring classes who were employed to tend to the sheep, and the Aborigines who sought revenge upon the pastoralists for stealing their land.

Although the laboring classes were employed to carry out the unsavory work their employers demanded, 'some individuals were notoriously brutal and violent' (Critchett 1990 p.33). As more Europeans moved into the area, contact between the two cultures grew more frequent and the nature of the contact varied:

'what was unusual was the degree of close contact between the races, a contact that varied from friendliness to outright hostility from one pastoral station to the next. Relationships were complex varying not only from one station to the next, but rapidly changing over time as those who found themselves intermingled across the district attempted to come to terms with the presence of another race' (Critchett 1990 p.36).

The Portland Bay district existed in physical and mental isolation from Port Phillip and local Aborigines could not have had any idea of the growth of Melbourne, because the only contact they had with Europeans came directly when they were told to leave their lands or with the intermittent passing of horse and dray. It was difficult for the local Aborigines to establish a general impression of the squatters, because they could present either a positive or negative image

of Europeans. Also adding to the uncertainty of the local Aborigines was their belief that the appearance of a white skinned person was actually an ancestor returning from the dead.

Robinson made great efforts to understand the social arrangements of Aboriginal groups. He identified 151 groups of Aborigines across the district and designated them as “tribes” when they were in fact ‘clans—groups of closely related kin which formed the most important social unit of the Aborigines’ (Lourandos in Critchett 1990 p.38). Although some knowledge was divested in Robinson by local Aborigines, certain knowledge was not. The local Aborigines did not share knowledge of sacred sites with Robinson even though they knew he was sympathetic to the situation in which they were placed.

The European conception of land and its use was very different to the perceptions of Aborigines:

‘Whereas Europeans talked of “land” the Aborigines referred to their “country”. Each Aboriginal family had its “own country”. The Aboriginal word for country “Chaknaek” in Chap wurrung, “Maeaering An” in Kuurn Kopan root and “Maeaering” in Peek Wurrung meant “my country” (Critchett 1990p.39).

The attachment the local Aborigines had to their country was not acknowledged in any meaningful way by the Europeans. Critchett raises the story of Jacky White who was forced to reside on Lake Condah mission station, away from his country. The following text reads as a poignant reminder that Aboriginal people were/are conscious that Europeans, after they first arrived in 1834, undid social and economic arrangements that had been adhered to for thousands of years. Jacky White’s letter to land-holder, Samuel Winter reads:

‘... if you write to the government for us, and get us off here, I will do work for you and will never leave you ... I always wish ... to be in my country where I was born ... This country don’t suit me. I’m a stranger in this country, I like to be in my country’ (p.41) while another Aborigine from around Burrumbeep, Tung borroong, declares to Robinson ‘that’s my country belonging to me!’ (Critchett 1990 p.41).

While moving through the Western District, the settlers had three main priorities according to Critchett: 1) Ease of access to the coast or city; 2) good pastures and ample water; 3) land clear of vegetation. It is the callous disregard which the Europeans had for the Aborigines which angered the Aborigines the most. That they sought to drive Aborigines off their land, off their country and their means of subsistence was bad enough, but the manner in which this task was executed lacked the most fundamental understanding of humanity. Indeed some Europeans did not question their own behaviour. They chose not to see Aborigines as fellow human beings.

The primary goal for the Europeans was to secure land with available water for their stock. Water and the marine life of the rivers, streams and estuaries were also critical resources for local Aborigines. Consequently the first land to be taken was often land adjacent to Aboriginal dwelling places. An Aborigine was recorded to observe ‘Plenty water for a long time, but when the white people come the water goes away’ (Critchett 1990 p.53), and ‘The natives say it is the white people coming that drives the water away’ wrote Katherine Kirkland (Critchett 1990 p.53). Large dwelling places used by Aborigines before the arrival of the Europeans ceased to be used after their arrival, because they were usually built near water sources to which Europeans had laid claim. Critchett (1990 p.53) sums up the process and its effect on the Aborigines:

‘As they scattered across the district lured on by the desire for a permanent source of water, each squatter established himself finally on a site without which

it is likely local Aborigines could survive without a fundamental change to their way of life. In some cases the effect was greater - the local Aboriginal group became extinct soon after the arrival of the Europeans'

Once the Europeans took the land force (in the form of firearms) was directed against Aborigines to disuade them from attempting to rebuild.

'Near to Forlonge's dairy station Robinson saw several native huts. And of the dairy' station itself he wrote : "Where the dairy station is there is a fine spring, the only water on the creek. The natives therefore are deprived of their water. A whole village ... have been forced away from their ancient pool". At Campbell's farm at Port Fairy, Robinson heard that "natives told the white man ... that they steal black men's water and are no good, for when the blackfellow came they say be off"(Critchett 1990 p.66).

A popular justification for such acts of theft and in some cases, murder, suggests (without basis) that Aborigines did not try to resist their oppressors. This is not the case. The same ignorant misrepresentation manifests itself in 'sympathetic' observations such as, *'it's a pity the Aborigines didn't fight back like the American Indians and the Maoris'*. A critical look at history informs us that the Aborigines did fight back and the romantic notion of the peaceful 'settlement' of the Portland Bay District and other parts of Australia is a myth. Critchett makes the telling point that :

'Those who ignore the books written about the pioneering period and the local oral history accounts of each community may believe in the peaceful settlement of the district. But the tradition of violence is so much alive that anyone with any interest in the district's history knows that in this area the land was neither easily won, nor without a large cost in lives - largely Aboriginal lives' (1990 p.121).

There has been much debate about the population of the Aborigines in the Portland Bay District up to Robinson's expeditions in 1841 and 1842. From Robinson's journals, a figure of 2942 Aborigines living in the district can be reached. However others such as Lourandos and Butlin have offered different schema, putting the figure above this, perhaps as high as 3600. At any rate, the declining population is a direct result of European occupation of the South West. A persistent belief which is commonly put to justify the population decline in Aborigines is that smallpox was responsible. Critchett however goes to great lengths to argue that smallpox played no role in the population decrease of the Aborigines living in the Portland Bay district. Anthropologist Diane Barwick conducted an important study *Changes in the Aboriginal population of Victoria 1863 - 1966* which found

Anthropologist Diane Barwick conducted an important study *Changes in the Aboriginal population of Victoria 1863 - 1966* which found that Aboriginal depopulation was chiefly caused by 'wanton slaughter', 'starvation' and the effect of European introduced diseases, notably influenza, measles, tuberculosis and the venereal diseases then labeled syphilis' (Critchett 1990 p. 84).

As more Europeans moved into the Portland Bay District, hostilities became more frequent and the killing of Aborigines began to escalate. In many cases Aborigines were killed for being suspected of stealing and maiming sheep. Sheep appeared to be valued more highly than the lowly paid laborers who were employed as shepherds throughout the district. Indeed according to Critchett the theft of sheep was reported to authorities on a more frequent basis than Aboriginal attacks on shepherds. Aboriginal attacks on sheep reflected the perception of Aborigines towards Europeans. According to Critchett 'Exclusion from their "country" was central to the Aboriginal sense of outrage' (1990 p.99).



It was not only the exclusion from country that drew local Aborigines to retaliate. It was also the callousness and brutality witnessed by so many Gunditjmara and Djap Wurrung Aborigines against their own people that caused their rebellion. Aboriginal attacks on sheep or revenge killings were frequently met by 'hunting parties' or 'punitive expeditions' as they were known, where whole bands of Aborigines would be shot on site by men with long range guns on horseback. It was reported after one hunting party that 'more than thirty are said to have been thus laid low' (Critchett 1990 p.125). The language of such a report, describing as it does the massacre of 30 Aborigines, is itself revealing. The most disturbing fact of this case is that the state was impotent and did not see that the men responsible for the murders were brought to justice.

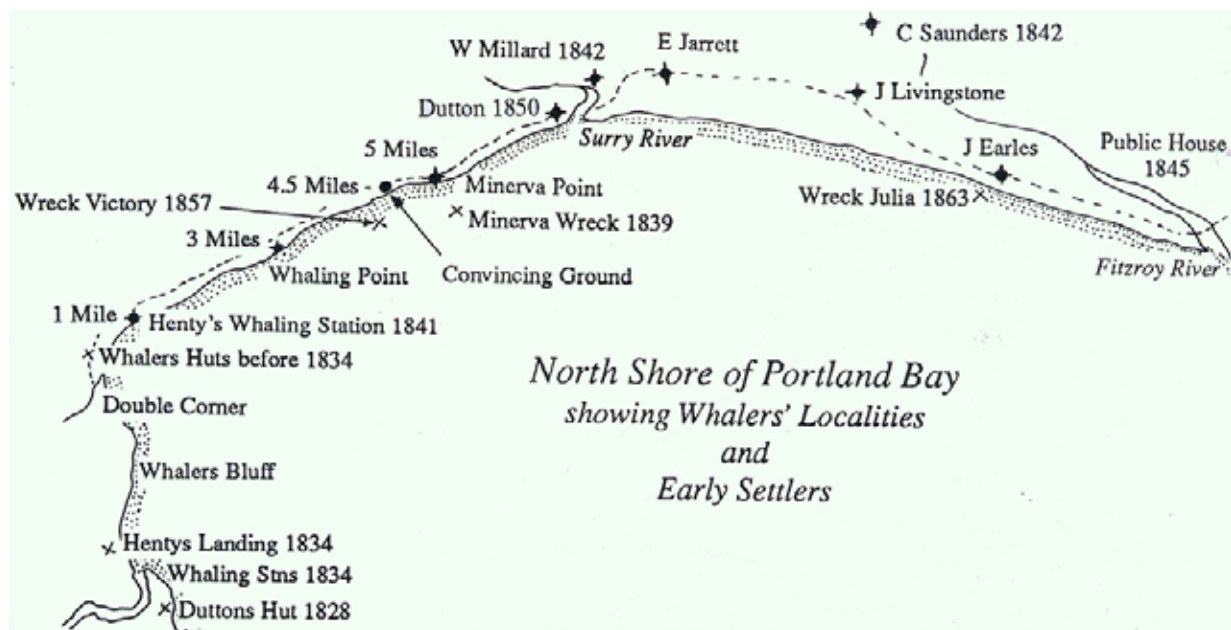
In the next chapter I deal with the political attitudes about Aborigines which pervaded through the colonies. The past is not far from the present; and massacres such as the one just outlined are still in the living memories of many Aboriginal people. The massacres throughout Victoria were many. In another incident outside Camperdown, between 35 –and 40 Aborigines were killed while they slept. In the knowledge of incidents such as this it is not surprising that many Aboriginal people felt offended that the tragic shooting of 35 people at Port Arthur in April 1996 was reported across the country as "Australia's worst ever mass murder". Thus an event that may have raised awareness and

understanding of the history of white settlement itself contributed to the persistence of misinformation.

The worst hostilities between Aborigines and Europeans occurred in 1842 with the *Portland Mercury* declaring that 'the country might as well be in a state of civil war' and 'open warfare between the races'. Critchett herself declared that by 1842 the district was 'in a state of turmoil' (Critchett 1990 p. 107). During this period of frontier conflict, Aboriginal groups upped the ante and continued their attacks on sheep, realising they were the most important commodity the Europeans possessed. Because of the attacks on sheep and the perceived threat to personal safety, more wars broke out in many parts of the district. By 1848 19 Europeans had been reported killed with the figure standing at 260 for the Aborigines. Many massacres of Aborigines are known to have taken place across the district including the massacre at the 'convincing ground' at Portland Bay where countless numbers of Aborigines are believed to have been killed. Robinson described the 'Convincing Ground' incident in his official report of his 1841 journey into western Victoria in the following terms

'Among the remarkable places on the coast, is the 'Convincing Ground', originating in a severe conflict which took place a few years previous between the Aborigines and Whalers on which occasion a large number of the former were slain. The circumstances are that a whale had come on shore and the Natives who feed on the carcass claimed it was their own. The whalers said they would "convince them" and had recourse to firearms. On this spot a fishery is now established' (Clark 1990b)

The 'Convincing Ground' incident which occurred on the coast between Portland and the Surrey river in either 1833 or 1834 saw the murder of all but two young men of the Kilcarer clan of the Gunditjmarra (Dhauwurd wurrung) nation. The map below provide some more geographical detail about the location of the 'Convincing Ground'.



Critchett states that ‘the district was a “distant field of murder” in several ways. Aborigines killed Europeans. Europeans killed Aborigines. But Aborigines also turned on other Aborigines whose presence was due to European settlement’ (1990 p.96). The disproportionate ratio of European to Aboriginal deaths needs to be placed in context; although doing so only makes the killings of Aborigines harder to justify. In the vast majority of cases Aborigines killed Europeans out of revenge; they were outraged at the treatment of their fellow countrymen/women by the Europeans. Critchett documents cases of Aborigines being kept for sex; or boys being kept to fetch women for sex. In other instances the boys were told to get their families who were promised damper and upon their arrival, they would be shot on site, or poisoned by the consumption of the food.

Aborigines *did* put up a significant fight against the Europeans. They did not initiate the conflict, but neither did they lay down and die at the onset of hostilities. Robinson found the local Aborigines to be a very adaptable people who would have been prepared to co-exist with Europeans. Reynolds too, has found evidence suggesting that Europeans and Aborigines attempted to coexist in Queensland with arrangements such as ‘your land, my sheep’ being the order of things. With these thoughts in mind, it is a sad reflection upon European settlers that:

‘Against a background where revenge killing and conflict over women accounted for most fighting, it is not surprising to discover that the Europeans killed in the Portland Bay district before 1842 were almost all guilty of violence against Aborigines or involved in disputes over Aboriginal women. Nowhere did a group of Europeans die as a result of a large-scale Aborigine-initiated encounter’(Critchett 1990 p.91).

According to Critchett, 'there is no doubt that the Aborigines understood that their land had been taken. What seemed to upset them most was that their willingness to share had been followed by their being turned away, not wanted' (1990 p.99).

The task of protecting the Aborigines became increasingly difficult for Robinson's assistant protectors who were naive in that they 'seem to have come to Australia with the expectation of establishing mission stations, rather than interacting with and amongst the tribes' (Critchett 1990 p.143). Eventually the assistant protectors won out and Governor Gipps in Sydney reluctantly agreed to the formation of a 'fixed station for each assistant protector' (Critchett 1990 p.143). Critchett makes the point that the establishment of stations may have done more harm than good because 'an assistant protector with duties on a station would not be free to check hostilities between the races across the whole district' (Critchett 1990 p.143). But so it was, that on 21 March 1839 Robinson ordered the assistant protectors 'to take the field forthwith' and one month later 'he notified them of their districts'. (Critchett 1990 p.143).

The assistant protector of the Western District, Charles Sievwright was to proceed 'in the direction of Geelong and the country to the westward' (Critchett 1990 p.143). It was not until February 1841 that he landed upon Lake Keilambete to the north of Terang where upon arrival, he found that the location was already occupied by John Thompson who protested at Sievwright's presence on his land. Sievwright spent time setting up camp and gathering local Aboriginal clans at Lake Terang, before moving on to the newly chosen site, Mt. Rouse, where Sievwright arrived on 12 February 1842.

The task of moving Aborigines onto mission stations was not easy. The Aborigines belonged to their own country so to move onto someone else's country could mean unnecessary hostility between the bands. After Robinson's recurring assurances that they would be protected an embassy of Barrable Aborigines accompanied Sievwright to Lake Keilambete. Upon their arrival, other Aborigines soon gathered:

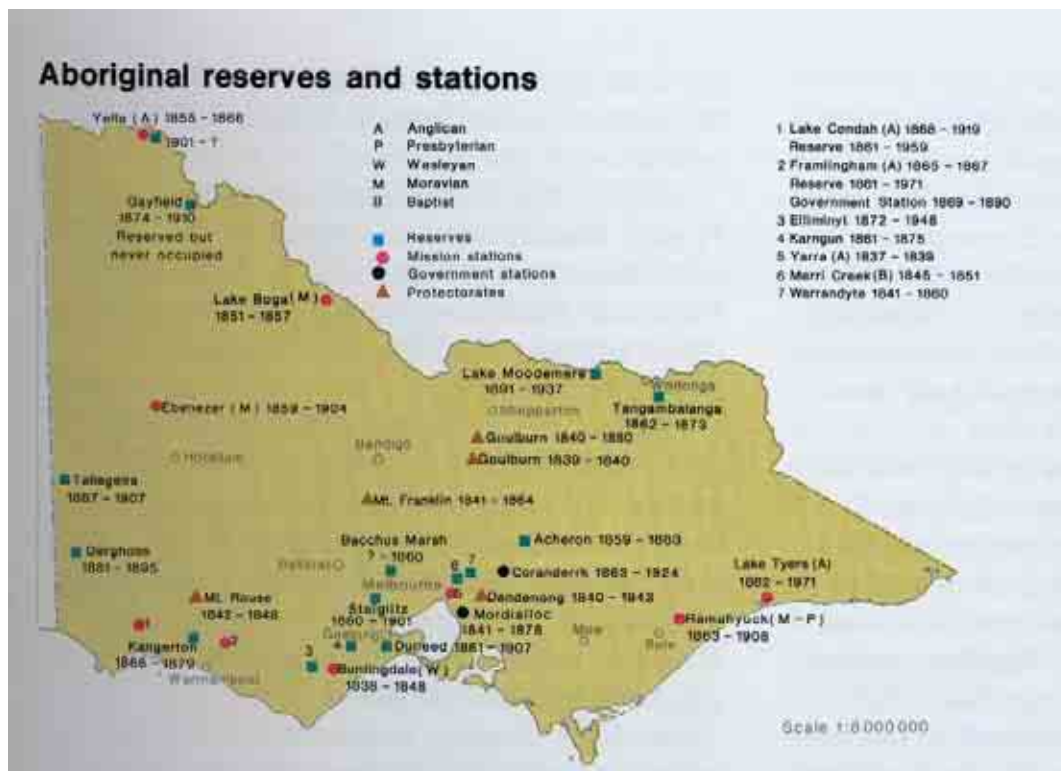
'When Robinson visited, between 6 and 22 April 1841 he claimed to have met between two and three hundred Aborigines. The Elingamite, the Jarcourt, the Maremeet, the Bullerburer (Bolokeburers), the Conewurt and the Wornerbul were mentioned as being at the camp' (Critchett 1990 p.144).

The Aborigines who did not make the trek to Mt. Rouse initially were ordered to go there, by the Native Police. According to Critchett, there was a lot of coming and going from the station and many who had gone there soon left. Many were reluctant to go in the first place; fearful of leaving their country and of the reception they would receive from other tribes upon their arrival at Mt. Rouse. Some did proceed of their own accord (perhaps motivated by the sense that they were returning to their own country). However the voluntary reasons for going to Mt. Rouse were outweighed by the State's forceful coercion of Aborigines onto the station. In one incident the Native Police 'drove a party of between two and three hundred Aborigines from Lake Boloke and the river Hopkins to the station' (Critchett 1990 p.145). Neil Murray sings of an incident such as this in *Bulukbara Man*. "So many fell just a few remained. Gathered up in mission shame".

Siewwright, unlike Robinson and Dawson did not speak any of the local Aboriginal languages and no religious services were held until after the Mt. Rouse station was established in February 1842. Life on the station consisted of regimented activities focusing on agricultural production and the aim was

to try and “civilise” the Aborigines. There were attempts made to teach the Aborigines how to ‘care for animals and plant crops’. The working day was from after breakfast to 3.00 pm. If it rained the men were not expected to work. It was, according to Critchett, ‘government policy that food should be distributed only to those who worked, to the sick and to the young and the elderly so that the Protectorate camp and later, the station could not be perceived as a place automatically to gain food’ (1990 p.147). The aim of this program was to teach the Aborigines the relationship between food and work. There is a paradox here. Before the arrival of Europeans, the Aborigines had food in abundance and their lives did not circulate around a European time system.

The “work for food” program for managing the Aborigines became as farcical in practice as it was in theory because according to Critchett there was often no food to be allocated as reward for work. The reward for work system brought other problems . At Lake Terang Sievwright and the Protectorate employees faced hostilities from Aborigines over the distribution of food. Two killings occurred which caused Sievwright to halt the supply of food. This decision was foolish and a siege ensued, with Aborigines attempting to take the food by force.



By the year 1865 the colonial government required Aborigines to live on mission stations. Six stations were established including Mt. Rouse, Lake Condah and Framlingham, all of which were located in South West Victoria. The Framlingham land rights battle of the late 1970’s and early 1980’s was born out of a desire of Aborigines of the area to reclaim land which was rightfully theirs. This is not to say that the Aborigines wanted to reclaim their country which was lost over 100 years ago, but rather, to gain autonomy and access of land which would help them to reclaim some cultural and symbolic independence from their European oppressors.

## (II)

### **A SNAPSHOT OF PORT PHILLIP**

The experience of western district Aborigines provides an insight into the conditions that applied to the local inhabitants of Port Phillip before the establishment of Melbourne and during the period of settlement and dispossession. In this section archaeological evidence will be provided which dates the Aboriginal occupation of Melbourne. Accompanying it is a description of the physical environment of Port Phillip at the time when John Batman led a team of Van Dieman capitalists ashore in 1834, to stake their claim on Woi wurrung and Bun wurrung country. This section owes much to the archaeological work carried out by (among others) Gary Presland, whose work is illuminating in its ingenious archaeological and historical reconstruction of Port Phillip and surrounding districts in the early nineteenth century.

#### **Melbourne's first settlers.**

There is evidence to suggest that aborigines first arrived in the Melbourne area at least forty thousand years ago. The most significant evidence was found when;

In 1940 a quarryman working at the junction of Arundel Creek and Maribyrnong River at Keilor unearthed some bones and a carbonate-encrusted skull. To the trained eye they looked old, the ground seemed undisturbed and there were traces of ancient hearths as well. Attempts were made to date the finds by geological estimates. A more precise answer came in the 1950's when radiocarbon methods established that the skull was 15,000 years old. Work in the 1960's, which has been confirmed recently, revealed that the age of the layers in which human occupation were found stretched back to 40,000 years, possibly a little more. The Keilor site, recently purchased by the Victorian government is not only the oldest known site of human occupation in Victoria, but one that was continuously occupied by the Aborigines for 40,000 years' (Broome 1984 p.4).

In his work, *The land of the Kulin*, Gary Presland challenges the reader to see the Melbourne landscape and surrounds in ways unfamiliar to them. He takes the reader back to the time pre-contact (before the first interaction between the Aborigines and Europeans) and tries to reconstruct both the landscape and aboriginal life as it might have been. Although written from a European perspective and thus being devoid of innate aboriginal wisdom, Presland does capture with clarity the physiography of Melbourne. It is an important work in that it alerts non-Aboriginal Victorians who seek a critical interpretation of Victorian history, that there was a rich and vibrant Aboriginal presence around Port Phillip and greater Melbourne, before the arrival of Europeans.

Presland asserts that the first Europeans to arrive at Port Phillip would have observed a landscape only vaguely like the one over which the city of Melbourne now spreads. As their boats enter Hobson's Bay, in 1830, they pass on the left a grassy point where Williamstown will be founded. On the right is a low-lying flat which extends around the perimeter of the bay away to the south-east. (Presland 1985 p.11). The flatness of the lowlands is broken only by 'a strikingly green grassy hill which rises prominently above its low surroundings. this is soon to be named Emerald Hill where the South Melbourne Town Hall will be built' (Presland 1985 p.11). Presland notes that the low-lying

country around the base of the hill 'will become known as the South Melbourne swamp and, during the depression of the 1930's will be formed into Albert Park lake' (Presland 1985 p.11).

In the early days of settlement, Presland notes, passengers disembarking for Melbourne will carry their bags from the wharf in Sandridge (Port Melbourne) across the northern end of the marshy flats, to the settlement on the Yarra banks. The marsh will be drained and built over as the area develops until virtually the only reminder of its original state is the Albert Park lake.

Northwest of the Port Phillip delta is a great volcanic plain, caused by lava spills emanating from the western district of Victoria as recently as 5000 years ago. The basalt plains are covered by native grasses and will provide luscious pastures for the vast sheep runs, which will define the squattocracy of western Victoria.



Two rivers run into the bay; one saltwater to be named the Maribyrnong, the other freshwater, to be named the Yarra;

'in 1835 John Wedge, Batman's friend and the surveyor with Batman's Port Phillip Association, will give it the name Yarra Yarra in the mistaken belief that this is the Aboriginal name for the stream. In fact the aborigines called it Bay-ray-rung' (Presland 1985 p.12).

Heading southeast to where St.Kilda will be built

‘there are swampy lagoons covered in close-growing tee-tree scrub. Much of the area between the river and the future location of Dandenong road is swampy and prone to flooding, and in winter, there is often water on the ground. In the area between where Chapel street and St.Kilda road will be, there is a thick wattle forest interspersed with mature gums. Parts of this forest will remain until the 1860’s to be lost in the rapid growth of Melbourne’ (Presland 1985 p.20).

Heading further southeast, low-woody scrub extends from the Yarra, near Kew, ‘and as far inland as Oakleigh and Springvale’ Larger trees such as redgums grow in areas which are well watered; particularly ‘along the few streams and in the valley north of where Middle Brighton station will be’ (Presland 1985 p.20)

Further south from Brighton, another larger swamp appears ‘so large that it will pose problems for the earliest European settlers and their grazing cattle. This will be known as the Carrum swamp, stretching along the eastern edge of the bay from Mordialloc creek to Frankston. (Presland 1985 p.22). East of the Carrum swamp Presland observes,

‘the major type of vegetation in the lower parts of the Port Phillip area is open woodland. Stretching from the Dandenongs to the top of Westernport, is a great plain covered with stands of mature eucalypts. This is essentially open country and will be very attractive to Europeans wanting to heard sheep. It is similar to the area north and west of the two main rivers of the district. All of these open areas are the habitat of the kangaroo, wallaby and emu’ (Presland 1985 p 22).

Presland describes the physical landscape of Port Phillip with clarity and ease. Anthropologist, Diane Barwick and geographer, Ian Clarke, describe the social organisation of the main aboriginal nations around the Melbourne area with an equal degree of accomplishment. Their work is the most recent and the richest account of the aboriginal nations of the Melbourne area produced by non-aboriginal writers. Clarke has not only been informed by Barwick, but has enlarged and expanded upon her original observations. The work of these writers challenges the historical beliefs of many non-Aboriginal Victorians, because it describes in detail, the society and beliefs of the first people of this area. Their work is an important contribution to the education of non-Aboriginal Victorians, because it provides some insight into the way aborigines of the Port Phillip and surrounding districts lived pre-contact.

Barwick (1984 p.100) states that

‘the best known map of Victorian “tribes” is the continental “tribal map” published in 1940 by South Australian Museum biologist and ethnologist Norman. B. Tindale . Tindale’s 1940 tribal labels were admittedly the basis for more recent maps of language distribution in Victoria - with some amendments resulting from linguistic research in the 1960’s and/or consultation with the original notes compiled by amateur ethnographers A.W. Howitt, R.H. Mathews and John Matthew, which were inaccessible for scholarly study until the 1970’s’(1984 p.100).

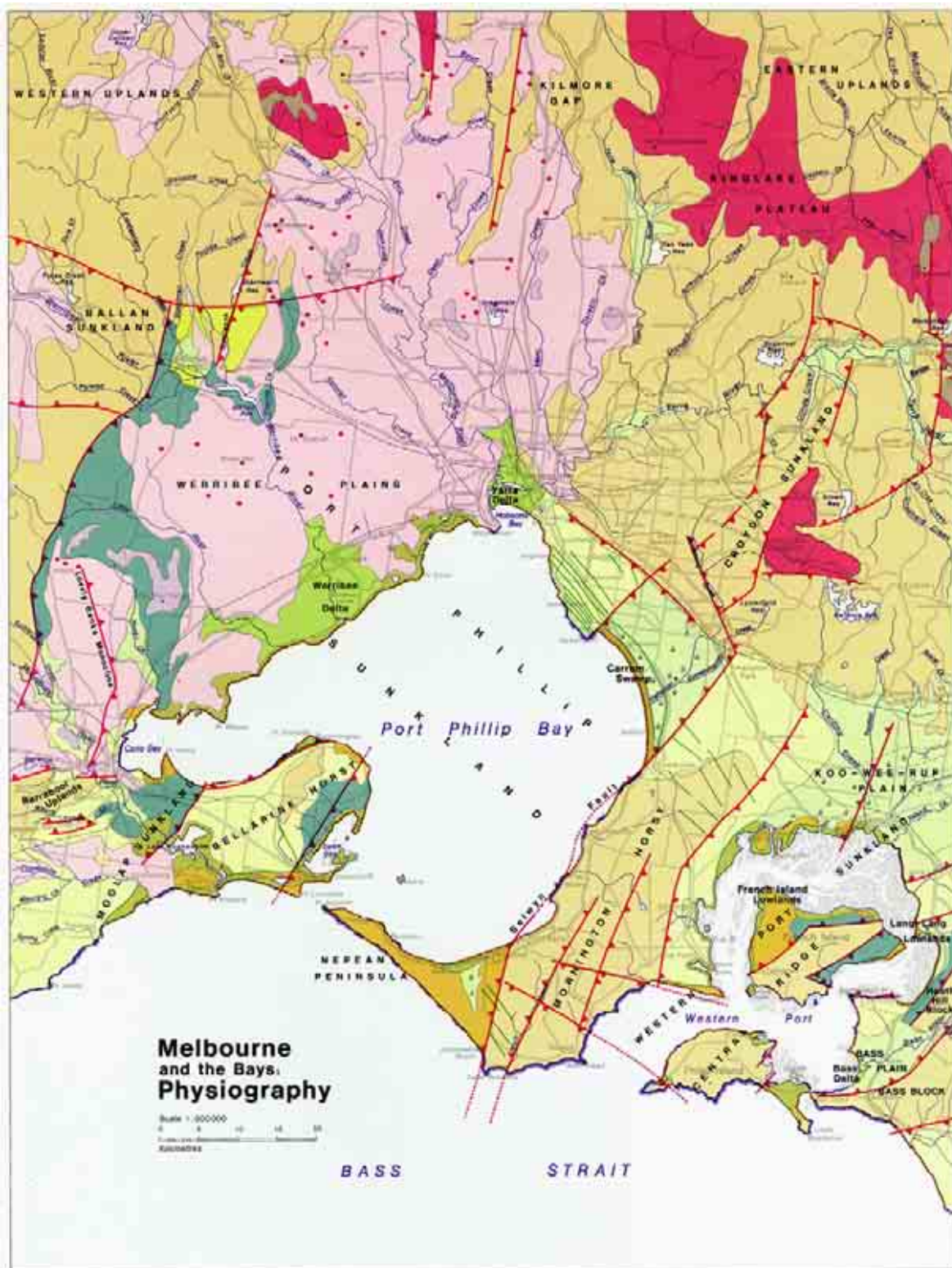
Much debate has been waged about the accuracy, validity and legitimacy of these amateur ethnologists; indeed Tindale questioned the reliability of R.H. Mathews in 1940 but his 1974 revision of his 1940 map 'acclaimed' Mathews' work. Barwick, although she appreciates Mathews' contribution, is conscious not to accept it on face value. She states that

'Because R.H. Mathews publications have been the main source for Tindale's maps, and modern language distribution maps, I cannot ignore them, but I must point out that his sometimes ignorant and sometimes deliberate distortions check quote so muddled the ethnographic record, that a detailed review of his research is needed' (1984 p.102).

Barwick's assertions raises an important point. When reading any historical research it is essential to bear in mind the social context and the perspective of the writer. Much "Australian History" which has been digested through the mainstream education system has been tainted with

'The nineteenth century gentlemen whose ethnographic publications influence modern research were not mere "scribes". Their jealousies, ambitions, loyalties and roles in colonial society shaped their inquires and the context of their publications' (1984 p.108).



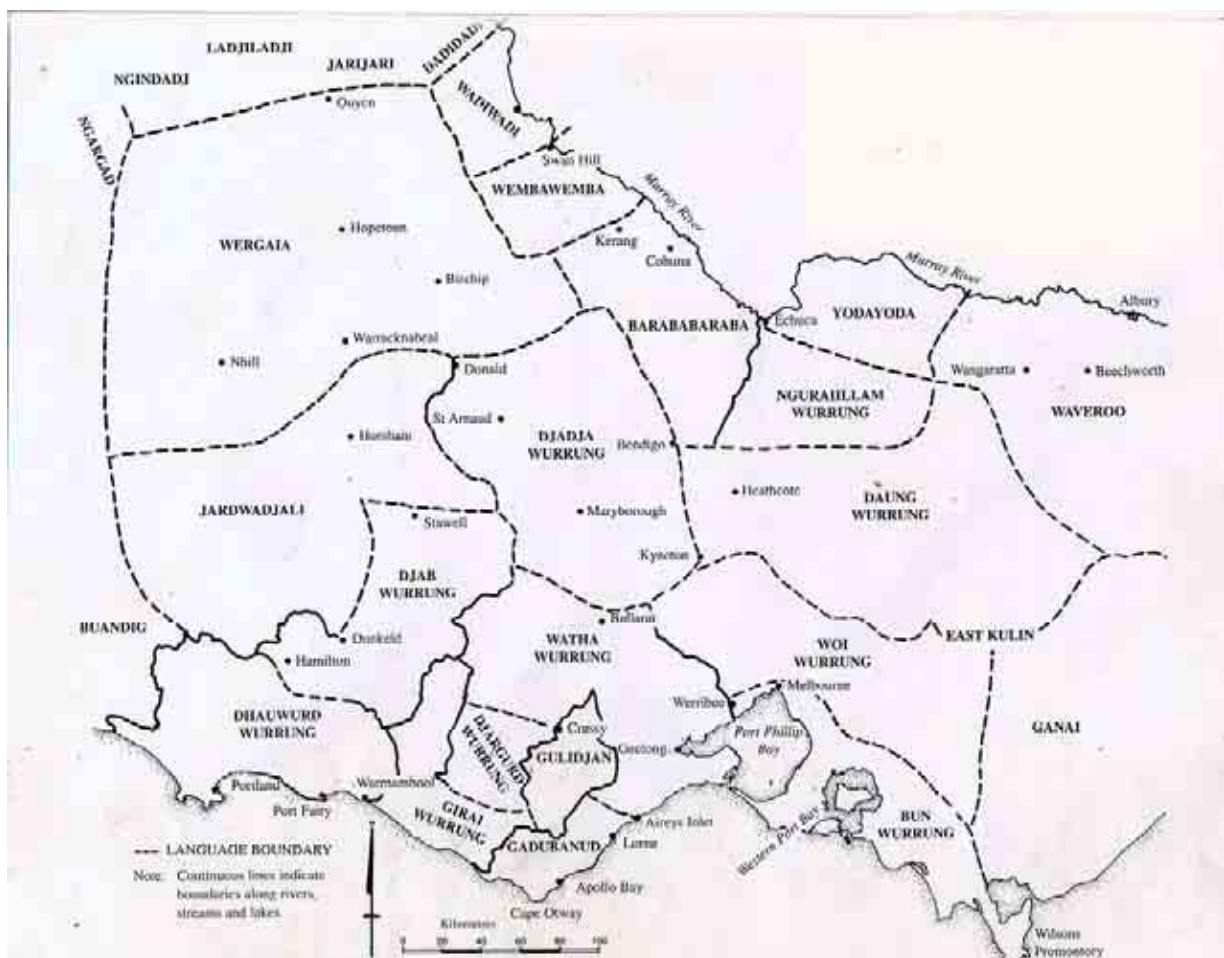


The ideologies that shaped white Australia's thinking at the time are discussed in the next chapter. Even today they impact upon the ways some non-aboriginal perspectives of aborigines, are shaped.

(III)

**ABORIGINAL SOCIAL ORGANISATION**

There are many gaps in European understandings of aboriginal society(s) both historically and in the contemporary context. How for example did different aboriginal nations organise their social and spiritual lives, and how did this order differentiate them from other aboriginal nations? By way of example, consider “the Australian nation”. Within this nation there are various states and territories and within each of these, there are districts and regions such as the Western District or Gippsland in Victoria. For at least 53,000 years, the state we now know as Victoria was divided between approximately 34 aboriginal nations.



The five aboriginal nations around the Melbourne area are the *Bun wurrung*, *Woi wurrung*, *Daung wurrung*, *Watha wurrung* and the *Girnai*. Barwick (1984 p.105) states;

‘They identified themselves as *Kulin* - as members of a regional cultural bloc or ‘confederacy’ - maintained by intermarriage, a common language and mutual interests of various kinds. One of the bonds maintaining this confederacy was *moiety affiliation* (my emphasis): *Kulin* divided their world into two halves (moieties) labeled *waa* (crow) and *bunjil* (eaglehawk). Individuals were identified with one or other of these moieties, which both shaped the patterned intermarriage of specific clans and transcended local allegiance when the *Kulin* met for religious rituals or the settlement of disputes or simply chose teams for a ball game’ (Italics my emphasis)

The importance of moiety cannot be understated in pre-contact aboriginal society. One’s moiety conferred upon the individual their social, political and economic opportunities and responsibilities:

‘Each clan belonged to either the *waa* or *bunjil* moiety. Clan members had to find spouses from a clan of a different moiety, either within or outside their own - (w)urrung. Within the *Kulin* bloc, clusters of adjacent clans which shared a common dialect and some degree of mutual political and economic interest because of their geographical contiguity, distinguished themselves by a “language” name with the suffix -(w)urrung (meaning mouth or speech) (Barwick 1984 p.105).

The *Woi wurrung* and *Bun wurrung* occupied the greater Melbourne area. According to Clarke, the *Woi wurrung*

‘Formed part of a dialect continuum with *Bun wurrung* (75 -80 percent common vocabulary and *Daung wurrung* (75 percent) and scored the following with neighboring languages: *Djaja wurrung* (45 percent), *Djab wurrung* (46 percent). and *Wemba wemba* (37 percent) (Dixon working papers). Clans were patrilineal and adhered to the *bunjil* / *waa* moiety system’ (1990 p.379).

When Clarke states that clans were “patrilineal” he means that ones clan membership was conferred upon them depending on which clan the individual’s father was born into.

Barwick states that

‘neither dispossession or migration altered the importance of clan and moiety membership, which influenced marriage arrangements and the resulting rights of inheritance affecting the political and economic opportunities of individuals’ (1984 p.105).

There is some debate about language boundaries in the greater Melbourne area. This paper accepts the schema offered through the work of Barwick and Clarke, whose research and sources are without peer. Clarke describes the *Bun wurrung* as ‘a wurrung composed of at least six clans occupying the coastal tracts stretching eastward from the Werribee River around Port Phillip and Westernport bays to the Tarwin river watershed’ (1990 p.366). Barwick also discusses the spatial location of *Bun wurrung* clans based on information provided by William Thomas, Assistant Protector of Port Phillip

aborigines; George Augustus Robinson, Chief protector of Victorian aborigines; ethnographers A.W. Howitt and R.H. Mathews. Barwick also denotes moiety membership for each clan.

The Bun wurrung clans were: 1. (*waa*) *Burinyung-Balluk*; located approximately from Point Nepean to Cape Shank. 2. (*bunjil*) *Mayune-bulluk*; about Carrum swamp and coastal strip at the head of Westernport bay. 3. (*bunjil*) *Ngaruk-willam*; at Brighton, Mordialloc, Dandenong and between Mts. Eliza and Martha. 4. (*bunjil*) *Yallock-bulluk*; territory at about Bass river and Tooradin. 5. (*bunjil*) *Yalukit-willam*; East of Werribee river, Williamstown, Sandridge & St.Kilda. and 6. (*bunjil*) *Yowengerra*; at Tarwin river. (Clark 1990; Barwick 1984)



## (IV)

### **SOME CULTURAL BARRIERS**

The first Europeans to make contact with the Kulin, often confused their terminology;

‘Most nineteenth century observers ignored or were bewildered by the various levels of Kulin identification because they did not grasp the underlying principles. A few perceived dialect and language differences and labeled the populations thus distinguished as tribes or nations but most used the label “tribe” to designate the small named groups occupying particular localities. The names they recorded were those of land-owning clans, yet clans as such were apparently invisible to Europeans, because all members did not live together permanently as an observable residential unit on their jointly owned estate. Clan lands were exploited by residential groups (now termed bands) whose membership changed over time’ (Barwick 1984 p.106).

Barwick states that band membership could be altered for a number of reasons; for example as nuclear families formed, aged and were replaced; or when band members would sometimes have to move on to other localities to fulfil religious and family obligations. Although an individual could move in and out of bands over a lifetime clan membership was fixed.

#### **The Bun wurrung and the Europeans.**

‘This morning we were visited by 3 males and 2 females of the Bunurong (sic) tribe. One of the men was a fine manly figure and remarkably intelligent; he is the first I have seen with the cartilage of the nose pierced. The two females were young and remarkably interesting, the prettiest black women I have seen and so modest as hardly to be spoken with. We obtained from them a benyak or native basket, and a piece of network worn as a band around the forehead to stick feathers in ... the work of native females’

(Journal of James Dredge, 20 February 1839. Historical Records of Victoria, vol. 2B p.424).

Dredge, later to become one of George Augustus Robinson’s assistant protector’s of Aborigines, records with a mixture of delight and childish curiosity an interaction he had with seven Bun wurrung. His language speaks volumes for the way many Europeans perceived the Aborigines of the Port Phillip district; particularly the three Kulin nations of Port Phillip district; the Bun wurrung, Woi wurrung and the Watha wurrung. Dredge’s description of one of the Bun wurrung men being of “a fine manly figure and remarkably intelligent” captures well the context in which the words were spoken; a time when European attitudes towards aborigines were plagued with the omnipresent scourge of racist ideology. The first recorded interactions between the Europeans and the Aboriginal

nations of the Melbourne area are scant, although journals such as Dredges, Robinson's and those of William Thomas, first protector of Port Phillip aborigines, are illuminating historical records.

## (V)

### John Batman - the "treaty" maker.

As discussed earlier with reference to the Portland Bay district, the first contact between aborigines and colonists in Victoria, was typified by cultural misunderstanding, language barriers and the overt use of violence against Aborigines. John Batman's infamous "treaties" made with representatives of the Bun wurrung and Woi wurrung at the Merri Creek bend, are examples of cultural ignorance, embodying an intrinsic arrogance which paved the way for the dispossession of aborigines from their land. A brief and perhaps unflattering description of Batman is provided by Australian historian, Professor Manning Clarke in his magnum opus, *A History of Australia* (vol. iii 1973 p.86) as he describes the settlement of Port Phillip. Clarke writes;

'The prime mover for the settlement, John Batman, belonged by birth to that convict society in New South Wales whose vulgar rise to wealth and prominence had been one of the reasons deterring Thomas Henty from trying his luck in the mother colony of Australia. His father was a convict; his mother was a convict. He himself was one of those native-born members of the convict class who made no secret of their belief that all the land of Australia, including Van Diemen's Land, belonged to them and their descendants'.

Historian Susan Priestley (1995 p.) sets the scene for how Batman's "treaty" unfolded.

'On John Batman's original inland excursion in June 1835 he and eight leading men from the Woiwurrung and the Bunurong went through a ceremony on the banks of a stream, possibly Merri Creek or even Edgar's Creek at Thomastown. The eight put identifying marks on a land sale "treaty" in exchange for blankets and other items, with promises of more to come. Five of the eight can be positively identified as influential Kulin leaders, which led anthropologist Diane Barwick to suggest that they saw the incident as Batman's rather clumsy attempt at *tanderrum*, the ceremony of obtaining visiting rights to a particular territory. Governor Richard Bourke's proclamation of 26 August 1835 that the treaty had no legal standing indirectly, if unwittingly, supported the Kulin position'

There can be no doubt that Batman's overtures to the Woi wurrung and Bun wurrung head men or *ngurungaetas* were undertaken to secure their lands. There is also no doubt that the *ngurungaetas* did not intentionally cede their lands to Batman. The notion of Batman "the treaty maker" has passed into Victorian colonial folklore with Batman portrayed as a good-willed man determined to co-exist

with the Woi wurrung and Bun wurrung. This disposition appears to be more folklore than fact. Indeed

‘The colonists who followed Batman were quickly made aware that the Kulin ngurungaeta had authority over their own clans and often had influence over distant groups. For a few years after 1835 Europeans had to negotiate with these leaders, but when squatters outnumbered the Kulin they sneered at the tattered dignity of landless chiefs’ (Barwick 1984 p.107).

And so it was that Batman claimed the land of the Kulin nations. Nothing in colonial Victoria was black and white apart from the colour of one’s skin. The attitudes of the Port Phillip colonists varied towards the aborigines, however they were united in their desire to take, at any cost, the land of the Kulin. For although Batman would privately declare with grand vision in his diary ‘this will be the place for the future village’ (Clarke 1974 p.89) his public denouncements of ‘black bastards’ and his bravado when telling Governor Bourke that he had not been ‘gulled’ by all this talk of civilising the natives’ (Clarke 1974 p.88) would suggest that he saw no place in the future of Port Phillip for any of the Kulin nations.

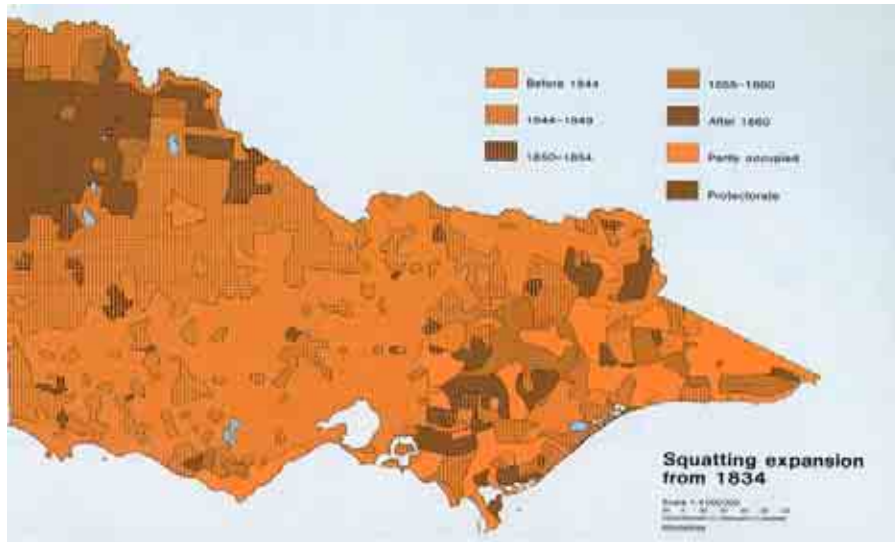
## **CHAPTER THREE - POLITICS & IDEOLOGY**

### **(I)**

#### **BRITISH IDEOLOGIES AND DISPOSSESSION**

This chapter is concerned with the ideologies which permeated colonial Victorian society, and which, in turn, had an adverse impact on the lives of Victorian aborigines. Conflicts between the colonists and Aborigines were inevitable because each possessed their own views about social order and economic stability. The European colonists were influenced by changes in British society, which was, at the time, going through its own period of economic and social upheaval, brought on by the post-Enlightenment era of scientific fervor and the associated new age of industrial revolution.

Accordingly the economic and social understanding of the colonists was framed by ideology, in that it prescribed the way the new order in Australia should be maintained. The main ideological currents to permeate the colonies were scientific and economic in their nature and type. Science had gained a new ascendancy following the Enlightenment, a period through which society was no longer seen as God-given and God-created. Before the Enlightenment people had placed their faith in God to help them socially, economically and politically. Within this deterministic model of humanity, the individual had little freedom. Society was highly ordered and one’s place within this order was God-given.



However with the new spirit of scientific rationalism came a capacity to perceive the future and through a process of positive deduction, scientists provided the possibility for human intervention in economic and social life, which would steer humanity on the road to progress. Progress was the spirit of the age. No longer was society subject to the whims of nature. Science promoted the view that technological innovation would help to harness nature and make it purely a utility for human purposes. In this context, Australia was legally held to be ‘terra nullius’ literally an empty land and this gave rise to a free for all land grab for the new colonists seeking their fortune.

This view was buttressed by racist ideologues who sought to justify the dispossession of aborigines of their lands. The colonists who stole aboriginal land, lacked the most fundamental notions of humanity. Land was more than just a commodity to be exploited, land was life affirming for aboriginal people.

(II)

**LAND RIGHTS TO NATIVE TITLE: "From little things big things grow"**

Chesterman and Galligan (1997 p.199) argue that

‘Land rights, in both a symbolic and substantive sense, represent the most fundamental challenge that has ever faced Australia's legal system. In a symbolic sense, the granting of land rights by courts and parliaments gives judicial and

legislative recognition to the view that, contrary to contemporary white opinion, Aborigines did have ownership rights to their land in 1788, of which the 'settlement' of Australia wrongly deprived them. In a substantive sense, the granting or acknowledgement of land rights, challenges contemporary thinking about the rights of aborigines as citizens. For with the legal recognition of native title, Aborigines, for the first time, have been recognised by the law to possess certain rights that cannot be possessed by non-Aborigines'

The sub-heading for this section "from little things big things grow" is taken from a Paul Kelly/Kev Carmody song of the same name. The song traces the struggle for land rights led by Gurindji man Vincent Lingiari, who led protests with his fellow workers for recognition of their land rights.

The struggle for land rights has been fought by many Aboriginal people since Europeans first invaded Australia 212 years ago. A myth which is commonly used to justify the dispossession of aboriginal people from their traditional lands is that they showed no resistance when their land was being taken from them. As we have already seen in Chapter Two this claim is both false and misleading. To many present day non-Aboriginal Australians, the notion of European "settlement" appears unproblematic in the sense that the manner and brevity in which they "settled" must have meant that they were met with little or no resistance when they first set foot ashore.

This is the imagery that most Australians have been taught - the image of a tall ship sailing majestically into a welcoming harbor. The idea of a new country, ripe for new social and political ideals, free of the rigid class system and its consequential crippling poverty, which so many were forced to leave?. A more realistic representation of this history acknowledges that the manner in which some of the landed gentry and ex-convict laborers treated the Aborigines, was truly appalling. The land became a violent frontier (as is vividly depicted in Henry Reynolds' writing about settlement in Northern Queensland).

Any non-Indigenous person who is sincere about coming to terms with Australia's Aboriginal culture(s) has to first acknowledge that European and Aboriginal conceptions of land and its uses, are poles apart. According to Lippermann (1996 p.33) 'it is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of land to Aborigines, either in the traditional society or in the circumstances of today'. To Europeans, land is a commodity to be exploited, subjugated and transformed to reap economic wealth. Although Aborigines have always seen land as an economy, their means of extracting economic wealth from the land saw them work with the land, not against it.

Pat Dodson, revered Aboriginal leader and former head of the National Council for Reconciliation describes the relationship between aboriginal people and the land thus:

'... For the Aboriginal people land is a dynamic notion; it is something that is creative ... Land is the generation point of existence; it's the spirit from which Aboriginal existence comes. It's a place, a living thing made up of sky, of clouds, of rivers, of trees, of the wind, of the sand, and of the Spirit that has created all those things; the Spirit that has planted my own spirit there, my own country ... it belongs to me; I rest in it; I come from there' (in Lippermann 1996 p.33).

The language used by Dodson here, is reflected in the language of Aboriginal people right across Australia. Uncle Banjo Clark, Elder of the Kirrae wurrung nation of South West Victoria, referred to the land as 'his cathedral' and as 'his church'.

Gunditjmara elder, Auntie Iris Lovett-Gardiner, states;

'The land is our mother. Our mothers at home help nurture us and so the earth does with us. The most valuable heritage we've got is Mother Earth. It helps us live, because if you didn't have a piece of earth you wouldn't have anything to grow on ... Non-Aboriginal people know what home is, but that's their domestic home, their house. Our home is the territory where our people roamed and lived and survived. That land to us, as everybody knows, is our mother. If everybody would think of it the same way, it would be their mother too. The land is ours because our people were born there. The blood of our people was spilt there and that distinguishes it as our place. Their spirits are still there with us and they're watching us all the time'  
(Lovett-Gardiner 1997 p.7)

The language of Dodson, Clark and Lovett-Gardiner expresses love and reverence towards their country. It is not the language of economic rationalism, nor is it framed by any desire to take anything other than spiritual and cultural sustenance from the land. The notion that land is something to be loved; cherished; revered; looked after; respected, learnt from and to be at one with, is central to Aboriginal conceptions of themselves right across Australia. The struggle for land rights and native title needs to be seen in the light of the sentiments expressed through Aboriginal people such as the ones just cited.

### (III)

#### SCIENTIFIC RACISM IN COLONIAL VICTORIA

At the time Europeans invaded Australia, the supposed value neutrality of science (the belief that science is not ideological) was being undermined by those who sought to use it as a means of supporting their own ideological views. One current of scientific thought, Darwinism, was bastardised and used by those who sought primarily to usurp aborigines of their lands. Charles Darwin, nineteenth century scientist, developed a radical theory of evolution, which was used by some in the colonies of Australia to support their belief that aborigines were inferior to Europeans.

Certain readings (or misreadings) of Darwin's work gave credence to those colonists who saw Aborigines as a primitive and less developed "species", than their European counterparts. Whether Darwin had meant for his work to be interpreted in this way, has long been a matter of conjecture for academics and others. What is certain however is that his name was used as a thinly veiled justification for the murder of aborigines. In particular the notion of Social Darwinism became popular. The use of this term has passed into the Australian vernacular, to represent practises which are barbaric or arcane. However its use as a justification for murderous practices still remains in the living memory of many Victorian Aboriginal people.

Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871) and *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) had a sustained influence on western science; particularly in the area of evolutionary theory. Indeed Darwin's thought was appropriated throughout the Port Phillip settlement to undermine the legitimacy as land holders, and place in humanity, of the Port Phillip Aborigines. According to Reynolds, the British were convinced the Aborigines were savages even before the settlement of Australia (and that, as enlightened Europeans, they knew all about savages!). (1987 p.108). The late Kirrae wurrung elder Uncle Banjo Clark was quoted in a country newspaper some years ago, echoing a similar sentiment to Reynolds. He stated "They wanted to come and civilise us savages! I don't know who the bloody savages were!"

In the mid seventeenth century the British philosopher and social contract theorist, Thomas Hobbes, described the 'primitive condition of man as solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short' (in Reynolds p.108). Reynolds notes that the intellectual elite believed that such a view had currency even though their noble savage had no basis in reality. A first fleet surgeon was heard to remark that the Aborigines were 'altogether a most stupid insensible set of beings' (Reynolds 1987 p.108). A nineteenth century settler's wife from the western district of Victoria wrote 'poor things, they scarcely remind me of human beings at all' (Critchett 1990 p.31). Historical journals, letters and diaries from the early settlers are riddled with language such as this.

The "noble savage" was one of many racist views of the aborigines. The so called "Great Chain of Being", a view which placed all living creatures in a hierarchy from simplest creatures, through to primates, then humans and finally God. The Europeans placed themselves at the top, with others cited down the order, until at the bottom of the human scale, "savages" merged with the more advanced monkeys; 'Black people were always placed at the bottom of the chain' (Reynolds 1987 p.110). The anatomist Charles White argued that 'In whatever respect the African differs from the European, the particularity brings him nearer to the ape'. Reynolds quite sardonically quips that it was

as if a place had been reserved on the great chain of being for the Aborigine in advance of the settlement of the continent.

It becomes clear that these currents of social thought held sway when one examines the many journals and diaries of the first Victorian settlers. James Dawson, wrote in 1830 that fellow colonists saw aborigines as ‘only a third, fourth or fifth link in the same creation and nearest of all to the monkey or ourang-outang and therefore incapable of enjoying the same state of intellectual existence as themselves’ (Reynolds 1987 p.111). Another pseudo-science to capture the racist minds of the colonists was phrenology. Founded by the German doctor F.J. Gall, phrenology ‘was based on the twin assumptions that specific areas of the brain were responsible for particular moral and intellectual characteristics and that the shape of the skull reflected the inner structure of the brain’ (Reynolds 1987 p.113). The English phrenologist who popularised the “science” asserted in 1828 that it was impossible for the aborigine to be civilised because ‘the organs of reflecting, intellect, ideality, consciousness and benevolence were greatly inferior in size’ (Reynolds 1987 p. 113).

Phrenology, for all its ludicrous assertions, was highly influential in the colony of Port Phillip. Just as the great chain of being placed aborigines at the lowest rung of humanity, so too did Phrenology. These pseudo-sciences gave superficial legitimacy to the ill-treatment of aborigines. For if the aborigines could be “scientifically” equated to animals, then land theft was not an issue - and after all, one cannot “murder” an animal. As we will see there was political resistance to racist ideologues by, as Reynolds describes them, “philanthropic individuals”, who for a variety of reasons, rejected the “scientific reasoning” of the day and its consequences for the aborigines. Before discussing this however it is necessary to investigate the ideas of Charles Darwin in more detail because they had, perhaps the strongest and most lasting impact on science, and their consequent application to human societies gave rise to a “pseudo science” of the twentieth century, Eugenics, which aimed to “breed the colour out” of aborigines.

Darwin’s seminal work is perhaps the most misunderstood social /scientific thought emanating from the nineteenth century. In *The Descent of Man* (1880) Darwin outlines his theory of ‘natural selection’. Although natural selection implies a conflict of order in the animal kingdom, Darwin, did apply his theory to human society as well. In human society there must, Darwin argued, be a natural selection of the most fit. (Martindale 1990 p.163). According to Darwin: “The early progenitors of man must also have tended, like all other animals, to have increased beyond their means of subsistence. They must, therefore occasionally have been exposed to a struggle for subsistence and consequently to the rigid law of natural selection. Beneficial variations to all kinds will thus, either occasionally or habitually have been preserved, and injurious ones eliminated’ (1880 p.48). For the colonists the logical extension of this theory was that they had to compete for land with the aborigines who were no doubt ‘the injurious ones’ and were henceforth eliminated by the colonists.

Darwin’s work cannot be adequately dealt with given the constraints of this paper. Suffice to say, his theories lent an air of formal scientific justification to the process of eliminating the aborigines, for where the great chain of being and phrenology dissipated, Darwin’s theories maintained their resonance well into the twentieth century. Having said this, a critical look at history in the colony of Port Phillip, reveals that not all colonists accepted the scientific justification for the disposal of the

aborigines. The philanthropic individuals, a diverse range of colonists rejected scientific rationalism, although their motives for saving aborigines reflected an ever-present racist paternalism, in which aborigines were seen as a curiosity, none-the-less human. Within this model of humanity, or ideology, all humans were created equal by God and all people including aborigines should be treated as equals by their fellow humans.

#### (IV)

### **THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPISTS**

Reynolds believes that the contribution made by philanthropic individuals has not received the recognition it deserves. Frontier violence was a fact in the first 100 years of European migration to Australia, however it was often arbitrary. Critchett, writing about western Victoria circa 1832 -42 reports that “all across the district Aboriginal men, women and children came into contact with European men and a few women and children. What was unusual was the degree of close contact between the races, a contact that varied from friendliness to outright hostility from one pastoral station to the next. Relationships were complex, varying not only from one station to the next but rapidly changing over time as those who found themselves intermingled across the district attempted to come to terms with the presence of another race’ (1990 p.36). Those who attempted to establish friendly relations or to try and help the aborigines cut ‘lonely figures’ according to Reynolds.

Missionaries had a great deal to do with the aborigines and were often ‘shocked by the bloodshed and outraged by the easy acceptance of racial violence’ (Reynolds 1987 p.84). The man who perhaps had the most to do with Port Phillip aborigines, Port Phillip Protector of Aborigines, William Thomas, wrote a great deal about them throughout the 1850’s and 1860’s and tried to understand aboriginal society and history. Other ethnographers tried to document aboriginal lifestyle in the face of rapid European expansion throughout Port Phillip. However this occurred within an racist atmosphere where the sole interest of the settlers was to acquire as much aboriginal land as possible. George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector of Aborigines at Port Phillip wrote of his experience of finding a Port Phillip aborigine shot and killed by settlers; he thought ‘of the helpless wives and offspring, of their deep lamentation, of their bitter indignation of the white and unrelenting persecutors and oppressors’ (in Reynolds 1987 p.84). Philanthropists such as Thomas pondered about the moral consequences of frontier violence; ‘Can our heavenly father look down with any degree of pleasure upon a country located on such terms?’ (in Reynolds 1987 p.84) he asked, in 1844.

While they were concerned with the welfare of the aborigines, often the philanthropists’ motivations had their roots in a paternalistic notion of saving the aborigines’ poor mortal souls. For although the Europeans and the aborigines were equal before God, in practice inherent racist ignorance dictated that Christian values must prevail over the God-less Aboriginal social order. Whatever can be said for the philanthropists motivations, they always exercised their concerns at great personal cost. Derided as “nigger-lovers’ by their own and often treated with disdain by the aborigines, they tread a line between self-less humanitarianism, misguided religious instruction and self-righteous paternalism, in their dealings with the aborigines.

The philanthropic individuals were operating within the social atmosphere of the day; and although their motives varied, they were often the only settlers who looked out for the interests of aborigines. Indeed when William Thomas was appointed assistant Protector of Port Phillip aborigines in 1839 'his appointment was "assailed in the public journals". All "the scurrilous language that could be made use of was employed" in attacking the Imperial government and the Protectorate, while the "poor Aborigines were designated as Brutes, Beasts and denied the lineage of humanity"' (Reynolds 1987 p.87).

While there was frontier war being waged in Australia, there was a public war being waged back in England by humanitarians taking up the cause of the Aborigines. The information being relayed there, came from philanthropic individuals who saw that publicising the treatment of aborigines back in England was the only way of effecting change in Australia;

'Missionaries kept in constant touch with the Metropolitan Missionary Organisation; Church Missionary; London Missionary and Methodist Missionary Service: concerned colonists wrote to the London-based Aborigines Protection Society and Anti-slavery Society, to the English papers or the Colonial Office pressing for action to suppress racial violence' (Reynolds 1987 p.89).

In the colonial papers concerned citizens were beginning to write letters to editors decrying the treatment of the aborigines; 'a correspondent wrote to the Port Phillip Gazette in 1840 informing fellow colonists that "the tale of aboriginal wrongs" was well known abroad. "The eyes of England are upon us, be warned"' (Reynolds 1987 p.89).

While frontier violence continued to be waged unabated the missionaries and others held firm that in the final summation, aborigines were the equal to their European invaders. E.S. Parker, the Protector of Aborigines in Port Phillip in 1854 stated quite firmly that man (sic) 'whatever be the variations of his colour, his social grading or civil condition stands forth as the creature of God, the offspring of common parents, the inheritor of a nature identified with his own, in its origins, its capabilities and its destination' (Reynolds 1987 p.93). For all Parker's fine words, his view was to be undermined and a process of actively "breeding the colour out" of aborigines was to be implemented as the *answer* to the aboriginal *problem*.

## (V)

### THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

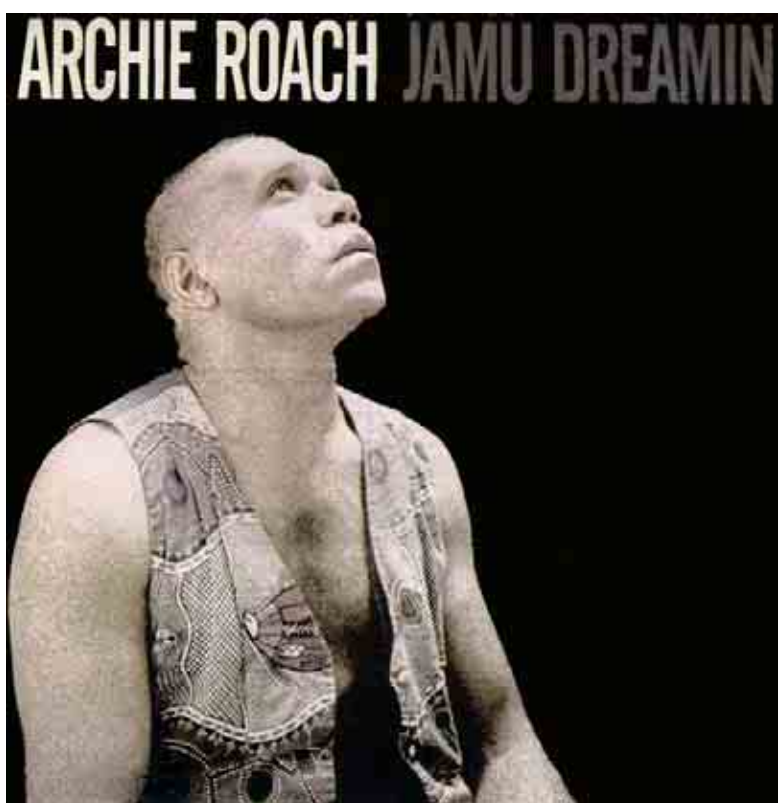
The "science" of Eugenics would become a central plank in government policy thinking and its ramifications are still being felt by aboriginal people today. Eugenics was the theory which created the 'stolen generations'.

In April 1997 the *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* or “*Bringing Them Home*” report was presented by Ronald Wilson, president of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, to the Australian Attorney General, Daryl Williams. The opening paragraph of the report states;

‘Grief and loss are the predominant themes of this report. Tenacity and survival are also acknowledged. It is no ordinary report. Much of its subject matter is so personal and intimate that ordinarily it would not be discussed. These matters have only been discussed with the inquiry with great difficulty and much personal distress. The suffering and the courage of those who have told their stories inspire sensitivity and respect’ (Wilson 1997 p.3).

In order to understand the magnitude and importance of this report and the national debate which followed its publication, it is necessary to understand the historical and contemporary events, which necessitated its inception. Robert Manne states that from the late nineteenth century to the late 1960’s Australian governments, as a practice and as a policy, removed part-Aboriginal children from their mothers, parents, families and communities, often by force. Some of the children were taken at birth, some at two years of age, some in their childhood years. Once taken, the babies and children were sent to special-purpose institutions or, particularly in later years, to foster homes(1998 p.15). Although the systematic removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) children from their families was only publicly acknowledged in 1997, the people and the families of people who were removed, have had to deal with the trauma, hurt and family disintegration for at least 100 years.

The Aboriginal musician from the Gunditjmarra nation of South West Victoria, Archie Roach, wrote a song released in 1990, *Took the Children Away*, which recounted his own experience of being removed from the Framlingham Aboriginal mission, 20 kilometres outside of Warrnambool. Anyone with an interest in the stolen generations would profit by listening to Archie’s music, because it offer a passionate insight into the experience of a man who is a member of the stolen generations. His albums, *Charcoal Lane* (1990), *Jamu Dreaming* (1992) and *Looking For Butterboy* (1997) all recount stories of Archie’s life and experiences and are beautiful pieces of contemporary Aboriginal oral history. For example *Took the Children Away* recounts a familiar experience for any member of the stolen generations.



## TOOK THE CHILDREN AWAY

This story's right, this story's true  
I would not tell lies to you  
Like the promises they did not keep  
And how they fenced us in like sheep  
Said to us come take our hand  
Sent us off to mission land  
Taught us to read, to write and pray  
Then they took the children away,  
Took the children away  
The children away  
Snatched from their mother's breast  
Said it was for the best  
Took them away

The welfare and the policeman  
Said you've got to understand  
We'll give them what you can't give  
Teach them how to really live  
Teach them how to live they said  
Humiliated them instead  
Taught them that and taught them this

And others taught them prejudice

You took the children away  
The children away  
Breaking their mother's heart  
Tearing us all apart  
Took them away

One dark day on Framlingham  
Came and didn't give a damn  
My mother cried go get their dad  
He came running fighting mad  
Dad shaped up he stood his ground  
He said you touch my kids and you fight me  
And then they took us from our family

Took us away  
They took us away  
Snatched from our mother's breast  
Said this is for the best  
Took us away

Told us what to do and say  
Told us all the white man's ways  
then they split us up again  
And gave us gifts to ease the pain  
Sent us off to foster homes  
As we grew up we felt alone  
Cause we were acting white  
Yet feeling black

One sweet day all the children came back  
The children came back  
The children came back  
Back where their hearts grow strong  
Back where they all belong  
The children came back  
Said the children came back  
The children came back  
Back where they understand  
Back to their mother's land  
The children came back

Back to their mother  
Back to their father  
Back to their sister  
Back to their brother  
Back to their people  
Back to their land

All the children came back  
The children came back  
The children came back  
Yes I came back.

Archie Roach, "Took the Children Away", *Charcoal Lane* (1990) CD Mushroom.

Archie's experience reflects that of thousands of Aboriginal children who were taken from their families. Other tracks express the same mixture of emotions reflecting hurt, anger and betrayal. ("Weeping in the Forest" and "Took them away from Paradise" from *Jamu Dreaming* come to mind.)

When discussing the stolen generations, it is important to remember the social attitudes which circulated through Australian society at the time the children were being taken away. The state's policy and practice of removing the children was not an arbitrary quirk of Australian domestic social

policy as has been argued by some commentators. Rather it was a conscious policy which reflected a world view about “race” and one group’s perceived “racial superiority” over another. Just as the Nazi’s world view reflected a belief about Aryan superiority over Jews, the state’s actions in removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families reflected the belief in two essentially racist social discourses, *Social Darwinism* and *Eugenics*, which prevailed in the later half of the nineteenth century well into the middle of the twentieth century.

If Social Darwinism provided the initial “justification” for the Europeans treatment of the Aborigines, the other pseudo-science, *Eugenics*, completed the process. The history of the stolen generations is best explained through a discussion of Eugenics, because it, like Social Darwinism provided justification for the dispossession of Aborigines of their country and family ties.

According to Manne (1998 p.26)

‘The 1920’s and 1930’s were years when the science of Eugenics- the science that taught that one of the responsibilities of the contemporary state was to improve a nation’s racial stock by breeding programmes - was, throughout the western world, extremely influential’.

Manne argues that the Eugenics program might have been passed off as an uninfluential scientific discourse, or;

‘... footnote in the history of Australian ideas, were it not for the fact that in the late 1920’s and early 1930’s two of the three most important administrators of Aboriginal affairs, the protectors in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, Dr. Cecil Cook and A. O. Neville were enthusiastic converts to this cause, and that both devoted a part of their energies to the creation of a blue-print for the implementation of a policy for the breeding out of the mixed-descent population under their control’ (1998 p.28).

When considering the case of the stolen generations, it is important to remember that there was a conscious attempt by the state to breed colour out of Australia’s Aboriginal people. The process is often portrayed as a well intentioned act by the state; an attempt to help the children by providing a better lifestyle for them. Anyone with an interest in the stolen generations needs to read the *Bringing Them Home* report to see that from the perspective of the children and their families, the state’s actions were anything but well intentioned. Manne argues quite successfully that the “good intentions” defense rests upon:

‘the belief that a policy may be justified on the grounds of its good intentions so long as the policy maker assures us - as no doubt the architects of the stolen children policy would - that their intentions were good. Such an argument can be disposed of quickly. When the Nazis, to take an extreme example, decided to rid the earth of the Jews, the chief executors of such a policy argued the goodness of their intentions’ (1998 p.22).

However, as Manne states, many Australians including current Prime Minister John Howard and Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Senator John Herron 'clearly believe that in regards to the stolen children, such a plausible good intentions defense exists' (Manne 1998 p.22). Howard and Herron are not alone in their ill-thought notions of the stolen generations. Indeed many prominent Australian "public intellectuals" even refute the notion that the stolen generations exist at all.

Take for example Paddy McGuinness; widely published writer and journalist, who appeared on an ABC panel discussion in early 1999., with Manne and well known Aboriginal leader Lowitja O'Donohue. O'Donohue herself is a member of the stolen generations, and her dignity and steadfast leadership on Aboriginal issues is nationally acknowledged. McGuinness sees the notion of the stolen generations as a fiction. He denies that there ever was a conscious policy adopted by the state to remove Aboriginal children from their families. Writing in *The Age*, November 15, 1999, Manne responds to a recent article by McGuinness in *Quadrant* magazine. McGuinness likens the claims made by the stolen children at the *Bringing Them Home Royal Commission* as "false memory syndrome". According to Manne's reading of McGuinness in *Quadrant*:

'The Aboriginal stories about child removal are now likened explicitly to fake stories of child sexual abuse. There might have been, McGuinness now concedes, some cases of child stealing, but certainly no systematic policy at any time. If children were removed it was essentially, he implies, because of "parental neglect". Before the removal parental consent was, anyhow, obtained. There is, he claims, no evidence of any government ever separating "half-caste" children as part of a policy of biological assimilation, or "breeding out the colour" as it was called' (Manne in *The Age*, Nov. 15 1999 p.17).

McGuinness' views on the stolen generations are offensive but they are also ignorant. McGuinness and others like him were sold the rhetoric of the state in regard to Aboriginal issues. The prevalence of racist discourse which circulated through the colonies last century, is as much a part of today's Australian society as it always was. Prominent social institutions, such as the education system, the church, and the legal system, all framed Aboriginal people in negative terms; as a people to be feared, not trusted, pitied, held in contempt, laughed at, or exploited for economic or sexual purposes. In this conception, Aborigines were anything but the equals of their European invaders.

McGuinness' own language reflects these discourses. His idea that children were removed due to "parental neglect" suggests that Aboriginal parents were incapable of looking after and protecting their children. The *Bringing Them Home* report suggests the opposite to this. At any rate the most disturbing aspect of the national debate about the stolen generations is the Federal Government's refusal to offer a formal apology on behalf of the nation, for the systematic state-orchestrated process of removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. The refusal to offer a formal apology is disturbing for two key reasons. Firstly, a formal apology was a key recommendation of the *Bringing Them Home* report. The stolen children and their families were not seeking what was not owed to them, however they did uniformly agree that a formal, sincere apology was required of the Federal Government to, at least, let the members and their families know that Australians were truly sorry for what had happened in the past, as recently as thirty years ago.

Secondly, the lack of formal apology reflects something much more than mere stubbornness. It suggests to the stolen generations, their families and the broader Australian community that we are ruled by a government that continues to be extremely insensitive towards the country's Indigenous people. The failure to apologise also suggests that the government does not take the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* report seriously. In an era which has been punctuated by rhetoric of "Reconciliation" and "Meaningful Relationships" with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it seems that non-Indigenous Australians have to reconcile themselves with their own history, before they can really achieve reconciliation and a meaningful relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

What follows is a poem written by "Milicent" '... a girl who never saw her parents after the age of four, and who spent some years of her life in Sister Kate's home in Western Australia, some of it as a servant on a farm, (in her testimony to the Bringing Them Home Royal Commission). The writer speaks of how she ate rat poison in an attempt to kill herself, and of "unrepairable scar of loneliness, mistrust, hatred and bitterness" that marks her heart. This is confidential submission number 640' (Bird Ed. 1998 p.27). Perhaps people of "good intention" but lacking cultural spirit, such as our Prime Minister and Paddy McGuinness, should read the following poem by Milicent; it achieves more than political rhetoric ever could:

## **SORRY**

Years have come and years have gone  
And we still don't know where we belong.  
Our future was placed in strangers' hands  
Who took us away, away from the land.  
Decisions were made where we would live  
Deprived of security as family could give.  
A neglected future and a lost past.  
To tell of our stories of a stolen generation  
All this was done without justification.

### **Chorus**

We know it was one of white man's tragic mistakes.  
Why can't they say SORRY for goodness sakes?  
one little five - letter word. We are all waiting  
But it won't be heard.  
For all of the children of the stolen generation  
Let the word SORRY be heard across our nation.  
They want us to forgive and forget  
But they still haven't said sorry yet.  
To say SORRY to the Aboriginal people across our nation  
Would be a giant step into reconciliation.

Some of us have found families at last  
But it hasn't erased nightmares from the past.  
For some of us are accepted and re-unite.  
For some of us it is still an ongoing fight.  
Too many years have passed us by.  
But we are not giving up without a try  
To be a family and have memories to share  
If it takes forever we don't care.  
We have waited so long to be together  
We are strong enough to face any stormy weather.  
We were stolen away  
We had no choice  
Now let's find our families and all rejoice!

Milicent.

## **CHAPTER FOUR - CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF ABORIGINES**

### **(I)**

#### **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

This section discusses the role played by the media, education systems and political / religious leaders as informers of people's understandings about Aborigines. The theoretical aspect explores the notion of *discourse* and is interested in exploring the way non-aboriginal Australians come to understand what it is to be Aboriginal. A discourse is a knowledge system with the power to change social attitudes about certain issues. The media, education systems and politics all use certain language to express ideology in relation to Aboriginality. The language these social institutions use, frequently becomes the starting point through which Australians inform themselves about society in general, and Aboriginal issues specifically. Unfortunately the agendas and interests of these institutions are such that Aboriginal issues are often ignored or obscured.

For example, media barons are more concerned with securing a stable readership and lobbying governments to water down media ownership laws, than opening up a savage critique of government policy in relation to Aboriginal health and Native Title. Similarly, education systems in the past (things are changing) have been more concerned with presenting a "balanced" interpretation of Australian history; a version that avoids difficult historical realities in favor of pioneer mythologies.. Likewise, politicians are more likely to be concerned with preserving their own skins, rather than help those who are persecuted because of the colour of theirs. And yet it is through the discourses these powerful social agents transmit that Australians gain their knowledge of Aboriginality.

An examination of language used by media through different social epochs reveals that the relationship between Aborigines and Europeans is played out in terms of predetermined criteria. The work of Stephen Muecke investigates how concepts of Aboriginality are constructed through discourse. Muecke argues that

‘whatever “Aboriginality” is, it has never always been the same thing from one tribal group to another, from ancient times to the present, or even according to some legal definitions, from one state of Australia to another’ (1992 p.19).

Although arguing that Aboriginality has never had a singular definition or meaning, Muecke rightly notes that according to humanist thought ‘the essence of what “they” are, is known intuitively by the people themselves, and no-one else can have access to this knowledge’ (1992 p.19).

Muecke's work on Aboriginality is an important starting point in a discussion about the historical construction of Aboriginality in Australian society. Muecke offers a lucid critique of the ways in which Aboriginality is represented as a truthful and authentic object by whoever appropriates it. Aboriginality is socially constructed through various discursive (discourses) representations eg. in print media; on television; in film; through politics, and through music. Muecke's critical and historical approach argues ‘that European ways of talking about Aborigines limit their ways of knowing what Aborigines might be’ (1992 p.20).

A good example of critical discourse leading to practical change is the legal status of “public drunkenness”. This offence was constructed during a period of high moral conservatism in Australia, and its existence now appears to be anachronistic. More insidious though is the fact that public drunkenness is the offence which sees many young black men being placed in police custody - a situation which leads to young black men taking their own lives at a disproportionately high rate compared with the national average for suicides in gaol. It would take a small act of legislative courage to remove the offence of public drunkenness from the statutes thus reducing the possibility of young black men being arrested and possibly taking their own lives.

According to Muecke language ‘is a relatively stable medium through which cultural things can be read’ (1992 p.20). Discourses, underpinned by ideology, are easily identifiable in Australian society so an understanding of discourse will, in turn, open up discussion about how and racism circulates through Australian society.

Muecke argues that:

‘Europeans in Australia have made three fairly well-worn tracks in their discourses on Aborigines. They are the Anthropological, the Romantic and the Racist. These tracks sometimes cross each other, sometimes double back on themselves, and sometimes even Aborigines themselves use them’ (1992 p.24).

Muecke points out that Susan Sheridan has made an addition, the political, to his schema:

‘The discourses on Aboriginality now available include, most significantly, that of a political identity as Aboriginal which is claimed by growing numbers, a discourse on survival and independence’ (1988 p.88 quoted in Muecke 1992 p.24).

## (11)

### **AVAILABLE DISCOURSES ON ABORIGINALITY:**

#### **Racist Metaphor**

Eminent philosopher Raimond Gaita describes the insidious nature of racism as follows;

‘the blindness to the reality that other people, seen through the prism of racism as lesser, simpler, more primitive, can experience., with the same intensity and depth as we do, love and attachment, bereavement and grief’ (in Manne 1992 p. 35).

Racist metaphor is a common means by which knowledge of Aborigines is discursively transmitted. Two reasons account for this. Firstly, racism as an ideology is able to penetrate many discursive frameworks eg. Academic writing; political speeches; radio talk-back; Education curricula; television programming; Art; print media (including cartooning); religious institutions; sporting arenas. The omnipresence of racist discourses can be explained by recognising its sites of transmission. For example racism can be expressed from the individual’s perspective eg. “The bloody Abos get it too good” through to “mainstream” mediums such as radio, television and newspapers, through to

formal channels such as racially discriminatory legislation and church policies designed to Christianise Aboriginal kids. These policies often coincided with welfare policies which aimed to assimilate Aboriginal kids by forcibly removing them from their natural parents.

The second reason for the emphasis on racist metaphor is that this paper is concerned to understand how European Australia was built over and without regard for Aboriginal people. It follows that in order to demonstrate how power was/is used to keep Aboriginal people suppressed, it is necessary to demonstrate how ideologies of power such as capitalism and colonialism underpin(ned) racist discourse at the local level.

As one small example of the relationship between social structures (e.g. the economy) and discursive constructions (knowledges) I will briefly discuss the election of the Kennett government in October 1992. Jeff Kennett was elected with a mandate to correct economic problems that had emerged in Victoria under the Cain and Kirner governments. In office Kennett's government sought to redress a concrete set of economic circumstances, which had done great harm to Victoria. This electoral mandate also gave Kennett a degree of legitimacy to reposition the economic and political goal posts. As a symbol example of the new era Kennett changed all Victorian motor vehicle number plates from "Victoria - The Garden State" to "Victoria - *On the Move*". Such is the power of rhetoric that "Victoria - *On the Move*" became a metaphor for economic efficiency in Victoria. A random selection of vox pop surveys soon after the phrase entered political speak, revealed the extent to which the mantra had permeated the consciousness of ordinary Victorians. "You've got to admit he has got Victoria moving" was a phrase overheard in conversation throughout the state. The example of Victoria - On the Move demonstrates the power of language as a medium through which common understandings (and mis-understandings) can be transmitted.

Muecke discusses the Australian writer, Mary Durack, demonstrating how the presentation of difference between cultures, can lead to racist conclusions about the subjected culture. Durack was born a pastoralist and wrote books from within the genre of the trail blazing pioneers. Durack wrote the preface of the first novel published by an Aborigine; Colin Johnson's *Wild Cat Falling*. In the preface to Johnson's work, Durack explains how she took Johnson 'under her wing' and when his book was published in 1965, she described him as 'nineteen years old and part Aborigine, though his features would not have betrayed him' (Johnson 1966 p7 in Muecke 1992 p.31). She also noted that Johnson had 'little of the coloured boy's willing-to-please manner' (1966 p.9 in Muecke 1992 p.31).

Elsewhere in the preface to Johnson's book, Durack states that Johnson regards *Wild Cat Falling* 'somewhat in the light of an exercise or proof of staying power- a deflection perhaps, of the pointed home of his Aborigine heritage' (1966 p.18). Of Durack's reflections on Johnson, Muecke notes that 'the Aborigine heritage is thus metaphorised as something that could only get in the way of the young man's progress' (1992 p.32). The extent to which Aborigines before Johnson's time, in his own time, and in generations to follow him were able to progress was/is curtailed by racist discourses emanating from writers such as Durack. For example the following extract appears to liken Aborigines to animals at the least (and to unfortunate but ultimately lazy people in the most understanding scenario):

'...the majority continue to breed among themselves or back into the Aborigines from other parts of the state, resulting in a drifting coloured minority caught in the

vicious circle of lack of opportunity and their own lack of stamina' (in Muecke 1992 p.31).

Despite decades of racist stereotypes Aboriginal people have resisted the oppression which has been their scourge since the arrival of Europeans to their shores. The resistance has taken many forms; overt public demonstrations come to mind, but more subtle none-the-less effective methods of resistance have emerged.

## **Anthropology**

French philosopher, Michel Foucault, argues that anthropologists knowledge of Aborigines is limited because they do not get to the heart of their subject matter. They seldom seek to reciprocate knowledge - to divest knowledge in their subject, nor to have alternative knowledge systems invested in them. In terms of Aborigines, the criticism goes thus; Anthropologists seek to objectify and describe Aborigines in relation to "their" essential normative characteristics - those which give Aborigines their "otherness" or "difference" from the "central" perspective of the Anthropologists own standpoint.

Muecke quite rightly points out that anthropologist have traditionally used terminology specific to their own discipline that precludes real involvement with the societies under investigation: terms such as "origins", "archaeology", "kinship", "economic life", "growing up", "marriage" and "law and order". These categories, according to Muecke

'reveal the obsession of the discourse of anthropology, a discursive practice which has traditionally excluded the possibility of dialogue with the others. Whatever Aborigines might wish to communicate in the fieldwork situation is lost; it does not become part of the authoritative and official discourse' (1992 p.26).

The anthropological discourse takes the European researcher (or the researcher working from within the European anthropological paradigm) as the central, objective point and perceives all research subjects as exterior to them. The prominent anthropologists R.M and C.H Berndt once vaingloriously stated that

'...the wealth of Aboriginal culture can contribute to what is sometimes called vaguely the Australian way of life. Firstly we Australians should know what we are supplanting. This is important in terms of creating not only a national conscience, but also a national consciousness' (1964 ix).

Muecke points out that the category "we Australians" functions in this account as an unproblematic, unified term, when it is itself a transcendental. In addition to Muecke's criticism it should be noted that the notion of "supplanting" the Aboriginal population takes as a given the view that Europeans had replaced Aborigines when in truth there were Aboriginal cultures surviving. These cultures may not have been noticed by the "objective" anthropologist because they had been suppressed or partially subjugated by the "science" of anthropology.

## Romantic discourses on Aboriginality

In his discussion Muecke uses a photograph of a young Aboriginal girl, set against a bleak, dark background, with her head positioned as if to denote a downcast or somber mood. He uses this image to demonstrate how romantic interpretations of Aboriginality construct a paternalistic and ultimately patronising view of Aborigines..

Muecke's second illustration of romantic discourse centers around the "Victorian Adventurer" Daisy Bates who had "a passion for the exotic". Bates held the essentially racist Social Darwinist views prevailing in the late 1880's that the destruction of Aboriginal society was a genetically predetermined fact. In Bates' book *The Passing of the Aborigines* her aim was to 'make their passing easier and to keep the dreadful half-caste menace from our great continent' (1966 p.243 in Muecke 1992 p.29). Bates' belief in the inevitable demise of Aborigines was held by many colonial and mid-contemporary authors.

The reality of colonial life at the local level could not have been further from the romantic struggle upon which writers like Bates relied so heavily. It was a situation in which ill-equipped and largely illiterate men existed in isolation in a constant state of fear - fear of the alien environment and fear of the local Aborigines. The myth of the pioneer bushmen is not matched by the reality of bloodshed in those early years of European occupation.

Romanticism's disconcerting and fundamentally flawed premise of locating social problems in the individual, sees the culture to which the individual claims membership, as unproblematic. The romantic view also attaches itself to anthropological absolutes such as the presentation of difference:

'For Daisy Bates the differences between our cultures and those of the Aborigines were determined by the categories of colonialism. "Barbaric" and "primitive" were opposed to "civilised". Race differences were determined in essentialist ways, as if the Aborigines do things because their primitive drive compels them to' (Muecke 1992 p.29).

An example of this connection between anthropological, romantic and racist discourse can be seen in the film *The Fringe Dwellers*, written by Nene Gare and directed by Bruce Beresford. There is a scene in which the Aboriginal school girl 'Trilby' escapes reprimand or expulsion for hitting a white girl who subjected her to racist taunts. Trilby's mother is pleased that her daughter has escaped punishment but Trilby herself is offended. She responds to her mother with words to this effect. "Can't you see mum! If I was white they would have punished me - but because I'm black, they think I don't know any better". This dialogue is a good example of a racist European arrogance in "making allowances". for Aborigines Muecke points out something similar:

'By locating a problem at a genetic level, any explanation or resolution in terms of social-economic forces lapses. Thus the familiar responses to Aborigines and alcohol, Aborigines and work, are made in terms of their being genetically incapable of tolerating either of these (can't handle their grog; can't hold down a steady job; go walkabout)' (1992 p.30).

### (III)

#### **SOME VOICES OF RESISTANCE FROM VICTORIA:**

For generations, Aboriginal political resistance to European domination of their country had been met with official state indifference. Music, Art and Film are tools which have been used by both Europeans and Aborigines in the recent past to circumvent such ambivalence and offer stirring critiques of Australian society. These media have broadened the parameters of social debate and moved politics from the party room into the lounge room. It seems, that in the last ten years, music in particular has been the medium which has attracted the attention of both non-Aboriginal and aboriginal people alike.

Music is an avenue through which political ideas and social critiques are readily expressed without the cliched hyperbole of the media or the mindless rhetoric of politicians. In other words, music is accessible and interesting - it has the power to hold an individual's attention on a small scale, and to bring forth a tide of social consciousness on a much grander, national scale.

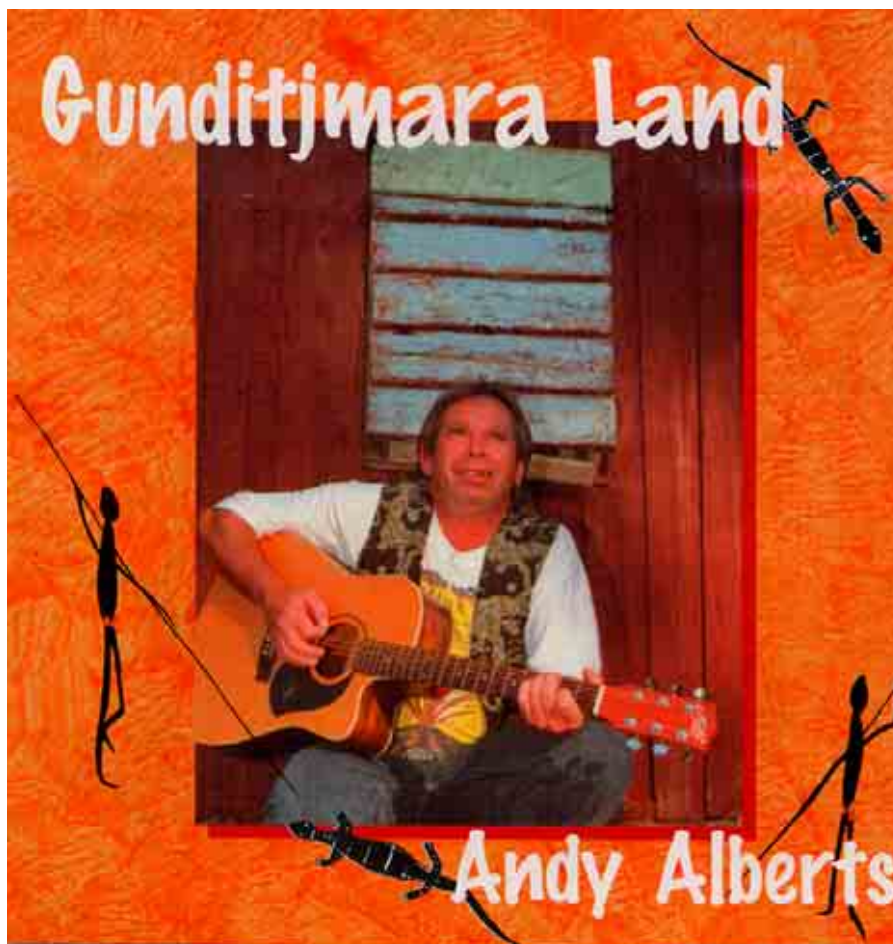
There is a wealth of prominent musicians, artists and actors who have recently aligned their talents to voice their collective dissatisfaction with the Federal Government's stance on Aboriginal land rights, evidenced through its Native Title (Amendment) Act: a piece of legislation which aims to formally extinguish parts of the original Native Title Act. These artists represent a powerful embodiment of an Australian national consciousness which has, until recently gone unnoticed. In earlier decades musicians expressed an underlying current of social awareness, particularly a pride of place and culture following the election of the Whitlam Labor Government.

Victoria, particularly its western district, has produced an array of musicians, artists and film makers which have offered critiques of important contemporary and historical social issues such as land rights and the Stolen Generation. For example; A musician from Kirraï wurrung country, Archie Roach, gained national prominence with his album *Charcoal Lane*, which produced *Took the Children Away*. This stirring song, recounts Archie's personal experience of being one of the children stolen from their parents at Framlingham station, 25 kilometres north east of Warrnambool. The song is a political indictment of the state's insensitivity in removing Aboriginal children from their families, and was first played on national radio in 1990; seven years before the *Bringing Them Home* report alerted the Australian public to the stolen generations. There have been songs before this one. Back in the nineteen-fifties, the aboriginal singer, Bob Randell, wrote and recorded the song "Brown Skin Baby" decades before Europeans had heard of the notion of "The Stolen Generations".

The Goanna Band attracted both critical and popular acclaim for their 1982 song 'Solid Rock' off the album *Spirit of Place*. The band was formed by a brother/sister combination of Irish ancestry, Shane and Marcia Howard who grew up in Warrnambool. "Solid Rock", was an impassioned anthem proclaiming the cause of Aboriginal land rights, and it set off a wave of popular consciousness about Aboriginal land rights around Australia. Another band to gain national attention was the Warumpi Band, whose founding member and main songwriter, Neil Murray, was raised at Lake Bolac 100 kilometers north of Warrnambool. One of the Warumpi's better known songs written by Murray is *My Island Home*, which was re-recorded by Christine Anu. Two of the founding members of the

female band Tiddas, Amy Saunders and Charmaine Clarke are from the Gunditjmarra nation. Saunders' brother Richard Frankland, filmmaker and musician, was a field officer for the Muirhead Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Frankland recently attracted critical acclaim for his award winning film, *Harry's War*.

Although these musicians have achieved national recognition there are others from the Warrnambool area who continue to express their passions at the local level. For example local Gunditjmarra man, Andrew Alberts has recently released a solo album, *Gunditjmarra Land*. Kirrae wurrung man, Lee Morgan has been playing politically inspired music for many years now. An accomplished guitarist, Lee like Andrew, has drawn inspiration from his country and his elders. In 1999 at the Grassroots music awards, Lee won the most outstanding new aboriginal talent award and Andrew Alberts won the award for most outstanding new song and album for *Gunditjmarra Land*. The song 'Gunditjmarra Land' is an anthem for many Aborigines living in south west Victoria. Its description of the physical landscape and the cultural spirit of Aboriginal people in this region resonates through Albert's strong Koorie voice. The lyrics to Gunditjmarra Land, outlined below capture the essence of so much of south west Victoria.



## GUNDITJMARA LAND

Silhouettes appear against the forest wall,  
Sunset fades through the trees rising tall,  
Old kangaroo brushes through that old bush track,  
Koala sits up in the gum tree scratching his back,  
He looks down yonder now for he hears a sound,  
Of Uncle Banjo walking on his native ground,

This is my land, this is my home,  
It's in my veins, it's in my soul,  
Gunditjmarā land, Gunditjmarā land

The smell of gum trees and fern trees young,  
Reaching out dancing towards the golden sun,  
Hear the birds singing echo through the trees,  
I sit there and listen in the evening breeze,

Dark time now the night has fallen,  
Old mopoke wakes now, listen to him calling,  
Old spiritual one says "fear this bird's sound"  
For he brings bad news homeward bound

So many stories here to be told,  
Some happy, some being sad, some young and old,  
Our forest is like a school, we all learn from that land,  
And I'm proud to say that I am Gunditjmarā clan.



## **CHAPTER FIVE - DISCUSSION**

The aim of this chapter is to open up discussion points around issues that have been raised in this paper. The paper should be seen as a series of starting points, designated as chapters, and specific discussions designated by headings within the chapters which broadly are connected. For example, the way Europeans saw aborigines is outlined in chapter three, and this is linked to the notion of cultural representations of aborigines outlined in chapter four.

### **CHAPTER ONE - A CRITICAL LOOK AT OUR HISTORY**

Chapter one asks you to take a critical look at our history. It challenges the reader to try and understand the changes which have occurred to the physical landscape of Melbourne and regional Victoria since the arrival of Europeans. Aborigines first arrived Victoria approximately 53,000 years ago.

Consider in your group, class or by yourself the world events which have occurred in that time. For example, Aborigines have maintained continuous occupation of the Keilor region of Melbourne for at least 5,300 years without interruption - that is over three thousand years longer than the birth of Christianity.

#### **Things to do to improve your knowledge of Aboriginal Victoria**

The Living Museum of the West, located at Maribyrnong offers a wide range of services for people wanting to increase their knowledge of Aboriginal Melbourne. Contact details: 9318 3544

The Victorian Koori Heritage Trust specialises in archival resources. Contact details: 9639 6555

The Bunjilaka Aboriginal Museum located at the Museum of Victoria has a large collection of artifacts on display. Contact details: 8341 7777

The State Library of Victoria's Latrobe Collection has a wide range of historical information relating to the colonisation of Victoria. Contact details: 9699 9923

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## CHAPTER TWO - FIRST CONTACT

Chapter Two discussed the first contact between Aborigines and Europeans at Port Phillip and Portland Bay. It aimed to demonstrate how cultural ignorance and fear caused conflict between two cultures.

Consider your own life. Try to imagine how you would react if your family was killed or taken away, your home destroyed and your property stolen. This occurred to countless thousands of aboriginal families after the arrival of Europeans to Australia in 1788.

Now try to imagine the impact of European settlement on Aborigines in Melbourne and regional Victoria. Referring back to Chapter Two, try to visualise using a Melway, the corner of Chapel Street and Brighton Road as a fertile forest of acacia and gum trees. Also recall that the entire bayside rim of Port Phillip, extending from Williamstown through Port Melbourne, St.Kilda and further to Mordialloc was a swampy wetland.

Consider where you live. With reference to Ian Clarke's Aboriginal Language Map, ask yourself whose country you live on. That is, what aboriginal nation (e.g. Woi wurrung, Bun wurrung) occupied the land your home is built on, before the arrival of Europeans. Can you identify the main clan of the area in which you live? For example, if you live in St.Kilda, Clarke's and Barwick's work will inform you that this is the country of the Yallukit-Willam clan of the Bun wurrung nation. If you live Mooney Ponds you are on the country of the Wurundjeri -Willam clan of the Woi wurrung nation.

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## CHAPTER THREE - POLITICS & IDEOLOGY

Chapter Three asks you to consider the politics of invasion. It suggests that politics is about power or *ideology*. An ideology is a value system which expresses a belief about how social order for example, is best kept. Ideologies are expressed in different ways and through different institutions. For example in the formal political arena (i.e. government and non-government peak body interest groups), the One Nation party expresses an ideology in relation to aborigines; whereas the peak Aboriginal body the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) expresses another ideology about aboriginal issues.

Ideologies relating to aboriginal issues are not, however confined to the formal political arena. At the 1994 Commonwealth Games the aboriginal athlete Cathy Freeman, after winning her gold medal event, performed a lap of honor draped in the Aboriginal flag. It was a positive gesture of pride and defiance which was interpreted by some, such as official Arthur Tundstall as unpatriotic. Although Tundstall's comments were generally perceived as the ramblings of a grumpy old man, the aftermath of the event revealed, in some sections of the Australian community, support for Tundstall's stance.

### Some practical activities.

- 1) Can you think of any examples of racist media representations of Aborigines?
- 2) Can you think of any positive media representations of Aborigines/
- 3) Now study the cartoons below.

What do you think Tandberg is suggesting about the nature of some Australian politicians?

- 4) Watch the video "Sorry".
  - a) Do you think the Prime Minister should apologise to the Stolen Generations?
  - b) If so why? Write down you reasons.
  - c) Why do you think he is refusing to apologise?
- 5) Watch the video "Land of Little Kings"
  - a) How does Archie Roach's experience make you feel? Does it do anything to change you views on the Stolen Generations issue?
- 6) Read the letter to the editor of *The Age*, written by Essendon footballer Michael Long. It reflected the personal views of Michael Long, and did not necessarily reflect the views of the Essendon Football Club. The articles makes the reader realise that the Stolen Generations are comprised of more than just those who were taken from their families. Thousands of individuals such as Long, who themselves were not taken still bear the scares of the state's policy of forcibly removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. For Michael Long, his sporting prowess has brought him much acclaim and admiration, but the hurt he and his family felt is clearly evident in his letter.

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## CHAPTER FOUR - CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF ABORIGINES

Chapter four asks you to consider cultural representations of Aborigines in Australian society. The way aborigines are represented by non-Aborigines often reflects racist ideology and its consequential cultural stereotypes. It discusses the work of Stephen Muecke who outlines cultural representations or *discourses* of Aborigines in Australian society: the *racist*, the *anthropological* and the *romantic*. These discourses can be transmitted through any institution such as the media, the education system or the political arena.

### Some contemporary examples of racist discourse - An afternoon at the football.

There are many examples of racist discourse manifesting on the sporting arena. In the early 1980's the aboriginal footballers Jimmy and Phil Krakour were racially vilified every time they played. An advertising campaign at the time used a photo of the brothers under the phrase "Come and see some aboriginal art". When questioned by the media about whether or not they thought the advertisement was racist, the brothers responded that it was inoffensive compared with what spectators would yell over the fence at them every week.

More recently in the mid 1990's the St. Kilda aboriginal footballer Nicky Winmar was subjected to constant taunts by spectators because he was aboriginal. At the end of the game while coming off the ground he faced the angry supporters, raised his jumper and declared while pointing to his black skin, "I'm black and I'm proud". It was a defining moment in the history of Australian Rules Football.

Three years ago Essendon aboriginal footballer Michael Long was racially vilified by an opponent so he reported the player to the central umpire. After being tackled by Long, the payer had called him a "black bastard". The offender was to later say to Long, "You took it the wrong way mate".

It has recently been revealed by some past and present AFL players that they would regularly taunt aboriginal opponents as a way of putting them off their game. Tony Shaw and Dermot Brearton have made public admissions stating that they thought the tactic be a legitimate way of unnerving their opponent. In recent years however and with the guiding wisdom of aboriginal footballers such as Michael Long some players have become contrite about their on-field racist taunts. Brearton for one has publicly apologies for his behavior stating that he had no idea how much hurt was being inflicted by his taunts. St Kilda player Peter Everett was in 1999 reported for racial vilification and he publicly apologized for his actions. Everett then stunned the football community. by fining himself \$20,000 (which was donated to an aboriginal organisation) and he then suspended himself for four matches. It is obvious that Everett came to realise the destructive nature of racism on the football field.

### Things to do:

- 1) Can you think of any other examples of racism in sport?
- 2) Do you think racism will ever leave the sporting arena?  
If so why? If not why not?

**SUGGESTED READING:** Refer to suggested readings on "Politics and Ideology" p. 61

## SUMMARY

This work aimed to increase the knowledge of Port Phillip residents about the aboriginal history of this region specifically and Victoria generally. The introduction stated that knowledge is power and power can mean changing a situation for the better. It is hoped that by increasing the knowledge of Port Phillip residents about the issues raised in this work, that they might gain a more critically informed understanding of Australia's historical treatment of Aborigines.

Chapter One introduced archaeological evidence which dated the first arrival of Aborigines to Port Phillip specifically and Victoria generally. It also demonstrated the complexity of Aboriginal infrastructure, through a discussion of aboriginal constructions such as fish traps, in western Victoria. Chapter Two firstly presented critical histories of Portland Bay, Victoria's official European birthplace and discussed the period of frontier conflict between Aborigines and Europeans between approximately 1834 -1848. The chapter then discussed the John Batman led "settlement" of Port Phillip and acknowledged that the original custodians of Port Phillip were the Kulin confederacy.

Chapter Three discussed the political nature of colonisation, and outlined the ways Europeans saw themselves in relation to the Aborigines at the time of invasion. The chapter dealt with the politics of invasion and explored the relationship between politics, power and ideology as expressed through the value systems or world views that existed at the time of first contact. Chapter Four discussed the cultural representations of Aborigines in Australian society. It asked the question "How do non-Aboriginal Australians become informed about *aboriginal issues*?" Chapter Five raised issues for discussion or suggested further avenues of research for each of the four main chapters.

## CONCLUSION

As this conclusion is being written there are issues of national importance outstanding between Australia's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. The discontent many Aboriginal people feel at the Howard government's policies in relation to Native Title and the Stolen Generations, is ongoing. The recent court decision not to award compensation to Stolen Generation members Peter Gunner and Lorna Cabilo seemed to embody a fundamental lack of understanding many non-Aboriginal Australians have about Australia's historical (and contemporary) treatment of its Aboriginal people. Prominent Aboriginal academic Marcia Langton has said that white Australia suffers from "a national psychosis" in not owning up to the reality of its own history. Another prominent Aboriginal leader, Gary Foley said last year in a Melbourne University student newspaper that reconciliation is meaningless unless the issue of land rights is seriously addressed.

Australian history has traditionally taught that European "settlement" was unproblematic in the sense that our history has fundamentally been one of shared prosperity. However, many pioneering colonial mythologies still need to be corrected if true reconciliation is to be achieved. The fact remains that if we are ever going to live in harmony with each other things need to change. One has to wonder what Aborigines have to reconcile and with whom? Surely the aim of reconciliation should be for non-Aboriginal Australians to reconcile themselves with their history. Part of this process is the empowerment one feels when they learn about that history.

This work has been designed for the people of Port Phillip to use as a starting point to increase their knowledge about the issues it raises. As stated in the preface to this work, knowledge is power and power can mean the ability to change a situation for the better. This work aims to target the grass-roots of Port Phillip citizens who would like to, in some small way, develop a

more critical understanding of Australia's history. It is at the grass-roots level - around the kitchen table, at the dinner party, the restaurant, the pub and the café, that peoples attitudes are shaped - and changed.

The work should not be seen as a definitive Aboriginal history of Port Phillip or Victoria. The preface stated that it was written by a person of European decent who does not presume to have any innate Aboriginal knowledge of this country. However this should not detract from the message it aims to impart. The City of Port Phillip is committed to building stronger relationships with its indigenous communities. To this end, the City has initiated various projects which aim to provide tangible and meaningful opportunities for its indigenous communities. Initiatives such as our involvement in NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Observance Committee); Reconciliation Week programs; the Aboriginal traineeship scheme, which aims to provide training and employment to Aboriginal and Islander trainees; the Memoranda of Understanding, in which the City has formally acknowledged that it is on Bun wurrung language country and the establishment of Aboriginal Policy Officer and Koorie Arts Officer positions, demonstrate the commitment of the City to its indigenous communities.

Although these initiatives are great achievements, they are the beginning rather than the end of the process. They are minimum requirements needed for any local government to play its role in the process of building positive relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. It should also be said, that real change does occur at the community level. Through the agency of Port Phillip Library Service and our Aboriginal representatives a more positive dialogue can be achieved which involves Port Phillip citizens actively playing a role in the process.







