



Photo: Birrarung (Yarra River) near the confluence with Merri Creek (2021)

(A. Foley)

Talking Merri Birrarung:

Caring for Country where the Merri flows into Birrarung (Yarra River)

Part 2

Online by Zoom: Wed 26 January 6 pm – 7pm (2022)



Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

&

Merri Creek Management Committee

Supported by Yarra City Council *Investing in Community Partnership Grants.*



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People as the Traditional Custodians of the un-ceded land and waters of the Merri Merri

In conversation

Uncle Dave Wandin is a Wurundjeri Elder, educator and spokesperson. He led Wurundjeri Council's first Narrap (Country) Conservation & Land Management Team. He is the first Wurundjeri Fire Elder, currently the Birrarung Council Member for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC), & he is the Chairperson of Wandoon Estate, Coranderrk.

Angela Foley is a non-Indigenous educator and geographer for Merri Creek Management Committee. MCMC is a 30 year old not-for-profit organisation focused on Caring for Country by advocating for the protection of indigenous biodiversity. She contributes to the coordination of MCMC's community engagement and education program across school, community and industry sectors.

Together, Uncle Dave Wandin and Angela Foley have worked on a variety of projects for 12 years, addressed conferences, spoken on 3KnD Radio and recently published a collaborative paper for an archaeological journal:

[https://opal.latrobe.edu.au/articles/conference_contribution/In the fine grain Intimate materials and experimental archaeology on Wurundjeri Country today/17046161](https://opal.latrobe.edu.au/articles/conference_contribution/In_the_fine_grain_Intimate_materials_and_experimental_archaeology_on_Wurundjeri_Country_today/17046161)



Photo A Foley

Welcome to Country: From Uncle Dave Wandin



Photo: Tom Crawshaw (Nov 2021)

Welcome: On Country Together



Top: Wurundjeri leaders
Uncle Dave Wandin, Auntie
Alice Kolasa, and Uncle
Colin Hunter at Merri
Birrarrung May 2016 & (right)
2017. Community events
(Sunbury Rings 2015
Garambi Baan)

(Photos: A Foley)



Did you join us online on December 8, 2021?
What does 26th January mean to you?



Photos: A Foley (Sept 2017 & 2021).

Yarra City Council's Yana Ngargna Plan 2020 – 2023

Yana Ngargna Plan 2020-23 refers to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung's continuing connection to culture, country and identity.

Yana Ngargna means 'continuing connection' in Woi Wurrung language. (Formerly known as the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan.)

This refers to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung's continuing connection to culture, country and identity—as well as Council's commitment to developing continuing connections with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations. The Plan was renamed in 2019, the International Year of Indigenous Languages."

www.yarracity.vic.gov.au



What 26th January means to Yarra City Council

City of Yarra views on January 26: <https://www.miragenews.com/statement-on-january-26-2022-710553/>

“We acknowledge the history and culture of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It is a day of mourning, pain and disconnection for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community.”

A unanimous decision to change the way the Yarra City Council marks January 26 was made on 15 August 2017.

<https://www.facebook.com/yarracitycouncil/videos/what-does-january-26-mean-for-our-aboriginal-community/463096694822721/>

<https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/the-area/aboriginal-yarra/january-26-in-yarra>



What day?

“A real Australian is someone who knows where they really, really come from.”

Bart Willoughby, Aboriginal musician.

“Aboriginal people call it 'Invasion Day', 'Day of Mourning', 'Survival Day' or, since 2006, 'Aboriginal Sovereignty Day'. The latter name reflects that all Aboriginal nations are sovereign and should be united in the continuous fight for their rights.”

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/australia-day-invasion-day>



What Country means to us: At Merri Birrarung Confluence on 26th January 2022



Uncle Dave: To acknowledge sadness and the burden of carrying on. Working with people who grab on to the feeling and stories continues the connection to Country.

Angela: Time to talk and be constructive, finding my place and way to experience Jan 26th on Country with Traditional Owners. Connecting with Country on January 26th is compelling and irresistible.



Merri Birrarung



(Photos: A Foley)

Merri Birrarung: Place of learning and connection



Darren Wandin and Uncle Bill Nicholson Sept 2016
trees marked lightly. (Photo: A Foley)



Uncle Colin Hunter 2018 (Photo: J Cirillo)

Who has control? Issues of custodianship



 **Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning**
FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE ACT 1988
PERMIT TO TAKE / KEEP PROTECTED FLORA

Pursuant to the provisions of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 permission is hereby granted to:

Mr David Wandin
Wurundjeri Tribe Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc
1st Floor Providence Building, Abbotsford Convent, 1 St. Heliers Street
Abbotsford 3067

Permit No: 10008083
File No: FF383495

 **Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning**
File: FF383495 12 SEP 2018

Mr David Wandin
Wurundjeri Tribe Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc
1st Floor Providence Building, Abbotsford Convent, 1 St. Heliers Street
Abbotsford 3067

Dear David,

I refer to your application for a permit under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 and the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978. Permit number 10008083 (expiry date 31 December 2018) has been granted in respect to an application for the take of protected flora in the additional native vegetation in the area. You are required to submit a copy of your final report. The permit was referred to Delta Vegetation to ensure that the project is consistent with public management objectives.

Please note this permit is only valid when signed and dated by the permit holder (see final page of permit).

Should you require further information, please email environmentalresearch@delwp.wa.gov.au or telephone 08 9412 1700. Please quote the file number and permit number in all correspondence relating to this permit.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Sue Hadden
Environmental Research Coordinator

 **Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning**
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Environmental Research Coordinator





Wandin, Nevin, Terrick Families: L-R: Darren Wandin; Ron Jones and Ash Kerr, Barry Coombes, removing *beal* bark beside Yarra Birrarung Sept 2016

(Photos: A Foley)

Cultural revival: Caring for Country

Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Bill 2017:

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung leaders addressed Victorian Parliament in Woi-wurrung language and English to explain their connection with the Yarra River and the importance of protecting it for generations to come prior to the introduction of the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Bill 2017.

NAIDOC Week 2021 theme:

‘Heal Country’ <https://www.naidoc.org.au/get-involved/2021-theme>

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2021:

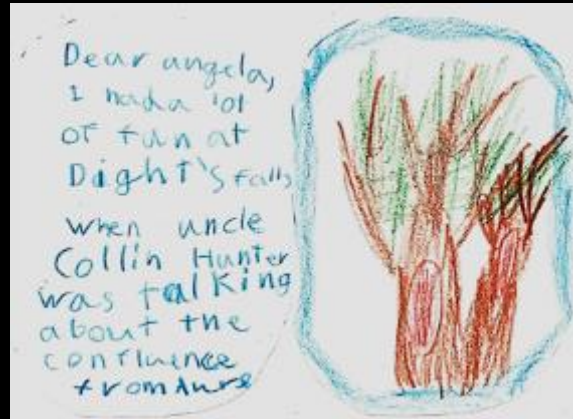
“ ‘More than a word. Reconciliation takes action’, asks people to take awareness and knowledge, and use it as springboard to be more substantive, be actively brave. And to be effective, it must involve truth-telling.”

<https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au/more-than-a-word-reconciliation-takes-action/>



<https://www.wurundjeri.com.au/our-story/recent-history-present/>

<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/news/3780-aboriginal-elders-address-legislative-assembly>



Merri Yarra Confluence beyond Jan 26: Culture, ecology, stories, history, ...

Far left: Intercultural Art Studio 2015

Above right: Uncle Colin Hunter with students
March 2017

Centre right: Student letter of thanks 2017

Bottom right: Newly scarred trees and planting
Sept 2016

(Photos: A Foley)

Always was, always will be ...

Six layers of Country* at Merri Birrarung

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country in six layers:

1. Biik-ut (English: Below Country)
2. Biik-dui (English: On Country)
3. Baanj/baan Biik (English: Water Country)
4. Murnmut Biik (English: Wind Country)
5. Wurru wurru Biik (English: Sky Country)
6. Tharangalk Biik (English: Forest Country - heavens)

*From: Mandy Nicholson (2021). Baban darrang: The mother tree. In *Balit Bagurrk: Strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women of the Yarra Ranges* (p. 7). Yarra Shire Ranges Council.

Ngoon godjin (thank you)

