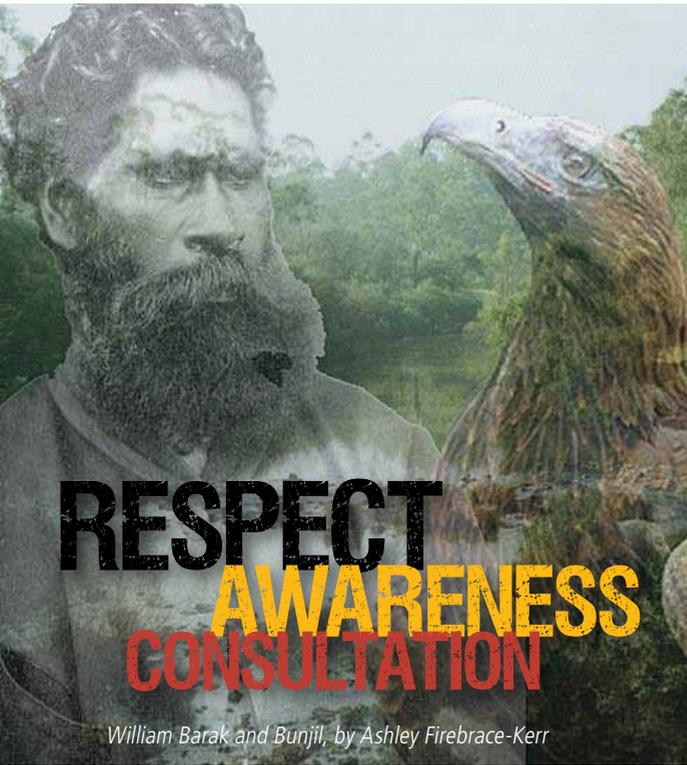
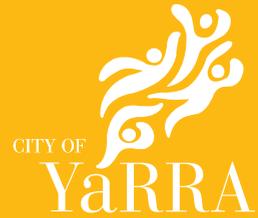


# The Wurundjeri Protocol: A short guide to engaging with the Aboriginal community in Yarra



*William Barak and Bunjil, by Ashley Firebrace-Kerr*



It is widely recognised that many non-Aboriginal Australians have limited knowledge and understanding of, and contact with, Aboriginal communities. This means that non-Aboriginal people and organisations are not always sure how best to engage, consult and work with the local Aboriginal community. This guide offers some respectful and culturally appropriate starting points for linking in with Yarra's Traditional Owners – The Wurundjeri – as well as the broader Aboriginal community.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that this publication may contain images of deceased peoples.**



*Wurundjeri figures in possum skin cloaks by William Barak, 1898, courtesy of the National Gallery of Victoria*

## **Requirement to contact the Traditional Owners**

The Wurundjeri people are the Traditional Owners of the land now known as the City of Yarra. All cultural requests such as Welcome to Country ceremonies, smoking ceremonies and cultural awareness training must be directed to Wurundjeri Council.

If the information you require is more specific in nature, other Aboriginal organisations may also be able to offer guidance. If, for example, your enquiry is related to health, try the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. If your enquiry is related to sporting events and other community activities, contact MAYSAR. Many Aboriginal organisations like these are located in the urban heartland of Aboriginal Melbourne, Fitzroy.

## **Welcome to Country vs Acknowledgement of Country**

A Welcome to Country ceremony should be conducted at significant official events and may only be carried out by a Traditional Owner (that is, a Wurundjeri Elder on Wurundjeri land). A 'Welcome' should be booked through the Wurundjeri Council at least 6 weeks in advance of your event.

At the commencement of all other events and meetings, it is appropriate for the first speaker to announce an 'Acknowledgement of Country'. This is a sign of respect for the Traditional Owners, their land and culture – and can be performed by anyone, Aboriginal or not.

## **Sorry Business**

Death and grief in the Aboriginal community is known as Sorry Business, and takes precedence over all other business, including any pre-arranged meetings. It is a cultural and social obligation for Aboriginal people to attend Sorry Business for their kin, including extended family.



*Annie Borate, 1866, reproduced with permission of Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Di Kerr*

## **Terminology: Aboriginal, Aborigine, Koori or Indigenous?**

There are no clear-cut rules, but if in doubt, it is best-practice to use the term Aboriginal – as in the Aboriginal community, or Aboriginal person.

Some Aboriginal people have mixed feelings about the use of other terms such as Indigenous and Aborigine because of negative historical associations.

Koori is another word frequently used by Aboriginal people in South Eastern Australia, but this is an informal term and best to be avoided by non-Aboriginal people.

## **The Parkies**

Some members of the homeless Aboriginal community who meet in and around the streets of Fitzroy and Collingwood refer to themselves as 'Parkies'. Many Parkies are members of the Stolen Generations, separated from their families and communities in their youth – and experience complex ongoing health problems as a result of this. If you see a Parkie in need of assistance, you can call outreach workers at The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (during business hours only). If a Parkie is experiencing a medical emergency, call an ambulance (000). If an issue involving a Parkie seems unmanageable or is escalating, contact Collingwood Police or Fitzroy Police.

## **Consultation**

Always consult the Aboriginal community from the commencement of your project. Do not present your proposed plans or projects to the Aboriginal community when they are half and/or already complete.

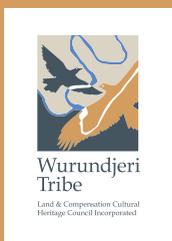
Allow time for consultation processes. Many decisions require Aboriginal people to consult their Elders.

Bear in mind that cultural knowledge and advice from Wurundjeri Council is in high demand and, like any specialised advice, may come at a fee. Allow adequate time for consultation in your planning processes and enquire about any expenses.

## Wurundjeri Customs and Traditions – Cultural Awareness Training

More local councils, workplaces and service providers are offering training to their staff, to improve understanding and awareness of traditional cultural practices, beliefs and histories, and to guide staff in appropriate ways to work with Aboriginal communities.

For further information, contact Wurundjeri Council, Koorie Heritage Trust or visit Bunjilaka at the Museum of Victoria.



## Useful Contact numbers

Yarra City Council	<b>9205 5555</b>
Wurundjeri Council	<b>8673 0901</b>
Koorie Heritage Trust	<b>8622 2600</b>
MAYSAR	<b>9486 9123</b>
Bunjilaka (Museum of Victoria)	<b>131 102</b>
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service	<b>9419 3000</b>
Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited	<b>9489 3367</b>
Ambulance	<b>000</b>
Collingwood Police	<b>9419 4911</b>
Fitzroy Police	<b>9419 4311</b>

For further information on Aboriginal history and culture in the City of Yarra, go to: **[www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/Aboriginal-services](http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/Aboriginal-services)** or scan this QR code.



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