

## Yarra valley Aboriginal Sites of Significance

- **Aboriginal sculptures at William Ricketts Sanctuary:** Mt. Dandenong, Melways 52 H10.
- **Coranderrk Aboriginal Cemetery:** Barak Lane, Badger Creek, 300 Kulin graves, Melways 277 K9.
- **Battle of Yering Memorial Rock:** Site of battle between Border Police & Wurundjeri, 13/01/1840.
- **William Barak Memorial at Brushy Creek:** Stone monument plaque and tree, Melways 37 C7.
- **Barnggeong Birthing Site:** At the confluence of Brushy Creek and Yarra is a Wurundjeri birthing and female initiation site where William Barak was born, Melways 24 K6.
- **Gawa Wurundjeri Resource Trail:** 340m bushland walking trail at Watson's Creek with 9 resource markers along the way, Melways 272 D5.
- **Pound Bend South Memorial Rock:** Dedicated to Reserve & 1852 corroboree site, Melways 23 C12.
- **Wurundjeri Stories Walk:** Start at Pound Bend tunnel & follow signage, Melways 23 A11.
- **Pound Bend North Memorial Rock:** Dedicated to Reserve & 1852 corroboree site, Melways 23 C9.
- **Moorrul Viewing Platform in Kangaroo Ground:** Interpretive panels, memorial, Melways 271 E11.
- **Tikalara Park:** Aboriginal living area occupied by Major Newman in 1837, Melways 22 C11.
- **Fish Farms at Finns:** Traditional fish & eel trap area, yabbie & mussel farms, etc, Melways 33 B3.
- **Yingabeal - the Scar Tree at Heide Museum:** Not just a canoe tree, also Marker Tree at junction of five Songlines (walking trails), Melways 32 E5.
- **Bolin-Bolin Billabong:** Eel and duck hunting site adjacent to corroboree ground, Melways 32 C8.
- **Bunjilaka Centre:** Melbourne Museum Carlton, 'First Peoples Exhibition', Melways 2B J9.
- **Birrarung Marr:** Celebrating Wurundjeri culture, displays, etc, along riverside walk, Melways 2F K6.
- **Koorie Heritage Trust:** Federation Square, Melb., Interactive displays, souvenirs, Melways 1A P10.

## Tikalara Park

The traditional Aboriginal living area at the Yarra River & Mullum-Mullum Creek junction, which was also the site of the earliest colonial occupation in the Manningham area

This is one of a series of pamphlets produced by Reconciliation Manningham with the aim of increasing the knowledge of local residents on both our local Aboriginal and early colonial history.

As this pamphlet briefly shows, these interactions were both positive and negative. Both sides of the coin need to be openly acknowledged as part of our Australian history and heritage, and as part of our journey toward reconciliation.

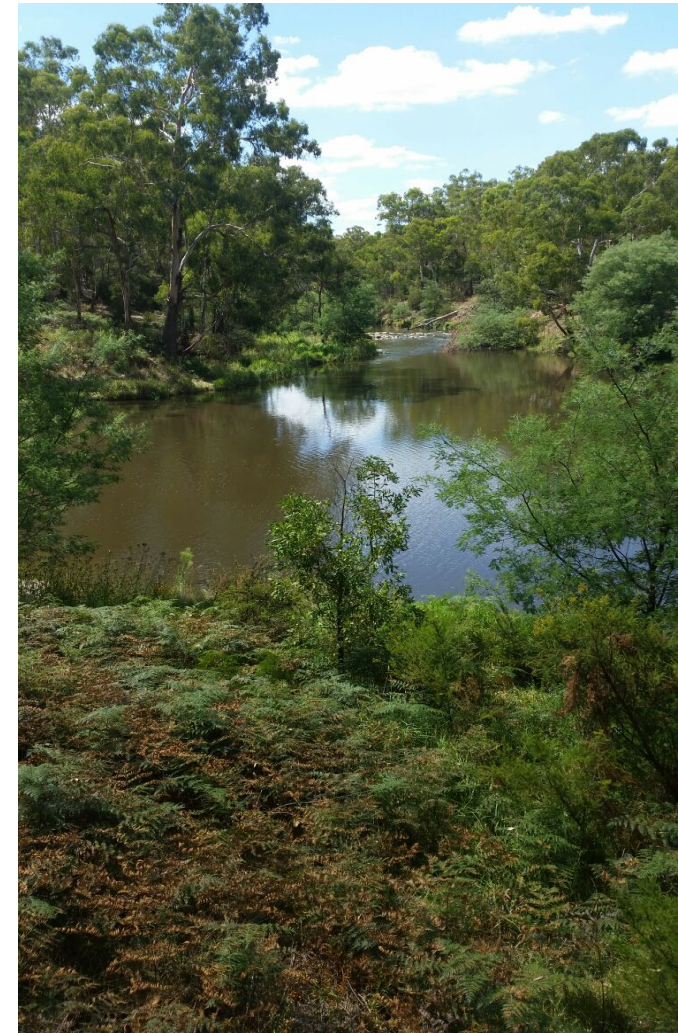
*For information on the activities and contact details of Reconciliation Manningham, please visit our website at:*

[HTTP://WWW.RECMAN.ORG.AU](http://www.recman.org.au)

*Or contact the Secretary, Jim Poulter, on 9842 3598*



## TIKALARA



The traditional Aboriginal living area at the junction of the Mullum-Mullum Creek and Yarra River

## How to find Tikalara Park

In the Woiwurung language, Tikalara means 'Spirit of Place'. Tikalara Park is located at the junction of Mullum-Mullum Creek and the Yarra River. It is mostly on Crown Land and is managed by Parks Victoria, but it also includes some parcels of freehold land owned by the Manningham City Council. Tikalara Park lies north of Websters Road in Templestowe along the Main Yarra Trail. It can be accessed from three directions:

- First is from the east along the Mullum Trail, starting at Beasley's Nursery on Andersons Creek Road.
- Second is from the south, starting behind Aumanns Nursery that backs onto Websters Road.
- Third is from the west via Pettys Orchard, which is at the end of Monckton Rd.

## Traditional land use

Aboriginal people were not 'Hunter-Gathers' as they have most often been described, but were instead 'Permaculture Farmers'. That is, they managed the land so as to preserve defined habitats for specific animals, plants, birds and fish, which they harvested at a sustainable rate. In reality, Australia was originally a series of 'farms without fences', the technology of which was largely invisible to European eyes.

Hilltops were always cleared of trees and cultivated as grass seed farms. A curtilage of open land would be cleared around copses of trees to become possum farms. Ponding systems would be installed up the creeks to form yabbie and freshwater mussel farms. Trees along the river flats would be thinned so that they stood 25m to 50m apart and formed kangaroo farms. Weir walls would be built across the rapids area of a river to form fish and eel traps. Gullies would be cleared by regular firing to form myrnong farms. Wetlands would also be burnt annually to maintain them as water-bird farms.

If you stand on the viewing platform at the junction of the creek and the river, you will see a rapids area 200m upstream. This ford was a permanent river crossing as well as a fish trap site. At the junction of the creek and river was a deepwater nursery for blackfish and a retreat for eels. On the rise to the right-hand side of the river, stood a semi-permanent village of some dozens of houses. Up Mullum Creek, were water-bird and myrnong farms that presented as prime 'unoccupied' grazing land to the first squatter in the area.

## The first Squatter arrives

This traditional scenario changed forever in 1837, when the first settler in the area, Major Charles Newman arrived from Tasmania. He ruthlessly destroyed the Aboriginal houses there and through convict labour, had a turf-block house built on the west side of the Mullum Creek junction. This was right behind the present-day viewing platform and is bordered by a post and rail fence.

The Major's hut was protected on three sides by the creek in the east, the river on the north, and an escarpment on the south. On the west side, he built narrow slit windows, from which he could fire on any Aboriginal people who dared to try and cross the land he now claimed.

## Wurundjeri Extreme Sports

As Aboriginal people have been scientifically proven to have the best eyesight in the world, it did not take long to figure out that it was no use ducking when you heard a gun go bang, because the bullet is faster than the sound. They very quickly saw that what preceded the bullet was a puff of smoke, so this led to a very dangerous game.

To keep the Major pinned down in his hut while others broke down his fences and drove off his stock, a group of Aboriginal men would step out into the open and yell. As soon as they saw a puff of smoke from the window, they would jump back behind a tree. As soon as the bullet had whizzed harmlessly by, they would step out again, turn around and bare their buttocks at the Major. Then of course they would jump back behind a tree before the Major could pick up and fire his next rifle.

## Can we kill the Major?

This animosity between the local Aboriginal people and the Major stood in complete contrast to their relationship with John Chivers, who lived in a bark hut some 800m from the Major. John often traded butter, sugar or tea for a possum or bandicoot and had many convivial chats with them. He was one of only two settlers known to have become fluent in the Woiwurung language.

One of the many stories passed down the Chivers family from the early 1840's was that early one morning, a half dozen or so painted-up natives passed by John's hut. He invited them to have breakfast and they said they would do so after they had killed the Major, who had apparently succeeded in shooting one of them the day before. However, as they approached the Major's hut, his wife Catherine, who had got up early to light the breakfast fire, saw them and realized that there were too many of them to fight. So she roused the Major out of bed and got him to hide up in the chimney. The tribesmen came in and searched for the Major but could not find him. So they left Catherine unharmed and went for a delayed breakfast with John. When the Major climbed down from the chimney, his clothing and whiskers had been singed from the heat of the fire. How he had not coughed from the smoke and given himself away is something of a miracle, but then again, his life had depended on it.

In 1844, Major Newman built a permanent homestead, Pontville, which still stands on the north of the creek and is the oldest building still standing east of the Yarra. It was constructed with handmade bricks, pit-sawn red gum timber and hand-sawn wood shingles. The slurry pit where the bricks were made is still present 50m up from the gate to Pontville.