



## The You Yangs Region

The Region is centred on the highly visible granite You Yangs peaks and surrounding basalt grassland plains. It spreads from Mount Anakie and the Brisbane Ranges in the west to the Port Phillip shoreline near Avalon Airport and contains the catchment for the Little River and Hovells Creek and tributaries as they flow to Port Phillip and Corio Bay.

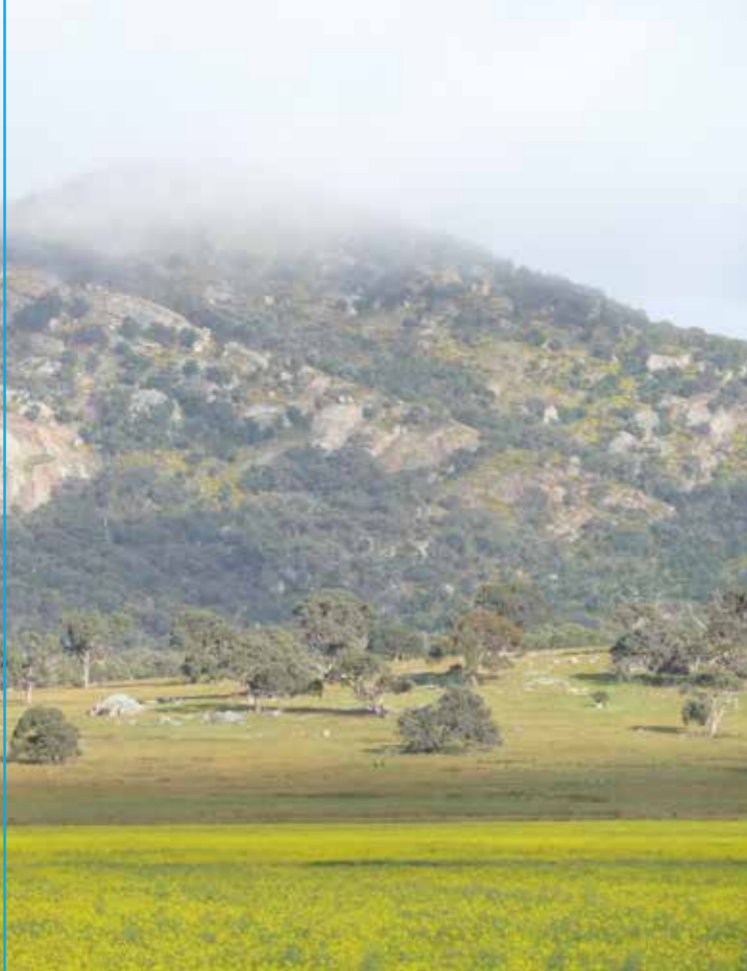
The You Yangs Region is noted for its rich Wadawurrung and early pastoral settler history and contains many registered Aboriginal Heritage sites associated with our parks, waterways and grasslands. These continue to provide a vital focus for Aboriginal cultural practices and learning and have immense potential for wider public education and interest.

The Region was central in the original Port Phillip Association settlement of 1835 and in the NSW administered Port Phillip District that followed. Recently, the areas north of Geelong and west of Melbourne have experienced a new wave of settlement from the rapid industrial, commercial and residential growth of our cities, leaving the rural and natural environment of the You Yangs region as a welcome wedge of open space.

The history of this region shows the three major streams of Australian history and cultural heritage:

- Australia's First People – the world's longest, continuous surviving civilization;
- British military and convicts who arrived during the late 1700s and 1800s and early free settler colonists, mainly from the British Isles, in the 1800s;
- Settlers from an increasingly diverse range of backgrounds who have added to Australia's multi-culturalism, mainly since Federation in 1901.

Tensions between the Wadawurrung and settlers developed with particular intensity in the Geelong and You Yangs areas between 1835 and 1850, with disastrous consequences for the rapidly displaced Wadawurrung People.



## Wadawurrung Timelines

*"From 'time immemorial' and according to science 60,000 years"*

*"Since the beginning of the Dreaming, the great ancestor spirit, Bunjil, the wedge tailed eagle, created the land, rivers, lakes, plants, laws and lore of the great Kulin Nation.*

*Djillong (Geelong) meaning "tongue of land" in the local language is the home of the Wadawurrung, one of the five tribes making up the Kulin Nation whose collective territory extends around Port Phillip and Western Port, up into the Great Dividing Range and the Loddon and Goulburn River valleys. The Wadawurrung territory includes the districts of Geelong, Bellarine, Ballarat and Beaufort, and around 25 clans.*

*Bunjil establishes the laws and bonds connecting people to country and enables people to live on the land in harmony and in balance with the environment. This knowledge is passed down from Elders in the*



*oral tradition. For thousands of years the Wadawurrung people hunted and gathered across their lands and waters, with weather and food availability determining where campsites were located. This could have been by a yaluk (river) or buluk (lake) for a good kuarka (fishing place) to catch a kuwiyn (fish).*

*Today, many Wadawurrung people maintain a strong sense of cultural pride and belonging, practicing culture, upholding the dignity of their ancestors and passing on knowledge to future generations. Remnants of daily life of the Wadawurrung people include shell middens, fish traps, artefact scatters, stone quarries, scar trees, stone arrangements and burial sites. Importantly, Geelong has one of the largest numbers of registered Aboriginal sites in the State.*

*The first European settlers arrived in Geelong in 1836 and the rapid colonisation that followed saw the Wadawurrung population decimated. Disease, violence, forced removal from their lands, and assimilation policies saw the loss of people, language, traditions and culture."*

This Introduction is from the City of Geelong Heritage Strategy, 2017-2023, written in consultation with Uncle Bryon Powell, Wadawurrung Traditional Owner.

## Early Colonial Timelines

**1802** Captain Mathew Flinders from the 'Investigator' climbs Wurdi Youang (big hill or rock in a plain) and renames it Station Peak. Later, it is renamed Flinders Peak.

**1803** Charles Grimes, member of a survey expedition on the 'Cumberland,' camps overnight at Hovells Creek.

**1803** Lieutenant-Governor David Collins establishes a military prison camp at Sullivans Bay (now Sorrento). Convicts include William Buckley, aged 23, the famous escapee who walks around the Bay to the Geelong area and is saved by the Wadawurrung People. Collins moves his settlement to Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) because of lack of water.

**1824** Hamilton Hume and William Hovell visit the mouth of the now Hovells Creek, the turning point of their exploration from Sydney.

**1835** John Batman, friend of Hume, leads fellow pastoralists from Van Diemens Land to Port Phillip. Batman's settlement is based on a treaty of sorts 'negotiated' with the Kulin Nations. This annoys the British and NSW governments who regard the settlers as trespassers and see Batman's treaty as a threat to Crown Land throughout NSW.

**1835-36** Batman and his 14 partners in the Port Phillip Association draw lots for shares of the roughly surveyed land between Indented Head and the Yarra.

**1837** Governor Sir Richard Bourke visits Port Phillip. He takes an eight-day tour on horseback to Geelong and back via Mt. Macedon and names Williamstown, Melbourne and Geelong.

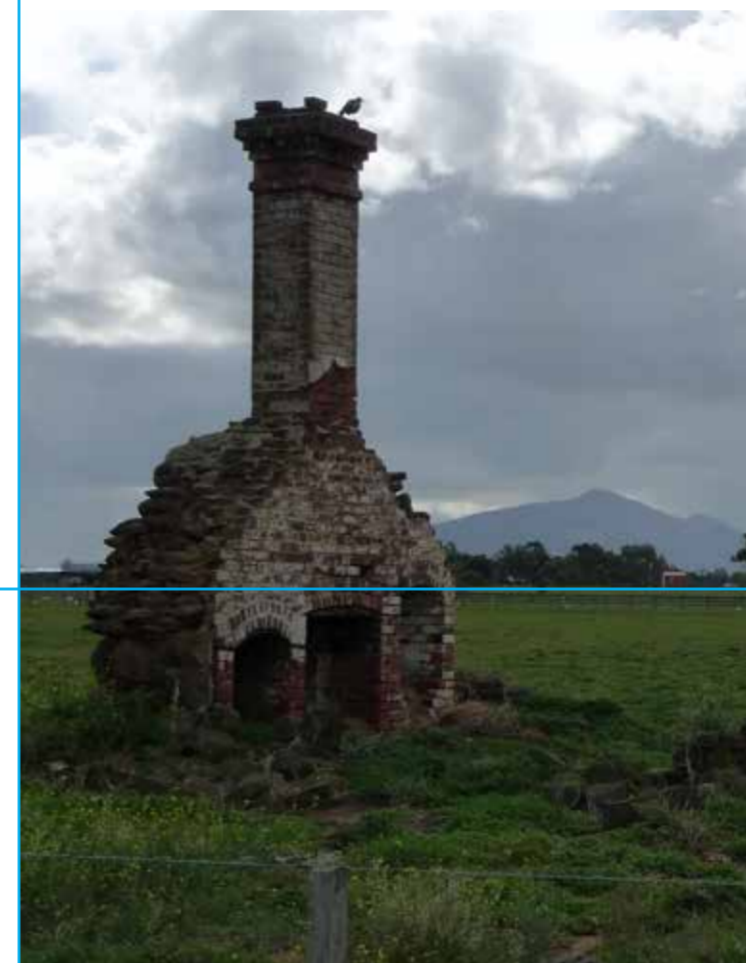
Later in 1837 London disallows Batman's treaty and the treaty obligation to supply the dispossessed Kulin People with necessities. Settlers are required to negotiate land claims within the Port Phillip District with the NSW government.

**1837-38** More Van Diemens Land settlers and some New South Wales overlanders take up runs as squatters and rapidly spread outside the approved area.

**1839** First mail cart service along the Melbourne-Geelong track. Some passengers take the 12 hour journey but most prefer the Port Phillip sea route on one of the new steamships.

**1843** Port Phillip settlement is divided into the Counties of Grant (south) and Bourke (north) each side of the Werribee River, in preparation for Government land sales.

**1851** Victoria separates from New South Wales to become an independent British Colony.



## Little River

Named as Cocoroc Rivulet (growling frog) in early maps.

**1835-37** Port Phillip Association members James Simpson and John Helder Wedge establish vast sheep runs.

Wedge's first run spreads north and west from the Werribee River, including both sides of the upper Little River and Balliang Creek, and west to near the Brisbane Ranges.

Simpson's 'Station Peak' includes both sides of the lower Little River, the You Yangs and Mt. Rothwell. Later holders of 'Station Peak', or parts of it, include W.J.T. ('Big') Clarke from 1837 and George and Marcus Synnot from 1842.

**1838** Henry Grass and William North establish runs on 'River Station' and 'Little River Station', and later Henry Grass and Sons take up 'Cocoroc', north of the Little River mouth.

**1839** 'Travellers Rest Inn' is built, most likely by Henry Grass, overlooking the main Little River ford.

The Inn is the first building in Rothwell, the name for the district at that time.

Little River today is a residential and farming district with many heritage assets. It is known for its rural environment, Heritage listed bluestone Railway Station and bridges, Rothwell Cemetery, riverside reserves and old farm walls.

## Lara

Previously called The Duck Ponds, Lara's name is thought to be based on 'lar', Wadawurrung word for rock.

**1835** Port Phillip Association member Michael Connolly is allocated land from Corio Bay and the Moorabool River to the Little River mouth.

**1836** James Austin and partners take up land along the shoreline to establish 'Avalon Station'.



**1837** Thomas Bates and his family take up land on part of 'Station Peak' near Lara.

The first known building in The Duck Ponds, as both Hovells Creek and the settlement are known, is the 'Robin Hood Inn' overlooking the Hovells Creek ford.

Its date is uncertain, between 1840 and 1858 when there is the first record of it being licenced. It is thought William Grass, brother of Little River pastoralist Henry Grass, built this Inn.

Today Lara is a thriving district and business centre, gateway to the You Yangs Region for travellers from Geelong and Western Victoria. Lara Heritage and Historical Museum has an excellent Heritage Tour map of Lara showing its many historical and natural features.



## Anakie & Balliang

Anakie, thought to be named from 'Anyaghe Youang' (smaller hills) is a township on the edge of the timbered Brisbane Ranges. The Balliang district, named after a Wadawurrung leader, is a mainly grassland area stretching from the northern Brisbane Ranges into the Werribee Plains. The Brisbane Ranges contain evidence of Wadawurrung occupation at traditional meeting places near swamps and waterways, including greenstone and quartz quarries.

The Port Phillip Settled Districts boundary runs through the plains between the Anakies and You Yangs. In the 1840s the Wadawurrung people were required to be outside this boundary by nightfall.

1841 Charles Griffin and James Moore establish 'Glenmore Run' in the Anakie area.

1842 Simon Staughton purchases the licence for 'Exford Station', from Eynesbury to the Brisbane Ranges and Charles von Steiglitz takes up 'Durdiwarrah' in the Brisbane Ranges.

Today Anakie is a small town on the Geelong-Ballan Road, with cross roads to Steiglitz, Staughton Vale, Balliang and the You Yangs. Anakie has a General Store with licenced bistro, adjacent vineyards, the Fairy Park tourist attraction, rugged Anakie Gorge and the Brisbane Ranges National Park.

Balliang is the centre of a thriving agricultural district, with sweeping grassland views and buildings much loved by the film industry.

## "My Culture, My Story"

The 2018 National Trust Australian Heritage Festival theme celebrated the diversity of cultures that have shaped our shared heritage, to ensure that this is protected and respected, and to contribute to strong, vibrant and prosperous communities.

The "Before 1850" tour held on Saturday May 12th 2018 was developed by the Little River Mechanics Institute Library and You Yangs Region Group, in consultation with the Wadawurrung Corporation and with support from the Cities of Wyndham and Greater Geelong. The generous support of Anakie Community House, Balliang Memorial Hall, Lara Heritage and Historical Museum, Little River Historical Society and Country Cartographics is appreciated.

This Guide encourages community members and visitors to celebrate our natural and cultural heritage and to showcase our wonderful landscape and environment.

Visit [www.youyangsregion.org](http://www.youyangsregion.org) for further background and for visitor information about services and amenities in the You Yangs Region.

Photos: Peter Jones

