

DJILANG TIMELINE

Djilang: 'tongue' is the Wadawurrung / Wathaurong Aboriginal name for Geelong

www.geelongonefire.org.au/index.php/djillong-local-history/the-djilang-timeline

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| At least 65,000 years ago | Evidence of Aboriginal people living on the Australian continent and of the world's earliest human art. (French cave painting 5,000 years ago, the Mona Lisa, 14th century) |
| 1600s | 1688 William Dampier (England) lands on the west coast of Australia. |
| 1700s | 1770 Captain James Cook (England) lands on the east coast of Australia. |
| 1800s | 1800 Lt James Grant (Lady Nelson ship) sails through Bass Strait. |
| 1802 | Dispossession in the Geelong district begins as Lieutenant John Murray takes possession of Port Phillip in King George III's name and raises the British flag. |
| | First contact between Wadawurrung and the Europeans. |
| 1803 | William Buckley escapes from Capt. Collins' temporary settlement at Sorrento and walks around Port Phillip Bay. Later he is invited to join the Monmart clan of Wadawurrung People when Kondiakruk (Svan Wing) declares him her husband returned from the dead. Aboriginal people believed that the dead were reincarnated in a white form. They call Buckley Morangurk (Ghost blood). |
| 1820s | 1824 Hume & Hovell arrive on Wadawurrung land at Corio Bay and are greeted by Wadawurrung resistance. |
| | In Tasmania settlers are authorised to shoot Aboriginal people. Martial law is declared in Bathurst (NSW) after violent clashes between settlers and Aboriginal people. |
| 1827 | Batman and Gellibrand apply to the colonial government for Kulin nation land. |
| 1828 | Martial law declared in Tasmania where the Solicitor General says 'the Aborigines are the open enemies of the King and in a state of actual warfare against him'. |
| 1830s | 1831 Tasmanian newspaper correspondents declare 'we are at war with them'. Gellibrand says, 'we are about to enter a war of extermination, for such I apprehend is the declared object of the present operation and that in its progress we shall be compelled to destroy the innocent with the guilty'. |
| 1835 | First massacres of Aboriginal people by Europeans occur near Geelong (and Melbourne). Whalers massacre a large group of Gunditjmarra People near Portland. Violent clashes occur around Port Phillip as Aboriginal people defend their territories. |
| | The Port Phillip Association is formed and spearheads the invasion of Wadawurrung land. |
| | John Helder Wedge leads a group to examine the land west of Indented Head. |
| | Batman first meets Wadawurrung. |
| | Batman transacts a 'treaty' with Wadawurrung members. |
| | Batman establishes a holding station on Wadawurrung land at Indented Head by leaving Todd, Gumm & Thompson (the Todd party) to secure the area and dispossession of Wadawurrung People begins. |
| | Clearing of native timber and planting of European crops begins the decimation of traditional Aboriginal food sources on the Bellarine. |
| | William Buckley makes himself known to the Todd camp, Indented Head. |
| | Batman establishes a ration station in Geelong to hand out flour and potatoes to local Aboriginal people. |
| | John Helder Wedge expresses racist colonial sentiments as he proposes the Bellarine Peninsula be used as a place to 'civilise' Aboriginal people. |
| | New South Wales Governor, Sir Richard Bourke asserts Terra Nullius and voids Batman's Treaty. |
| 1836 | William Lonsdale appointed Police Magistrate. Increased killing and dispossession of Aboriginal people due to authorities' disinterest or lack of control. Cowie, von Steiglitz, Sutherland, Thompson and Manifold rush to take land near Geelong. Thompson calls his property Kardinia and claims all the land on the south bank of the Barwon River to Barwon Heads. |
| | Settler Franks killed near Werribee. White revenge party fires on 50-100 Aboriginal people, killing at least 12. |
| | Willem Baa Ni ip, who ended up being the last traditional Wadawurrung person, is born in a location close to today's Market Square. He was named after a bunyip that his father saw on the day of his birth. |
| | Sealers continue their practice of abducting Aboriginal women. |
| | Buckley acts as an interpreter between the Port Phillip Association and the Wadawurrung. |
| | A 'settler' shoots Curacoine, clan-head of the Wadawurrung balug, and his body dumped in the Barwon River. |
| 1837 | After just 18 months since European arrival dispossession of Wadawurrung land within 25-mile radius of Geelong is complete. |
| | First Police magistrate (Foster Fyans) arrives in Geelong giving its settlement official colonial government recognition. Squatters complain to him 'of attacks of the most determined character' by Aboriginal people. Fyans complains of settlers killing blacks indiscriminately. |
| | Governor Richard Bourke names Geelong, with the name derived from the local Wathaurong / Wadawurrung Aboriginal name for the region, Djilang, which was understood to mean 'tongue of land'. Squatters are well established throughout the district. Fisher builds house on the north bank of the Barwon. |
| | Foster Fyans orders Buckley to assemble Aboriginal people and his census of Aboriginal people in the Geelong region counts 297 Wadawurrung within 30 miles of Geelong. |
| | Buckley resigns from working with the white authorities, dismayed his engagement as translator is not working to the advantage of the Wadawurrung. |
| | First European house is built in Geelong. |
| | Wadawurrung resist their land being taken and attack William Yuille's station at Murgehboluc. |
| | Two Wadawurrung killed by shepherds on the Leigh River; another 'drowns' after being chained to a log. |
| | The House of Commons Select Committee (Westminster, London) allows 'that the right of civilised states to take possession of barbarous countries rested entirely on the full equivalent being given by the invaders'. |
| | The Native Police is formed. |
| 1838 | Lake Burrumbeet, an important food source, is drying up and Wadawurrung claim it is an effect of white settlement. |
| | Wadawurrung resistance continues throughout the region. |
| | Geelong township surveyed and land 'sales' begin. Fyans chooses land on the Barwon River. |
| | European population grows to 545 as the Wadawurrung population declines. |
| | Blacks drive off sheep from Werribee pastures. Six are captured and sent to Sydney for trial. |
| | Siewwright arrives as the Protector of Aborigines for Geelong and the Western district. He spends time living with Wadawurrung People and unsuccessfully seeks prosecutions for massacres of Aboriginal people. |
| | Governor Gipps authorises public execution of whites convicted of killing blacks amongst white public outrage. Future murder and massacres in the war go unreported by the settlers. |
| 1839 | First European mission (Buntingdale) established in Victoria on Wadawurrung borders at Birregurra. |
| | Fyans travels the Western district to investigate the massacre of blacks, and reports on 'fine country available for pasture'. |
| | LaTrobe appointed Superintendent of the Port Phillip district and Protectorate system introduced. G A Robinson appointed Chief Protector of Aborigines. LaTrobe reports that, within 5 years of Batman's arrival most land in the Western District is 'settled' and indigenous populations are much reduced. |
| | William Hunt charged with wantonly assaulting Mundyendoc as European atrocities against Aboriginal people continue. |
| | Rev Joseph Orton arrives in Geelong and attempts to engage Wadawurrung in establishing a mission site. |
| | Siewwright submits a plan for 'civilizing' the Wadawurrung. |
| | A Wadawurrung balug is shot at Station Peak (Wurdi Youang; You Yangs). |
| 1840s | 1840 European massacres of Aboriginal people continue as 50 'natives' are shot near Colac. |
| | Wadawurrung are banned from the streets of Geelong. |
| | Sheep grazing is destroying Wadawurrung traditional foods – especially the murnong yam daisy. |
| | Public meeting of British settlers in North Geelong calls for government protection of Aboriginal people as a way to reduce conflict. |
| | Geelong squatters petition the Government against Aboriginal protector Siewwright. |
| | Police are given authority to keep Aboriginal people out of Corio. |
| | Wadawurrung insurgence and resistance against European squatters continues. |
| | Detailed notes on Wadawurrung language are lost in a fire at Buntingdale. |
| 1841 | 60 Wadawurrung visit Anne Drysdale's station (Borron-Goop) on the Bellarine Peninsula in search of food. She says 'they are causing no trouble'. Drysdale and Alexander Thompson (Kardinia) sometimes supply food for Buntingdale mission. |
| | Crown Commissioner Addis finds 150 remaining 'Barrabool' Wadawurrung 'settling down' near Geelong. Robinson reports most 'blacks east of Hopkins River eliminated'. |
| | Geelong Advertiser expresses prevalent colonial racism in advocating the removal of Aboriginal people to Victorian offshore islands for 'civilising'. |
| | 'Barrabool' People decline to take up residence at Buntingdale. All clans find being lumped together with other groups dispiriting. |
| | Assistant Protector Siewwright takes out a warrant to arrest Mom-Bourne (Bengali clan) for murder. Mom-Bourne escaped in chains from the cutter transporting him to Melbourne. The rebel leader is never heard of again. He was part of an organized resistance to settlement – the Silent War. |
| | Massacres of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Aboriginal people elsewhere in the region. Approximately 20 white shepherds and settlers killed. |
| | District conference of Aboriginal people near Mt Ararat complains of mistreatment and loss of food from loss of habitat. |
| | Wadawurrung, like Aboriginal people elsewhere in Australia, respond to poisonings, shootings, rapes, dispossession and starvation by dispersing flocks of sheep. Settlers respond by burning down Aboriginal villages, making Aboriginal people vulnerable to colds and respiratory infections. Judge Willis admits that the frequent conflicts between settlers and Aboriginal clans showed they were 'not a conquered people' nor did they 'acquiesce to the supremacy of the settlers'. |
| 1842 | All native trees on the surveyed streets of Geelong have been removed. |
| | Dan Dan Nook, Bengali clansman and once fastest runner in Geelong, saves Samuel Mossman from drowning. |
| | Dan Dan Nook's father and two uncles flee from British justice after fighting to protect their land. |
| | Seven years after Europeans arrive a census at Bukar Bulok (Fyansford) shows only 118 Aboriginal people survive in Geelong region. |
| 1845 | Protector Robinson reports 90% of Aboriginal reprisals against whites are due to their rape of Aboriginal women. |
| | Reports sent to Governor LaTrobe by Addis of Barrabool tell of Aboriginal women being 'interfered with' by Europeans. |
| 1848 | Foster Fyans reports that there are virtually no Aboriginal people at the Mount Rouse and Buntingdale missions. |
| 1849 | The Geelong Town Council is incorporated with no recognition of the Wadawurrung. |
| 1850 | 'Landholders' complain of Aboriginal Protectorates and stations taking up 'good land' and attracting Aboriginal people 'near our properties'. |
| 1851 | Gold is discovered in Victoria. Thousands flock to diggings and more land is taken from Wadawurrung as a result. The Buninyong People around Ballarat are the worst affected by the influx of rapacious diggers. |
| | Geelong is the 5th largest town in Victoria but only a handful of Wadawurrung survive. |
| 1852 | Small groups of Aboriginal people from different clans are moving into Geelong. |
| | William Thomas (former Protector) appointed as Guardian of all surviving Aboriginal people. Addis appointed Commissioner of Lands in the Geelong district. |
| | He suggests a reserve should be set aside as a Living Place for Aboriginal people near Point Lonsdale – never implemented. |
| 1853 | A census of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people living in Geelong shows the extermination of the Wadawurrung population nearly complete. |
| 1856 | A 'secret' Geelong pamphlet is published in The Argus that admits complicity in dispossession of Aboriginal people from their lands and debates what is to be done. |
| 1858 | Wadawurrung People compete for the first time in the second Highland Games in Geelong. |
| | A Select Committee of the Legislative Council of Victoria is appointed to enquire into the living conditions of Aboriginal people. It blames Aboriginal people for their plight and recommends reserves to protect, constrain and control them. Finds population of Aboriginal people declined by 50% in last decade. |
| 1860s | 1860 Victorian government (Land & Survey Office) announces a Central Board & District Committees for the Protection of the Aborigines of Victoria. |
| 1861 | Colonial government gazettes one acre of land for Geelong Aboriginal people (the Duneed Reserve, Ghazepore Rd, Waurm Ponds) where six surviving people live. |
| | Colonial government census of Aboriginal people living in the Geelong region shows only seven Wadawurrung left in the region. |
| | Land set aside by the Lands & Survey Office, Melbourne for the Aboriginal people of the Moorabool and Werribee district. |
| 1863 | 'Queen Eliza', wife of Dan Dan Nook, dies and is buried at Portarlington. |
| 1867 | John Garratt and Charles Read become guardians of surviving Geelong clans' people and those of Colac, Winchelsea and Waurm Ponds (Duneed), running the rations store. |
| | A copy of Mr Bunce's 'Language of the Aborigines' was 'Presented by King Jerry, the remaining representative of the Geelong, or Dan-dan-nook tribe' to Prince Alfred, son of Queen Victoria, 'as a specimen of the language of his own and other tribes'. |
| 1869 | Victorian Aboriginal Protection Board is given statutory authority. |
| | Parliament enacts an inhumane Act for the Protection and Management of the Victorian Aborigines (the Mission Act). It restricts the rights of Aboriginal people to control where they live and work and whom they marry. This is the beginning of legislation that produces the Stolen Generations. It also forces Aboriginal people of fair complexion off reserves. Some reserves are broken up and land sold. |
| 1870s | 1870 Dan Dan Nook, once the fastest runner in Geelong, dies in the Geelong Invalid Asylum of tuberculosis. |
| 1874 | Only one male Aborigine requests and receives aid from the local guardian in Geelong. |
| 1880s | 1886 The Victorian Aborigines Protection Act denies human rights as it increases control measures including empowering the Victorian Board for the Protection of Aborigines to apprentice Aboriginal children at 13 and enabling them to require children to seek their permission to visit their families. |
| | Willem Baa Ni ip, the last traditional Wadawurrung person, dies at Geelong Hospital of tuberculosis after living alone for 15 years after the last of his contemporaries died. 'Who can imagine his sorrow'? |
| 1890s | 1897 Robert Shirra raised money to erect a railing around the Wadawurrung grave for Willem Baa Ni ip, Dan Dan Nook, Jumbo Moora Nook, Dick, Jemmy Nelson, Harry Gore and Ellen, in the Herne Hill cemetery. |
| 1900s | 1902 The Aboriginal reserve at Steiglitz (63 acres) is given back to the Department of Lands due to the continuing decrease in Aboriginal numbers in the area. |
| 1910s | 1910 Aborigines Act 1910 reduces some government restrictions on Aboriginal life but maintains distinctions between the rights of white Victorians and Aboriginal Victorians. |
| 1916 | The Aboriginal Protection Board begins to withhold payment of wages to Aboriginal workers as a form of punishment and control. |
| 1920s | 1925 Australian Aborigines Progressive Association formed. |
| 1930s | 1932 Australian Aborigines League is established in Melbourne. |
| | Aborigines Progressive Association declares Australia Day a national day of mourning. |
| 1950s | 1951 Assimilation Policy formed: 'All Aborigines expected to attain the same manner of living as other Australians'. |
| 1956 | Uncle Rocky Couzens, a Geelong resident, becomes the first Aboriginal train driver in Victoria. |
| 1960s | 1962 All Victorian Aboriginal people are finally given voting rights for the first time. |
| | Assimilation Policy restated as Integration Policy. |
| 1967 | Referendum gave the power to the Commonwealth to make laws about Aboriginal people and included them in population counts. This is the first time that Aboriginal people were classed as people, as opposed to 'flora and fauna'. |
| 1970s | 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy outside Parliament House, Canberra, calling for land rights and compensation. Federal Government agrees that Aboriginal people could hold leases and form pastoral companies. |
| 1974 | Gough Whitlam (then Prime Minister) pours Gurindji sand into the hand of Vincent Lingiari thus returning the land to traditional owners. |
| 1975 | Federal Racial Discrimination Act passed. |
| 1976 | Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) allows Aboriginal people to own traditional land and make claims for Crown Lands. |
| | Wathaurong Aboriginal Corporation was incorporated under The Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976 to act on behalf of and represent the interests of all Wadawurrung People |
| 1977 | The Wurdi Youang stone arrangement on Wadawurrung lands is declared a protected archaeological site. |
| 1978 | Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd is formed. |
| 1980s | 1980 Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative is formally registered. |
| | Vicki Couzens appointed Chairperson and Director Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative. |
| 1984 | Lyn McInnes begins work as Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer in the Department of Aboriginal Health, Geelong Hospital. |
| 1986 | Deakin's Institute of Koorie Education (IKE) is established in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI). |
| 1987 | Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody formed. |
| 1988 | Koori Hour, a Wathaurong Aboriginal Radio Program, begins operation. |
| 1990s | 1992 The High Court rejected the doctrine of Terra Nullius and concluded that consequently Native Title could have survived on lands where it had not been extinguished. |
| 1993 | The Commonwealth parliament introduces The Native Title Act. It was amended in 1998 and 2006. |
| 1994 | Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report handed down. |
| 1994 | Milla Milla Playgroup begins operation at the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative. |
| 1996 | High Court rules in favour of Wik People's right to receive Native Title Rights. |
| | Narana Creations moves to Torquay Road, Geelong. |
| 1997 | City of Greater Geelong presents a tree to the Wathaurong Co-operative to acknowledge the 30th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum. |
| | Report Into the Separation of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (The Bringing Them Home Report) published. |
| | Wathaurong: Too Bloody Strong published. |
| | Geelong One Fire Reconciliation Group is formed in Geelong. |
| 1998 | The Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative and Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) start work on the Wathaurong Language Program. |
| | Wathaurong Glass is formed. |
| 1999 | Wathaurong acknowledged as owners of Wurdi Youang astrological stone arrangement with traditional knowledge of the site's sanctity. |
| 2000s | 2000 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management & Protection Development Planning Protocol agreed between City of Greater Geelong and the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative. |
| 2001 | City of Greater Geelong agrees to archaeological examinations for all development within 500 metres of the ocean, bays or waterways in order to protect Aboriginal sites. |
| | Yorta Yorta loses court case for land rights claim. |
| 2004 | Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative expands to include a community controlled health service. |
| | William Buckley Labyrinth opened at St Leonards. |
| | Wadawurrung Elder stands beside Moopor as she points the bone at the then Prime Minister John Howard's decision to end ATSIC. |
| 2005 | Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative 25th Anniversary. |
| | Wathaurong Co-operative participates in 'Finding Your Story: A Resource Manual to records of the Stolen Generations of Victoria'. |
| | William Buckley Discovery Trail launched. |
| | Wadawurrung Elders, community members and members of the Geelong One Fire Reconciliation Group mark 120th Anniversary of Willem Baa Ni ip's death. |
| 2006 | Memorandum of Understanding between the Corrangamite Water Catchment Management Authority and the Aboriginal Community Organisations in the area. |
| | Establishment of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act, to provide protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, to empower traditional owners as protectors of their cultural heritage, to strengthen the ongoing right to maintain the relationship of traditional owners with the land and waters and other resources, and to promote respect for Aboriginal cultural heritage. |
| 2008 | Statement of commitment to partnership with the Wadawurrung by the City of Greater Geelong. |
| | City of Greater Geelong endorses the apology made to the Stolen Generations by Prime Minister Rudd. |
| | Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative BBQ and gathering to watch Prime Minister Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generations. |
| 2009 | Wathaurong Aboriginal Corporation (WAC), trading as Wadawurrung, was accorded Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) status. |
| 2010s | 2010 The Storyteller Aboriginal board game is launched. |
| 2011 | Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd is the largest employer of Aboriginal people within the Geelong region. |
| | Rocky Couzens, first Aboriginal train driver in Victoria, dies in Geelong hospital. |
| | Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative participates in the 25th Anniversary of Deakin University's Institute of Koorie Education (IKE). |
| 2017 | Wadawurrung Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) office opens in Geelong. |

This timeline will be updated on the website as new material becomes available.

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