

## Fact Sheet 8: Understanding Aboriginal culture and history in the Campaspe Moama Region

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are amongst the oldest living cultures in the world and they form a central part in shaping Australia's identity and the way we view life today.

By understanding culture and history and building stronger connections between Aboriginal people and the broader community we together can remove barriers to participation in community life and in the process gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture.

### Aboriginal People of Campaspe Murray

Two tribal clans, **the Yorta Yorta and the Dja Dja Wurrung** lived along the grassy waterways of this region to hunt, fish and gather food across territory defined by tribal language, and bounded by geographical features such as forests, rivers and creeks.

### Yorta Yorta

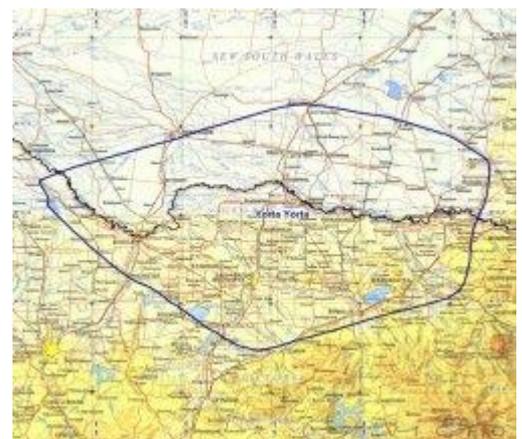
The Yorta Yorta are the Traditional Owners of a unique stretch of country now known as the Murray Goulburn region of northern Victoria and southern NSW. Traditional Yorta Yorta lands lie on both sides of the Murray River roughly from Cohuna to Albury / Wodonga. They include towns such as Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta and extend northwards to just south of Deniliquin

Yorta Yorta Towns covered in the Murray and Campaspe Shires are:

- Echuca
- Kyabram
- Moama
- Mathoura
- Rochester

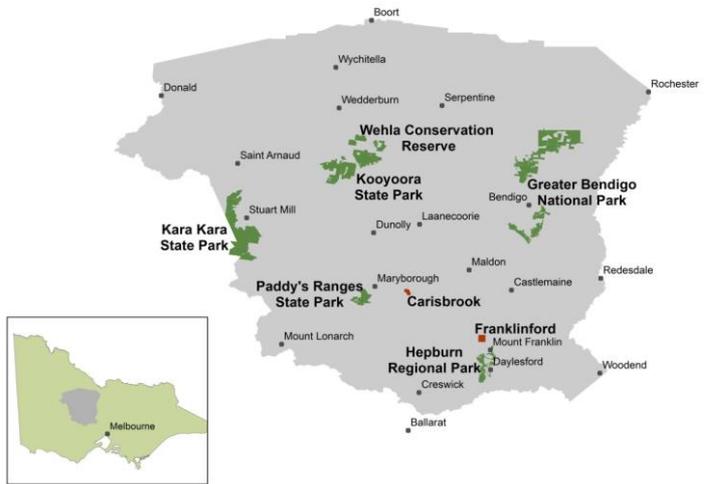
The Yorta Yorta Nation is made up of clans and family groups including:

- Kaitheban
- Wollithiga
- Moira



- Ulupna
- Bangerang,
- Kwat Kwat,
- Yalaba Yalaba
- Ngurai-illiam-wurrung.

Yorta Yorta comes from the traditional language spoken by all Aboriginal Traditional Owner clans across the region



### Dja Dja Wurrung

Dja Dja Wurrung territory extends from Mount Franklin and the towns of Creswick and Daylesford in the southeast to Castlemaine, Maldon and Bendigo in the east, Boort in the north, Donald in the northwest, to Rochester in the northeast to Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca marking the south west boundary. Dja Dja Wurrung covers towns of Rochester, Lockington, Rushworth and Elmore in the Campaspe Shire.

Dja Dja Wurrung is made up of Aboriginal clans who occupy these areas are

- the Jaara Jaara people of the Dja Dja Wurrung language community,
- the Taungurung peoples and
- the Barapa Barapa peoples.
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### Aboriginal and Torres Islander Population in Campaspe Murray

From the 2011 ABS table 1 highlights people whom identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

	Campaspe Shire	Murray Shire
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents	815	232
Percentage of Shire's population identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	2.3%	3.33%
Median Age	20	26

Table 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the Shires of Campaspe and Murray



## Understanding how past practices and discrimination have affected the health and welfare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- 47.1% of Aboriginal people have a relative who was forcibly removed from their family due to Stolen Generations policies in Victoria. Trans-generational trauma continues to affect Aboriginal people in Victoria.
- Over one in five Aboriginal adults report 'high or very high' levels of psychological distress. This is double the non-Aboriginal rate.
- Australia has the greatest differences in health between peoples within a country than anywhere in the world; Indigenous Australians die at much younger ages, have more disability and a lower quality of life largely due to unequal access to resources and opportunities.
- Median age of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is 21 years compared with median age of 37 years for non-Aboriginal.
- Aboriginal population is growing at a faster rate than non-Aboriginal – Victoria has the highest population growth rate in the country.
- Aboriginal people are in the minority within their communities wherever they live in Victoria.
- 93% report experiencing discrimination – racist taunts, insults, physical violence, refused service, different treatment in hospital care and more often in justice or education settings.
- Average income \$289; Vic Aboriginal ave \$332, whilst the average Australian household income \$599 (Vic ave \$763)

### Race-based discrimination

- Race-based discrimination can be defined as 'those behaviours and practices that result in avoidable and unfair inequalities across groups in society based on race, ethnicity, culture or religion' (VicHealth 2009, p. 146).
- Individuals can experience multiple forms of discrimination (VicHealth 2005), such as racist taunts and insults, physical violence, being refused service in shops and poor expectation of academic ability at school (Priest & Paradies 2009)
- Race-based discrimination is known to be associated with poor mental health, physical health and self-rated health. It is particularly associated with an increased risk of anxiety and depression and has possible associations with diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease.

### Aboriginal significance in our local area – Did you know?

- That the site where the current Echuca library and Campaspe Shire offices was the site where Aboriginal people performed Cooroborees for thousands of years.
  - In 1839 Campaspe Creek, was the site where over forty Duang Warrant and Dja Dja people were massacred by an armed party of police as an illegal reprisal after two shepherds have been previously killed.
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- On Scenic Drive in Echuca you can find scar trees where bowls were cut from them and used them to build canoes and huts.
- The Cummeragunja walk-off in 1939 was a protest by Aboriginal Australians people at the Cummeragunja Mission in southern New South Wales. This was the home to many Yorta Yorta people. While thousands of pounds were being raised for missions in foreign countries the aborigines in Australia were regarded as outcasts ".Over the years, the New South Wales government had tightened its control on the operation of the mission. By late 1938 people had become unhappy with the management of the mission, living conditions and restrictions on their movement. On 4 February 1939, when Jack Patten a local aboriginal man was arrested and removed from the mission after trying to address the local people, as many as 200 residents of the Cummeragunja Mission walked out of the mission and crossed the Murray River leaving the state of New South Wales. This was in contravention of rules set by the New South Wales Aboriginal Protection Board. Many of the people who left the mission in February 1939 settled in northern Victoria in towns such as Barmah, Echuca and Shepparton.
- Up until the 1950's Aboriginal women were forced to deliver their babies on the verandah of Echuca Hospital.

### Key dates that are significant to Aboriginal people and our local community

Date and Event	Significance
<b>26 January Survival Day</b>	Aboriginal Australians choose to mark Australia Day as a day to highlight the invasion of Australia by Europeans and to acknowledge the survival of their cultural heritage.
<b>National Close the Gap Day 17<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<p>Equal access to healthcare is a basic human right, and in Australia, we expect it. So what if we told you that you can expect to live almost 20 years less than your next-door neighbour? You wouldn't accept it. No-one should. But in reality, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People can expect to live up to 10–17 years less than non-Indigenous Australians. Learn more about why the health gap exists.</p> <p>Working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is one of the critical success factors. With continued support from the public, we can ensure the Australian Government continues to work with Indigenous communities, recommit additional funding and invest in real partnerships.</p>
<b>Echuca Koorie Arts &amp; Craft Market – Easter Saturday</b>	<p>The purpose of the Market is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate and promote local Indigenous arts &amp; Craft</li> <li>• To Provide an opportunity for local Aboriginal artist to showcase their skills in traditional arts, craft, music and dance</li> <li>• To provide an opportunity for Indigenous and non Indigenous people to come together to bridge the gap and promote reconciliation</li> </ul>

<b>26 May – 3 June National Reconciliation Week</b>	This week begins with National Sorry Day on 26 May and ends with Mabo Day on 3 June.
<b>26 May National Sorry Day</b>	This day marks the anniversary of the 1997 tabling of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, Bringing Them Home (April 1997)
<b>3 June Mabo Day</b>	This day commemorates the anniversary of the 1992 High Court decision in the case brought by Eddie Mabo and others, which recognised the existence in Australia of Native title rights.
<b>First full week of July NAIDOC Week</b>	The first Sunday of July sees the beginning of a week dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people to celebrate NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day Observance Committee) Week. It is a celebration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people of their survival. It is also a time for all Australians to celebrate the unique contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and cultures and to bring issues of concern to the attention of governments and the broader community
<b>November Ngan Girra Festival</b>	Ngan Girra means 'gathering' and this local event celebrates the heritage of Mungabareena Reserve on the banks of the Murray River as a meeting place.

Campaspe Murray Welcoming Business Program is an initiative of the Community Building Program (Shire of Campaspe Rural Access) and the Socially Inclusive Communities Project (Campaspe Primary Care Partnership). These initiatives are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services.

Go to [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au) or [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au) for more information.

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***The welcoming business program has been developed and endorsed by these organisations:***

