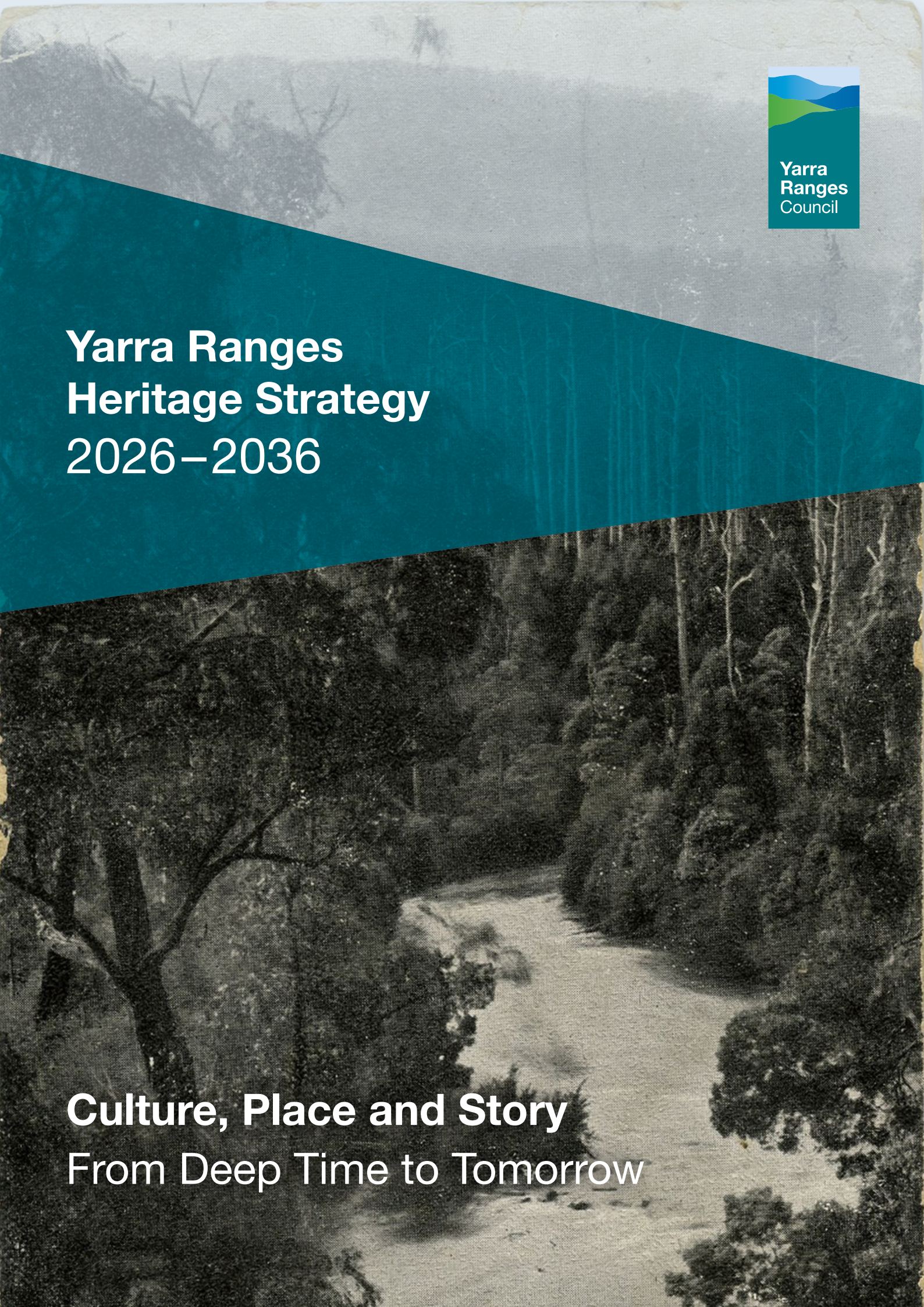
Yarra Ranges Council

Yarra Ranges Heritage Strategy 2026–2036



Culture, Place and Story

From Deep Time to Tomorrow

Acknowledgements

Yarra Ranges Council Councillors and Staff
Yarra Ranges Heritage Network
Yarra Ranges Council Indigenous Advisory Committee
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Policy and Partnerships Committee
Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
Taungurung Land & Waters Council
Yarra Ranges Community
Lovell Chen Pty Ltd

Cover Image: *Yarra River at Warburton, photograph*
(Source: reg. no. 6272.91 Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)

Version:	1
Approved by Council/SLT:	27 October 2026
Responsible Officer:	Katherine Baltas, Senior Strategic Planner
Department:	Design and Place and Creative Communities
Contact Officer:	Katherine Baltas, Senior Strategic Planner

Cultural Advisory Notice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document contains a range of material which may be considered culturally sensitive, including images or names of people who have passed away.



Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation peoples and as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Yarra Ranges and pay tribute to their unbroken connection and stewardship to the lands and waterways of the Municipality. We wish to acknowledge their resilience, courage, grace and generosity in the face of extreme adversity.

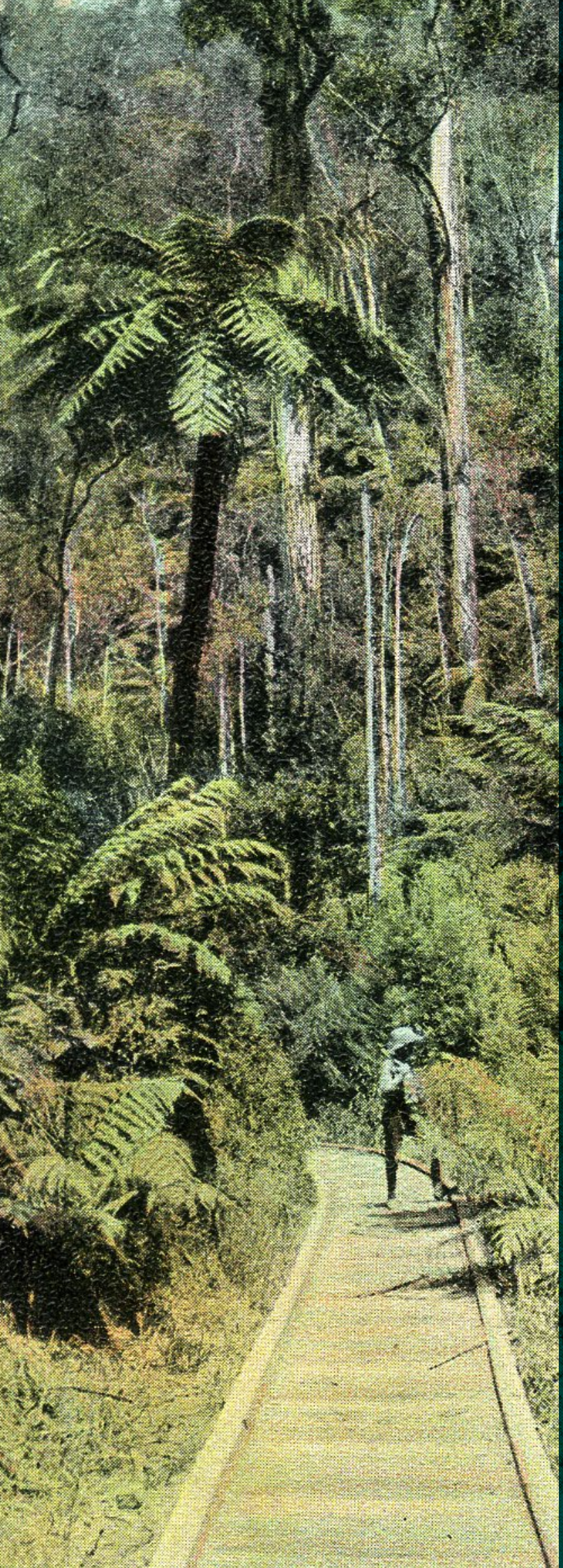
It's a privilege for us to be placing our footprints on top of those made by thousands of generations of Wurundjeri and Kulin Nation peoples and to understand the deep love they have for Country and deep love Country has for them.

It is the relationship with Country that we need to get back to if we're going to meet the challenges that lay in front of us regarding climate and its impact on the natural world. Aboriginal knowledge systems, Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing, have much to offer in this space.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and heritage are the cultures, histories and heritage of all Australians, of all of us, it informs our identity, personally, regionally and nationally as we all live on Traditional lands. This realisation is critical for us to move forward as one Country; walking side by side together as one story, the story of who we all are.

We pay respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of these lands. We thank Wurundjeri, other Kulin Nation people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from across Australia for the legacy of love and care for this land. We hope we can do them justice, that we do our best to also love and care for this land. We hope we can do them justice, that we do our best to also love and care for this land that we've been blessed with. We believe this is the great gift Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples offer to all Australians.

As developed for the *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, August 2024-August 2026*, Yarra Ranges Council



Value of History

We acknowledge that history shapes our identities, engages us as citizens, creates inclusive communities, is part of our economic well-being, teaches us to think critically and creatively, inspires leaders and is the foundation of our future generations.

Identity: History nurtures identity in a world characterised by diversity and change. It helps individuals locate themselves within the narratives of families, communities, First Peoples, and nations—stories shaped by freedom and oppression, justice and inequity, war and peace, resilience and achievement. These narratives influence the values that guide personal and community life.

Engaged citizens: History helps people to craft solutions that meet community needs. Democracy thrives when informed citizens act collectively. Exploring the historical roots of current issues clarifies misconceptions, reveals complexity and opens pathways to constructive solutions.

Strong communities: History underpins vibrant, inclusive communities. Shared memory—Indigenous knowledge, family stories, oral histories, social customs, cultural heritage and civic commemorations—fosters belonging, social cohesion and resilience.

Economic development: Heritage drives economic vitality. Communities with a strong historical identity attract talent, investment and tourism, making cultural heritage a key economic asset.

Critical skills: History teaches independent thinking, analytical skills and perspective. It encourages engagement with continuity, change and causation, and develops the ability to interpret and communicate complex ideas.

Leadership: History offers roles models and lessons for leadership, inspiring courage and wisdom to meet contemporary challenges.

Legacy: Preserving authentic stories, places and collections ensures we leave a foundation upon which future Australians can build.

Image: *Myers Track Healesville, Postcard (Source reg. no. P8766, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum Collection)*

Contents

Part A: Introduction **2**

1. Introduction 2
2. Purpose of the Strategy 4
   - 2.1. Vision 7
   - 2.2. Definitions 8
   - 2.3. Acronyms 9
   - 2.4. Support Materials 10

Part B: Background **12**

3. Historical context 12
4. Community context 18
5. Mosaic of heritage 21
   - 5.1. Natural heritage 21
   - 5.2. Cultural heritage 24
   - 5.3. Tangible heritage 26
   - 5.4. Movable heritage 27
   - 5.5. Intangible heritage 30
   - 5.6. Heritage tourism 32

Part C: Developing the Strategy **34**

6. Stakeholder and Community Engagement 34
   - 6.1. How the Community were involved 34
7. What the community told us 38
   - 7.1. Heritage strengths and achievements 40
   - 7.2. Key issues, challenges and opportunities 42

Part D: Delivering the Strategy **45**

8. Action Plan 45
   - 8.1. Focus Area 1: Knowing 49
     - Goal 1: Deepen Understanding of the Region's Heritage (Policy Principle 5) 50
     - Goal 2: Advance Cultural Safety and Shared Heritage Values (Policy Principle 1) 53
   - 8.2. Focus Area 2: Being, Protecting and Supporting 55
     - Goal 3: Champion Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Heritage (Policy Principle 2) 56
     - Goal 4: Protect and Activate Heritage for Future Generations (Policy Principle 4) 57
   - 8.3. Focus Area 3: Doing, Communicating and Promoting 60
     - Goal 5: Empower Community-Led Heritage Management and Interpretation (Policy Principle 3) 61
9. Monitoring and review 65

References 66

Part A: Introduction

1. Introduction

The inaugural **Yarra Ranges Council Heritage Strategy 2026 – 2036** (the Strategy) is a strategic roadmap for how Council will understand, protect and celebrate the region's diverse heritage.

It supports the achievement of the **Community Vision 2036**, where "you will see how much we care for Country, how inclusive and connected our communities are, and how balanced growth makes this the best place in the world." The Strategy also aligns with the Council Plan's strategic objectives, particularly **Healthy Connected Communities**, **Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places**, and **Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment**.

Heritage is core business for Yarra Ranges Council (YRC). It is embedded across many areas of Council activity from planning and parks to community and cultural development. Council's leadership in this space reflects not only its **legislated responsibilities** under the *Heritage Act 2017*, *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, *Statewide Treaty Act 2025* and *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, but also its broader role in shaping **how heritage is valued and sustained for future generations**.

> 'Living in Badger Creek, heritage means to me – Indigenous history'
>
> *Contributor to the Shaping Yarra Ranges webpage*

> '[Heritage is] a window to the past. It enables us to look back to where we have come from, to understand our ancestors' lives, and to learn about history in a tangible way'
>
> *Contributor to the Shaping Yarra Ranges webpage*

Throughout the Strategy document, story boxes highlight a small selection of significant and lesser-known heritage stories from the region.

The Strategy:

- Clarifies Council's role in heritage under **three key focus** areas guided by the principles outlined in the accompanying *Heritage Policy*.
- Responds to ***Heritage Victoria's Municipal Heritage Strategies: A Guide for Councils***.
- Integrates **First Peoples' Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing**, in alignment with Council's commitment to reconciliation.
- Identifies **priority actions** to be delivered in partnership with community and heritage stakeholders over the next 10 years.
- Acts as both a **decision-making framework and advocacy tool** to guide Council's work.

Heritage encompasses the places, objects, stories, traditions, knowledge and cultural practices that connect people to place, identity and community. It shapes how communities understand their histories, experience the present and create meaning across generations. Recognising that heritage is continually evolving, this Strategy seeks to support its stewardship, relevance and contribution to community life. This Strategy is built on the recognition that heritage is understood and expressed through **multiple knowledge systems** including First Peoples, European, and other cultural and community-based ways of knowing, each offering valuable insights into how we connect with, care for, and celebrate place, people, identity, and history.

The Strategy was shaped by input from community members, Traditional Owners, heritage experts, local organisations and Council staff (see Part C). It **articulates a shared vision** for how we care for and connect with the heritage of the Yarra Ranges.

Yarra Ranges Heritage Snapshot

People



- Registered Aboriginal Parties
  - Predominantly Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
  - Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
  - Taungurung Land and Waters Council
- Yarra Ranges Heritage Network
  - Includes 16 individual historical societies, heritage groups and museums
- First Peoples' Organisations
  - Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation
  - Oonah Health and Community Services Aboriginal Corporation
  - Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place
  - Boorndawan Aboriginal Healing Service
- Your Library
- Returned Services League branches
- History or heritage groups outside the Heritage Network, and other community organisations with an interest in heritage including emergency services, sporting clubs, churches, cemeteries etc
- Council Officers with expertise in heritage places, collections, interpretation and place making
- Numerous community-run local history and heritage social media platforms and accounts

Heritage Attractions



- Yarra Ranges Regional Museum
- Puffing Billy Railway
- Gulf Station, National Trust
- Running Rabbits Military Museum
- Mont de Lancey Historic Homestead
- Menzies Creek Railway & Steam Museum
- Upper Yarra Museum
- Coombe Cottage
- Numerous heritage gardens and heritage trails

Protected Places

- Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, the only place on the National Heritage List (NHL)
- 26 places, sites or complexes on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)
- 443 Heritage Overlay (HO) entries including heritage places, precincts, rail corridors, infrastructure, war memorials, commemorations and other heritage sites, in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme
- Significant trees, views and vistas protected by the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)

Collections



- Yarra Ranges Regional Museum permanent collection, 14,000+ items
- Shire Art Collection
- Public heritage, monuments and memorials
- Collections held by historical societies and community museums within the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network, 100,000+ items
- Collections held by heritage tourism attractions, Returned Services Leagues, sport, music and other organisations
- McLeod Gift Collection (owned by YRC, managed by Burrinja), 600+ items

Images (top to bottom): *Arbor Day heritage trees talk and walk (Source: Yarra Ranges Council), Coombe Cottage, Coldstream (Source: Yarra Ranges Council), Court House, Lilydale (Source: Yarra Ranges Council), 'A Toast to Melba' exhibition (Source: Sean Paris)*

2. Purpose of the Strategy

Heritage practice has evolved over recent years. No longer confined to the preservation of buildings, it now encompasses a broader, more inclusive understanding of place, identity and memory incorporating layered stories and narratives. This Strategy has been developed to guide **how Yarra Ranges Council manages heritage in an increasingly complex public arena**, where diverse cultural values, contested histories, and new understandings of Country are reshaping what heritage means and how it is cared for.

This complexity arises from:

- The challenge of managing **multiple and sometimes competing narratives** in places with shared values.
- The need to recognise and respect First Peoples', European, migrant and other cultural communities.
- A growing emphasis on **intangible heritage**, such as oral histories, cultural practices, and community knowledge.
- The impacts of **climate change, urban development and social change** on heritage places and values requiring more adaptive, creative and future-focused approaches.
- A shift toward **inclusive, place-based and community-led approaches** to heritage.

Understanding this complexity requires us to look beyond policy frameworks and planning tools to the land itself, and the deep histories it holds. Council recognises the challenge **of bridging cultural perspectives** on heritage without diminishing the integrity or significance of cultures.

Benefits of Heritage

- **Strengthens community identity** by connecting people to shared stories and places.
- **Supports local economies** through tourism and heritage-based businesses.
- **Promotes sustainability** by conserving and reusing historic buildings and landscapes.
- **Encourages education** and lifelong learning through cultural experiences.
- **Fosters pride and belonging** across generations and cultures.
- **Informs planning and development** with historical context and continuity.
- **Protects cultural diversity** by valuing different traditions and histories.

Heritage in the Yarra Ranges is not just about what we protect, but **how we understand our place within a much older and ongoing story**. Long before roads carved through forests and towns nestled into valleys, the land we now call the Yarra Ranges was shaped by forces older than memory. Volcanic flows, tectonic shifts, and ancient rivers sculpted the hills and valleys over millions of years. These **natural systems laid the foundation** for life: soils rich with minerals, waterways teeming with biodiversity, fires that brought regeneration and ecosystems that evolved in harmony with the climate.

Ancient Landscapes – Geological Time and Natural Heritage



Yarra Ranges Landscape (Source: Yarra Ranges Council)

The Yarra Ranges landscape is shaped by millions of years of volcanic activity, tectonic uplift, and erosion, forming the dramatic ridgelines, valleys, and ecosystems we see today. This ancient geological story is the foundation of all heritage here.

Every community that has lived on, arrived to, or cared for this place has been shaped by this deep, ancient Country. Understanding geological time helps us appreciate not only the land itself, but the profound relationships between place, memory, and identity that continue to grow across generations.

Yeringberg and Barak – A Shared History



William Barak and Walter Briggs [solicitor for the de Pury family] at Yeringberg, c1880s (Source: reg. no. 9498, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection, included with WWCHAC permission)

The de Pury family, like many Swiss migrants, played a significant role in the cultural and agricultural heritage of the Yarra Ranges. Baron Frédéric Guillaume de Pury established the Yeringberg vineyard in 1863, laying the foundation for five generations of winemaking in the Yarra Valley.

Today, the family continues this legacy, producing small-batch, high-quality wines. Importantly, the de Pury family also shared a respectful relationship with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder Uncle William Barak. A shared interest in art developed into a rare and meaningful cross-cultural connection during a time of widespread dispossession.

Into this landscape came the **Kulin Nation Peoples**, particularly the Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Taungurung, who walked these lands with deep knowledge and reverence. Their songlines (oral maps of Country) traced the contours of the land over thousands of years, connecting sacred sites, seasonal food sources, and stories of creation. Every mountain, tree and stream held meaning, woven into a **living culture** that continues today. Each feature of the landscape speaks in the language of Country, carrying its own voice and story, echoing the deep connection between people and place.

This idea is captured powerfully in Dr Debra Dank's (Gudanji/Wakaja woman, educator and academic) concept of **terraglossia**: a term she coined to describe the 'tongues of the earth.' Terraglossia recognises the **many voices that speak through Country**: human and non-human, ancestral and contemporary. It invites us to listen to the land not as a silent backdrop, but as a **living archive** of knowledge, culture, and communication. In this view, heritage is not static or segmented, but relational, layered, and continuously expressed through language, story, and stewardship.

From the 1830s, European settlers arrived in the Yarra Ranges, drawn by its fertile soils, towering forests and waterways. Many came seeking escape – fleeing famine, poverty and religious persecution – or opportunity -drawn by the promise of gold, affordable land, or a fresh start far from the rigid social structures of Europe. They brought with them agriculture, new industries, timber harvesting and tourism, reshaping the land and establishing towns and livelihoods. European settlement also introduced new cultural traditions, such as festivals, faith communities, social clubs and civic institutions, which have become part of the regions' heritage landscape. These communities forged connections to the land in their own ways, adapting to the challenges of drought, fire, flood and isolation while drawing strength from the landscape that sustained them.

2.1. Vision

The Yarra Ranges is a region that recognises, protects and celebrates its rich, diverse and layered heritage from deep time to the future. Heritage will continue to be supported and celebrated by locals and visitors alike, with effective stewardship promoted to all generations and for future generations.

As time went on, the Yarra Ranges welcomed migrants from across Europe, Asia and beyond. These communities arrived with memories of other homelands and brought with them languages, artistic traditions, food cultures, and skills that have enriched the social fabric of the region. Whether arriving after displacement or seeking opportunity, migrant and multicultural communities have profoundly contributed to the cultural and economic landscape and their stories of resilience add further layers to the heritage of this place.

Today, the Yarra Ranges is a **place of convergence**. It holds tens of thousands of stories of custodianship, migration, resilience, creativity and cultural revival. It's a place where ancient knowledge meets contemporary living, where long-standing local families live alongside new arrivals, where diverse cultural perspectives interact with and respond to the same enduring landscape. To speak of Deep Time is to speak not just of the past, but of our **responsibility to the future**. It is an invitation to recognise that everyone living in the Yarra Ranges is now a part of the ongoing story of this place.

While Council already manages aspects of heritage as part of 'business as usual' in line with relevant legislation, this Strategy provides a unifying framework to guide and prioritise work over the next decade. This Strategy sets out how Council will work with Traditional Owners, long-established residents, multicultural communities, heritage experts and community groups to conserve, celebrate and strengthen our unique heritage in all its forms. It responds to the need for **a more coordinated, inclusive and future-focused approach** one that honours First Peoples' knowledge systems while embracing the diverse cultural stories that have grown here over time.

The **Focus Areas** outlined in this Strategy address the complexity in contemporary heritage practice. They support connection, respect and shared stewardship of the stories, places and traditions – old and new – that make Yarra Ranges a culturally rich and deeply interconnected community.

2.2. Definitions

Burra Charter: The Burra Charter is Australia's national standard for managing and conserving cultural heritage places, providing guiding principles and procedures for buildings, landscapes, archaeological sites and more, emphasising understanding significance and sustainable care. The Charter provides a framework for owners, managers, and professionals to identify, plan, and act on heritage conservation, promoting least-intervention and reversibility, and is internationally influential.

Caring for Country: First Peoples' practices of land, waterway and sea management that draw on deep bodies of knowledge based on thousands of years of observation and inherited lore and custom.

Citation: An expert report that details specific aspects of significance of a property such as events, design, personalities and items of particular value. This forms the basis of a heritage application.

Country: The complex interconnected system of land, water, sky, plants, animals, ancestors and spirit. For First Peoples, Country is identity, culture, language, lore, and Community. It's deeply spiritual and has supported life for tens of thousands of years.

Creation stories: a collection of stories that express First Peoples' beliefs about the origins of the world.

Curtilage: The land surrounding a heritage item is known as a 'curtilage' and will be shown as a polygon on the Heritage Overlay map. This may include a key view line or the whole of the property.

Deep Time: 'We are born with our Ancestors' yurlendj (intelligence/knowledge), murrup (spirit), wurrung (Language) and sadly also their trauma. These are all embedded in our murrup and continue through the generations. This is our genetic memory, which comes from Deep Time. Deep Time surpasses all other 'times' in the western sense of the word. Deep Time began before time itself and will continue indefinitely' (Nicholson 2019).

Demolition by Neglect: The significant deterioration of a building through abandonment or lack of maintenance, often an intentional neglect with the aim of enabling a demolition permit.

Diversity: A term used to refer to the variety of different cultures, languages, identities, experiences, religions, age groups, genders, sexual orientations and disability needs.

Evidence-based: Evidence-based heritage draws on multiple sources of knowledge: archives, texts, databases, archaeology, stories, memories, and lived experience. It also acknowledges that evidence is shaped by the perspectives and power dynamics of the time.

Facadism: Where the facade of a building is the only part of a building is preserved with the remainder demolished and new buildings erected behind or around it.

Heritage: What people value and wish to retain from the past, including First Peoples heritage, natural heritage, built heritage, movable heritage objects and collections, and intangible heritage.

Heritage Overlay: A planning control in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme to protect places of historical, cultural, or architectural significance.

History: The research, analysis, presentation and interpretation of past people, events, periods, and changes.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing: Traditional knowledge, perspectives, and practices. Knowing is how First Peoples perceive and understand the world, encompassing their beliefs, stories, accumulated bodies of knowledge and wisdom. Being is connected, to identity, Community, spirituality, and connection to Country. Doing encompasses rituals, actions, and daily practices that uphold cultural values such as Respect, Caring and Sharing. These elements embody a 60,000-year-old Indigenous worldview shaped by generations of experience, emphasising harmony with Country, Lore, Ancestors, and protocols.

Interpretation: Methods used to increase public understanding of and engagement with heritage and histories.

Shared heritage: Places where histories and heritage associated with different cultures intersect.

Songlines: A method used to navigate Country by First Peoples through stories and songs, based on the journeys of ancestral beings during the Dreaming.

Truth-telling: The process of recognising, documenting and sharing a fuller and more accurate understanding of history by including diverse perspectives, experiences and evidence. In a heritage context, this means acknowledging both positive and challenging aspects of the past, particularly where they have shaped the heritage values, stories, places or communities being considered.

Under-represented histories: Events, stories and narratives (often associated with diverse groups of people) that have been researched and/or shared less frequently than dominant mainstream histories.

2.3. Acronyms

- **BLCAC:** Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- **CFA:** Country Fire Authority
- **MPS:** Municipal Planning Strategy
- **PPF:** Planning Policy Framework
- **RAP:** Registered Aboriginal Party
- **RSL:** Returned Services League
- **SES:** State Emergency Services
- **TLWC:** Taungurung Land and Waters Council
- **WWCHAC:** Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- **YRC:** Yarra Ranges Council
- **YRHN:** Yarra Ranges Heritage Network
- **YRRM:** Yarra Ranges Regional Museum

The Layered History of Blacks' Spur



Black's Spur, Healesville – Photographic Postcard (Source: reg. no. P8747 Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)

The Black Spur, a scenic road near Healesville, is historically significant for its connection to displaced Aboriginal people, early gold miners, and later, tourism.

The origins of the place name 'The Blacks' Spur' or 'Black's Spur' is linked to the settlement of, and travel of dispossessed people to, Coranderrk Aboriginal Station; and potentially an early Kulin Nation track across the range or a meeting place on the route. By the 1930s, the name had largely become 'Black Spur' possibly because mapmakers gradually dropped the apostrophe, or because people had popularly begun to refer to it this way because of the dense, dark forest, the frequent accidents on the dangerous road, or the area being blackened by bushfires. In 1966, 'Black Spur' was cemented as the official name when the Geographical Names Board removed apostrophes from all place names, but the origins of the name reflect the continued relevance of the route to Kulin Nation peoples.

The Spur also became a crucial part of the Yarra Track, used by coaches carrying miners and settlers to the goldfields.

In the early days of motor vehicles, driving the unsealed road with its hairpin bends and steep drops was considered a feat of bravery and "no place for a woman". Alice Anderson, today a queer icon, became the first woman to do so in 1916. Alice used the route for her postal deliveries and later started an all-female taxi company in the Ranges. Later, Black Spur became a popular tourist destination, known for its stunning Mountain Ash forests and winding road.

2.4. Support Materials

The Heritage Strategy will be implemented in accordance with the associated Yarra Ranges Council Heritage Policy 2026.

Relevant legislation, YRC guiding documents and external guiding documents are detailed in section 8 of the Heritage Policy.



Downderry, Bickleigh Vale, Mooroolbark, c.1922-1934,
Photographer: Duncan Wade (Source: State Library of Victoria).

Part B: Background

3. Historical context

The Yarra Ranges region holds a deep and enduring history, shaped by tens of thousands of years of continuous connection to Country by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, Bunurong and Taungurung people. Before European colonisation, **Kulin Nation peoples moved with the seasons along the Birrarung** (Yarra River), camping on its banks and constructing bark shelters known as willams during colder months. Annual gatherings brought communities together for ceremonies, games, and performances of song and dance, reinforcing cultural ties and shared knowledge.

The arrival of settlers from the 1830s marked a period of profound disruption as Kulin Nation peoples were dispossessed from their lands. Many of the earliest settlers were from Scotland, Ireland and England, and came not only in search of fertile valleys and forested hills, but also to escape hardship, poverty, famine or persecution at home. They brought with them cultural traditions, beliefs and a mindset shaped by European farming and land-use practices.

Early pastoral runs such as Yering, established by the Ryrie brothers around 1837, introduced sheep and cattle to the region. The story of early settlement in the Yarra Ranges is one of both disruption and resilience; of Indigenous communities enduring ongoing impacts, and of settler families facing isolation, harsh conditions and the challenge of building new lives on unfamiliar land.



Figure 1: *Hauling timber, Powelltown 1933, Rose Series Postcard (Source: reg. no. 10939, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)*



***Figure 2:** 'Robert Wandin, King Barak, William Parker, Martin Simpson, Jimmy Barker, Peter Hunter', 1878 (Source: Fred Kruger photographer, H90.64/9, State Library Victoria, included with WWCHAC permission)*

By the 1850s, **large estates** were subdivided for agriculture, including viticulture, dairying, orcharding, and berry farming. **Waves of migration** from Switzerland, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Greece, and later from Asia and beyond, further shaped the region. For example, Swiss families including the de Purys, de Castellas, and the Neuchatel community played a key role in shaping the region's wine industry.

Townships grew around sawmills, railways, and agricultural enterprises. Orchards, vineyards, and gardens flourished, reflecting both the productivity of the land and the cultural influences of those who worked it. For example, communities in the Dandenongs were shaped by both the opportunities and the hazards of living in a forested landscape: Mast Gully, where 100-foot-tall trees were harvested for ship masts in 1850, and paved the way for timber getting, but bush fires were a regular threat. **Timber reserves** were created in the 1860s to regulate logging, leading to the development of timber towns in the Upper Yarra and the establishment of the Dandenong Ranges National Park. Lilydale's first **land sales** occurred in this period, and the Shire of Lillydale was formed in 1872.

Colonisation had devastating impacts on First Peoples, including the destruction of hunting grounds, violence, and disease. The *Aboriginal Protection Act of 1869* imposed government control over First Peoples' lives, forcing many into missions. In 1863, **Coranderrk Aboriginal Station** was established near present-day Healesville, and despite Kulin Nation peoples being forced to move there, under the leadership of Uncle William Barak, Uncle Robert Wandin and others it became a vital centre for Community, resistance, and cultural survival which endures to this day.

Active Resistance and Legacy at Coranderrk



Residents at Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, c1865-66 (Source: reg. no. 9505, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection, included with WWCHAC permission)

Established in 1863 near Healesville, Coranderrk Aboriginal Station became a thriving, self-sufficient community of First Peoples dispossessed from their lands across Victoria. Renowned for its hops and agriculture, Coranderrk stood as a beacon of cultural strength and determination. When threatened with closure, residents launched a bold campaign for justice, leading to the historic 1881 Parliamentary Inquiry—one of the few occasions in 19th-century Victoria where Aboriginal people were invited to give evidence directly to a parliamentary commission about their own lives, rights, and governance.

Though the reserve was eventually closed in 1924, Coranderrk remains a powerful symbol of resistance, cultural pride, and healing. Today, under the management of Wandoon Estate, Coranderrk continues to connect people to Country and inspire hope for a shared future.

From the 1850s, **industries** such as brickworks and limestone quarries emerged, and the region became central to Melbourne's **water supply**, with the Maroondah Aqueduct and O'Shannassy system built in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. With the opening of the railway to Warburton in 1901, the Upper Yarra Region became the premier sawmilling region of Victoria and included Warburton, Powelltown, Yarra Junction and Healesville. Powelltown developed as a major Victorian saw-milling centre after the 1912 establishment of the Victorian Powell Wood Process Company's mill and seasoning works.

Rail connections from Melbourne to Healesville opened the area to tourism, with visitors drawn to its natural beauty and village charm. Throughout the 20th century, the Yarra Ranges grew as a **destination for rural retreats, guest houses, and health resorts**. Dame Nellie Melba purchased Cullwin Lodge, Coldstream which became known as Coombe Cottage and was her Australian home until 1931. Colin Mackenzie founded the Institute of Anatomical Research on former Coranderrk land, advancing wildlife protection efforts. Waves of migration continued in the 1930s, with Italian and Dutch communities enriching the region's cultural landscape.

Following both **World Wars**, the Yarra Ranges became home to returned servicemen and their families through the **Soldier Settlement Schemes**. These programs aimed to provide land and livelihood to veterans, particularly in areas like Warburton, Launching Place, Yarra Junction, Silvan, Monbulk and The Patch.

While many settlers faced significant challenges due to poor soil, isolation, and limited support, their efforts contributed to the development of local agriculture and community infrastructure.



Figure 3: *Lantern Slide – Landslip, Dandenongs, Victoria, July 1891, Photographer: A.J. Campbell (Source: Museums Victoria)*

Natural disasters have shaped the Yarra Ranges landscape and community for generations, including major bushfires in 1851, 1926, 1939, 1962, 1983 and 2009, and severe events including the 1891 Great Flood, freak storms in 2012 and 2021, and major landslips in 1863, 1891 and 1934. These events have repeatedly displaced residents, destroyed livelihoods, damaged hundreds of homes, and left communities without essential services. They have also strengthened local resilience, with communities rallying together to recover (see section on Intangible Heritage, p. 28).

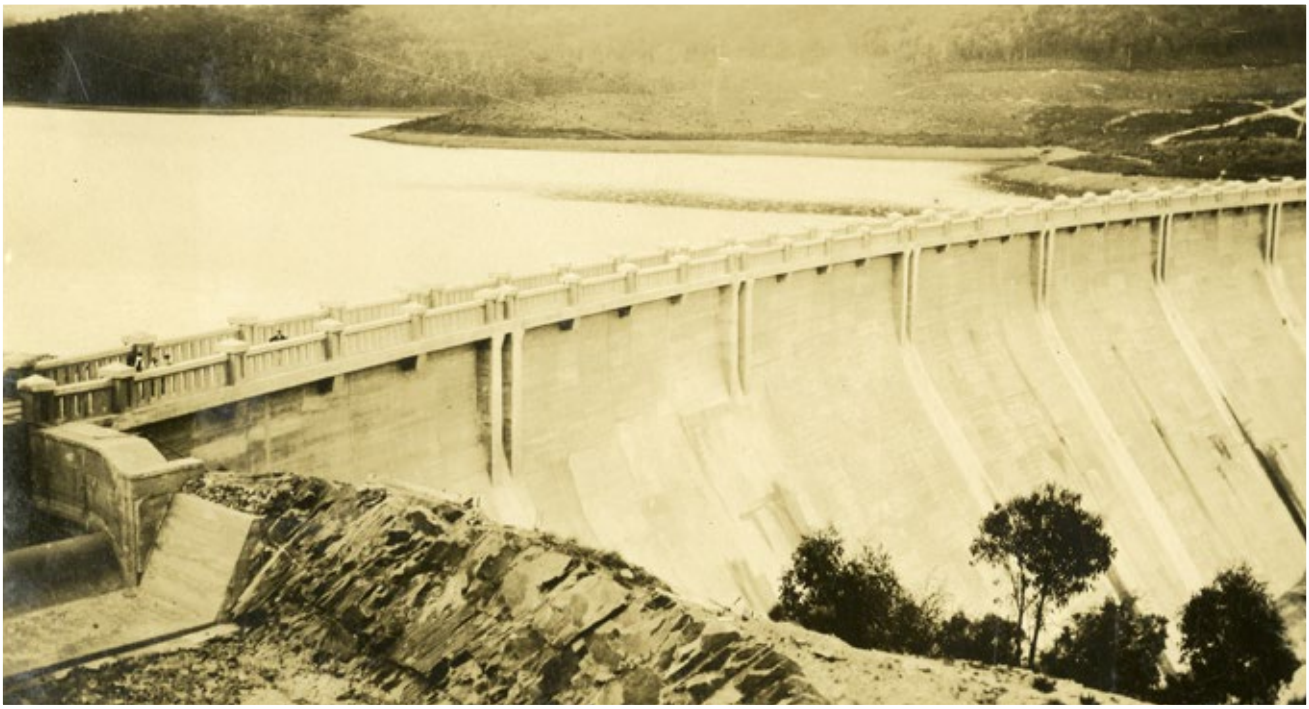


Figure 4: *'Maroondah Dam, wall 930ft...' 1920s (Source: reg. no. 11600 Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)*



Figure 5: *Tesselaar family picking tulips, Tesselaar Tulip Farm established 1945 by Dutch immigrants Cees and Johanna Tesselaar, Silvan (Source: reg. no. 5401, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).*

Elegance and Endurance – Italian Women's Intangible Legacy



"Nonna Dorinda with Connie and Toni Di Pietro", Nonna Dorinda had just arrived off the plane at Essendon Airport, 1948 (Source: provided by Maria McCarthy, Yarra Valley Italian Cultural Group Inc.)

From creating Valentino and Dior-inspired designs to working bushland farms while their husbands earned salaries, Italian women in the Yarra Ranges were the strength behind migrant families, adapting traditional recipes, farming, and raising children often in isolation.

Many endured long separations from their husbands and gave birth alone in a new country. They carried skills of self-sufficiency from wartime Italy—knitting, sewing without patterns, and even crafting shoes from scraps. They preserved culture through food, fashion, and resilience.

Italian women shaped the region's heritage with creativity, sacrifice, and enduring pride in their Italian identity. A legacy of intangible heritage that continues to this day.

Over time, many settlers and migrants developed a deep appreciation for the region's beauty and ecological richness. Early **conservation efforts**, such as Arbor Day plantings from 1897 and later community responses to widespread land clearing under soldier settlement schemes, reflected a growing desire to restore and protect the landscape. These acts of stewardship, shaped by different worldviews to First Peoples, echoed a love of place that continues to evolve.

The Yarra Ranges landscape is a place of deep cultural knowledge and custodianship for First Peoples; the subject of European curiosity and aesthetic idealisation; and a place central to the development of a distinct Australian artistic identity. Capturing the artistic imagination, the region has a rich heritage of artistic practice: the Aboriginal art and cultural expressions associated with William Barak, Bill Onus and Lin Onus; the 'fern mania' landscapes of Eugene von Guérard; the transformational and internationally recognised approaches of the Heidelberg School painters including Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts and their forebear Louis Buvelot; the contributions of women artists including Constance Coleman and Norah Gurdon, whose depictions of the Ranges reflect both place-based intimacy and the region's early twentieth-century artistic communities; the modernist reimagining of the bush by Fred Williams, and other contributions from many notable artists. Together, these artists and interpretations reveal the Ranges not merely as a backdrop, but as an active and influential force in the shaping of Australian art, cultural memory and national story.



Figure 6: *The Lime Kiln, Lilydale, 1935, oil on canvas painting by Arthur Streeton (Source: reg. no 8598, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).*

Hope, community collaboration and activism also characterise the Yarra Ranges—particularly around the environment, First Peoples' rights and local amenity. For example, Save the Dandenongs League was established in 1950 to protect the region from overdevelopment.

In the 1970s, Yorta Yorta artist Lin Onus led a land rights protest in Sherbrooke Forest, and First Peoples women founded the Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association (now Oonah Health and Community Services Aboriginal Corporation).

Activism Lives Here – The Heritage of Protest



Protest ribbons and sign on fence at 150 Cambridge Road, Kilsyth, October 2022 (Source: uncatalogued, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).

Anti-McDonald's sign and pamphlet (Source: reg. nos. 9440 and 9441 Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).

Activism is both a significant part of the heritage of the Yarra Ranges and a continuing legacy. In 2011, McDonald's lodged a planning application for a 24-hour outlet with drive thru in Tecoma. A huge community campaign fought to stop McDonald's opening in the town, receiving international media coverage. The pictured sign was used by members of the community organisation 'Burger Off' in protests. A similar expression of community activism emerged in 2019, when residents rallied to protect the former Pembroke High School site at 150 Cambridge Road, Kilsyth, from development. The 'Save 150 Cambridge Road' campaign mobilised thousands of locals through petitions, flyers and public displays of support, ultimately leading to Yarra Ranges Council purchasing the land in 2022 and preserving it as public space.

The Yarra Ranges is a place of living heritage—where ancient traditions, colonial legacies, and contemporary communities continue to shape a vibrant and resilient region.

Aboriginal Enterprises – Art, Activism and Industry



Aboriginal Enterprises, c1950s (Source: reg. no. 12401, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection, included with permission of the Onus Family)

Aboriginal Enterprises, located on Monbulk Road, Belgrave, was an innovative retail and manufacturing initiative founded by Aboriginal rights activist Bill Onus during the 1950s–60s. The enterprise combined a shopfront and factory to produce and sell Aboriginal-designed souvenirs and cultural items to the growing tourist market in the Dandenong Ranges, and attracted celebrity visitors like Harry Belafonte.

It was a bold and innovative expression of Aboriginal entrepreneurship, cultural pride, and economic independence at a time of widespread discrimination. Further, it was one of the first places where Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff worked alongside one another, under the direction of an Indigenous manager. Aboriginal Enterprises not only supported local livelihoods but also played a vital role in promoting Aboriginal art, identity, and activism to a broader public.

4. Community context

Covering approximately **2,500 square kilometres** in the outer east of Melbourne, the Yarra Ranges Council local government area (LGA) is the largest in Melbourne by geographical area, spanning urban areas, agricultural land and forested zones.

The Yarra Ranges population is **165,000+ people**. There are 55 suburbs, townships and small communities within the LGA. Around 70 per cent of the population lives in urban areas (which represent only three per cent of the Yarra Ranges land mass).

The Yarra Ranges region sits across **three Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) areas** (Figure 7). The majority of the municipality falls within the area of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC), with smaller areas associated with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) to the south, and Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLWC) in the forested north-east. The Taungurung areas sit wholly on Parks Victoria land and are therefore not managed by Council. Council works within the RAP framework established under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and recognised by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council. Council acknowledges that Kulin Nation connections to Country extend beyond contemporary administrative boundaries. Historical evidence and cultural traditions indicate that landscapes within the Yarra Ranges have long been places of movement, interaction and shared significance. Council approaches this legacy with respect for its complexity.

The region has many historical societies and heritage groups compared with many other municipalities, reflecting the importance of heritage in the region. These volunteer organisations have been a driving force in heritage for decades. The **Yarra Ranges Heritage Network** (YRHN, formed in 1995) is an umbrella network with representatives from many history and heritage groups (currently 16, see Figure 8).

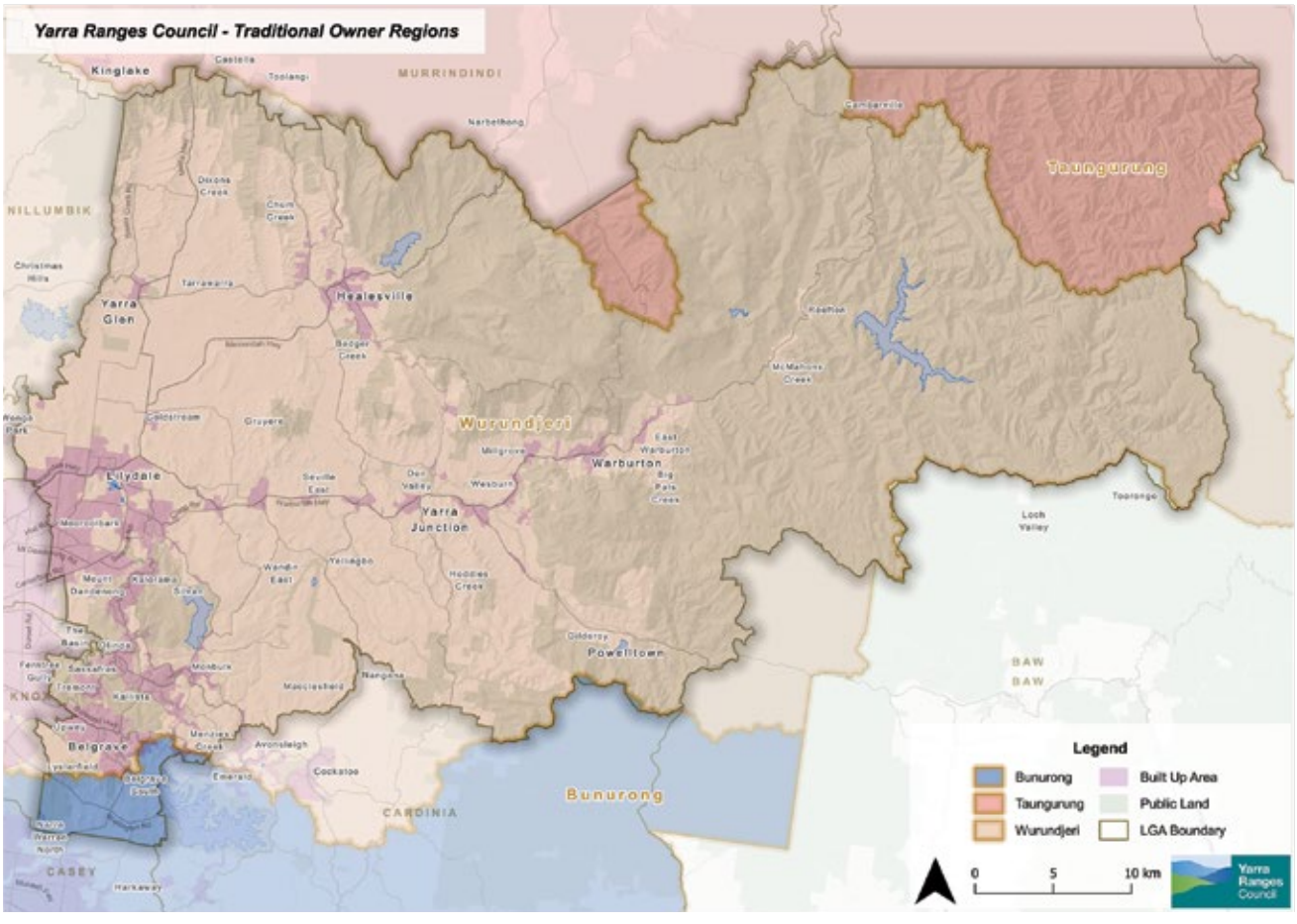


Figure 7: *Registered Aboriginal Parties in the Yarra Ranges (Source: Yarra Ranges Council)*

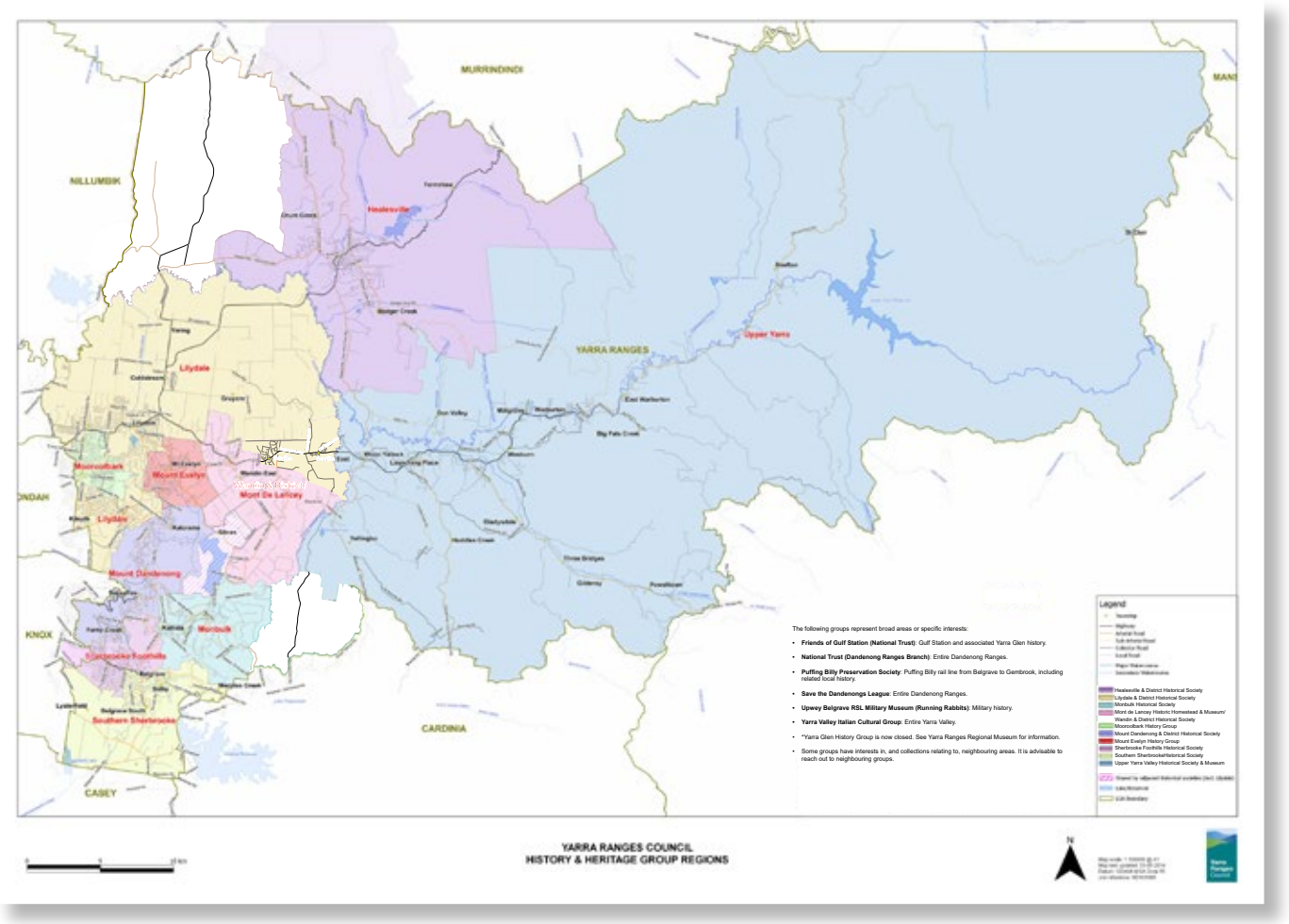


Figure 8: *Yarra Ranges Heritage Network group regions (Source: Yarra Ranges Council).*

Current (as at 2026) **YRHN member groups**:

- Friends of Gulf Station (National Trust)
- Healesville and District Historical Society
- Lilydale and District Historical Society
- Monbulk Historical Society
- Mont de Lancey Historic Homestead and Museum/Wandin and District Historical Society
- Mooroolbark History Group
- Mount Dandenong and District Historical Society
- Mount Evelyn History Group
- National Trust (Dandenong Ranges Branch)
- Puffing Billy Preservation Society
- Save the Dandenongs League
- Sherbrooke Foothills Historical Society
- Southern Sherbrooke Historical Society
- Upper Yarra Valley Historical Society and Museum
- Upwey Belgrave RSL Military Museum (Running Rabbits)
- Yarra Valley Italian Cultural Group

Beyond these core groups, there are numerous other organisations and businesses that have an interest in the heritage of the region including Your Library, Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation, Oonah Health and Community Services, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, Boorndawan Aboriginal Healing Service, Healesville Sanctuary, TarraWarra Estate, Puffing Billy Railway, Yarra Valley Railway, and Coombe Cottage, along with numerous other tourism, sporting, church, cemetery and environmental organisations.

The Yarra Ranges is a **culturally and linguistically diverse** municipality, with 16.8 per cent of the population born overseas in 2021, and eight per cent using a language other than English at home. This is increasing, with the number of people born overseas rising by 7.8 per cent between 2016-2021.

Approximately one third of the population was aged 24 years or younger in 2021, with a h**igher proportion of children** (aged under 18) than the average for Greater Melbourne.

The Yarra Ranges is a **tourism destination** for millions of people annually from across Melbourne, Victoria and overseas. There were approximately 4.5-million-day trips to the region in 2023, which is projected to rise to 9+ million by 2033.

An Artist's Gift to Nature



Constance Coleman painting (Source: uncatalogued, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)

Constance Coleman was a painter, poet, and conservationist whose deep connection to the Dandenong Ranges inspired evocative artworks and a lifelong commitment to nature.

Living at Wanderslore in Launching Place, she transformed a modest cottage and studio into a sanctuary for creativity and conservation.

Before her death, Coleman gifted the property to Trust for Nature, preserving its native flora and fauna. Today, Wanderslore is heritage-listed and remains a rare example of an artist's studio in situ (HO199, Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme). With sweeping views, it embodies artistic heritage, environmental stewardship, and the enduring natural beauty of the region's vistas.

5. Mosaic of heritage

Yarra Ranges Council recognises both **traditional and evolving perspectives on heritage**. While this includes architecturally significant buildings and places protected by statutory controls, it also embraces less visible and often undervalued elements such as sites of protest, culturally significant vistas, natural features like ferns and mountain ash, and intangible heritage including songlines, stories, and oral traditions. The Strategy focuses on heritage categories by form to recognise that all heritage is a mosaic formed in the same place over time, as follows.

5.1. Natural heritage

Natural heritage refers to elements of the natural environment that are recognised for their aesthetic, historical, scientific, social or cultural significance. It includes **landscapes, vistas, trees, flora, fauna, waterways, habitats, sanctuaries, and ecosystems**, and is intertwined with cultural heritage.

The Yarra Ranges is known for its **striking natural environment and views** across the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. The landscape itself is significant heritage due to the Deep Time connections to Country of Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Taungurung peoples. The region also has a history of exploration and scientific enquiry, including botanical investigations by nineteenth-century naturalists and government botanists. Forest and water supply catchments enabled Victoria's development and continue to support Melbourne's water system. For generations, locals and visitors valued the scenic valleys and mountains, forests and celebrated 'beauty spots' establishing a lasting legacy of **recreation, wellbeing and appreciation** of the natural environment.

To protect and manage the natural environment of the Yarra Ranges, Council utilises planning controls within the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme including the **Significant Landscape Overlay**, which protects valued landscapes, views and substantial trees, together with other planning mechanisms that help conserve significant vegetation, biodiversity and environmental values. The Significant Landscape Overlay is derived from the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan and underpinned by Council's Green Wedge Management Plan.

Natural heritage places, features and heritage trees or plantings may also be recognised for their cultural or historical significance through the Heritage Overlay and specifically listed as part of the Schedule.

Recognition of natural heritage significance is drawn from National Trust classifications, the Yarra Ranges Heritage Study, landscape character assessments and Traditional Owner knowledge. While these sources do not provide statutory protection, they are an important indicator of cultural, aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance.



Figure 9: *A Souvenir of Beautiful Dandenong Ranges, undated (Source: reg. no. 12412, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).*

Birrarung and Bunjil – Pathways Through Time



Murrup Brarn Billabong, Yering (Source: Yarra Ranges Council)

The Birrarung (Yarra River) flows for 242 kilometres from Mount Baw Baw, through the Yarra Ranges to Melbourne and out to Port Phillip Bay. In the Woi-wurrung language, Birrarung means 'river of mists and shadows'. The river is central to Wurundjeri cultural, economic and spiritual life. The tributaries of the Birrarung include the Coranderrk Yaluk (Badger Creek), Olinda Creek, and Brushy Creek. The confluence of the Birrarung and Brushy Creek in Wonga Park (outside the boundaries of the Yarra Ranges) was the birthplace of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ngurungaeta (leader) Uncle William Barak.

The Birrarung is legally recognised as a living entity through the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017.

Creator Spirit Bunjil and creation of the Birrarung are central to Wurundjeri people's connection to Country. There are many known Wurundjeri cultural heritage sites along the Birrarung. Dreaming stories connect the river and its billabongs, wetlands, swamps and floodplains. The Yering Billabongs project by Yarra Ranges Council and WWCHAC is working to restore 100 hectares of floodplain to functioning billabongs.

Statement by the Wurundjeri Council, included in the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-Gin Birrarung Murron) Act 2017*

Woiwurrung baluk ba Birrarung wanganyinu biikpil

Yarrayarrapil, manyi biik ba Birrarung, ganbu marram-nganyinu

Manyi Birrarung murrondjak, durrung ba murrup warrongguny, ngargunin twarnpil

Birrarungwa nhanbu wilamnganyinu

Nhanbu ngarn.ganhanganyinu manyi Birrarung

Bunjil munggany biik, wurru-wurru, warriny ba yaluk, ba ngargunin twarn

Biiku kuliny munggany Bunjil

Waa marrnakith-nganyin

Balliyang, barnumbinyu Bundjilal, banyu bagurrk munggany

Ngarn.gunganyinu nhanbu nyilam biik,

nyilam kuliny – balit biik, balit kuliny: balitmanhanganyin manyi biik ba Birrarung.

Balitmanhanganyin durrungu ba murrupu, ba nhanbu murrondjak!

We, the Woi-wurrung, the First People, and the Birrarung, belong to this Country.

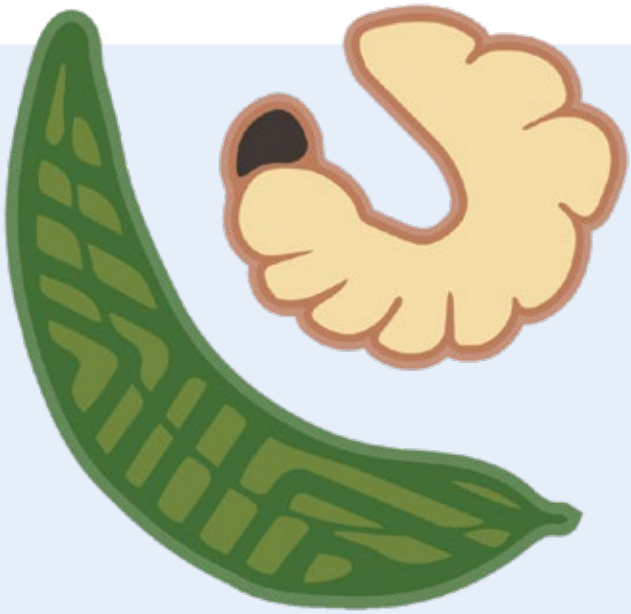
This Country, and the Birrarung are part of us.

The Birrarung is alive, has a heart, a spirit and is part of our Dreaming. We have lived with and known the Birrarung since the beginning. We will always know the Birrarung.

Bunjil, the great Eagle, the creator spirit, made the land, the sky, the sea, the rivers, flora and fauna, the lore. He made Kulin from the earth. Bunjil gave Waa, the crow, the responsibility of Protector. Bunjil's brother, Palliyang, the Bat, created Bagarook, women, from the water.

Since our beginning, it has been known that we have an obligation to keep the Birrarung alive and healthy—for all generations to come.

Explanatory details: The Woi-wurrung text does not exactly match the English words because it is a different language culture.



5.2. Cultural heritage

‘It is the people, land and culture connection, the way we represent ourselves in the world around us and the way we adapt to that environment that hasn’t really changed for 60,000 plus years, and probably won’t change. That’s the message we’re hoping we can get non-Aboriginal people to recognise and embrace, because they’re part of that culture.’

Dr Andrew Peters, YRC Indigenous Advisory Committee member

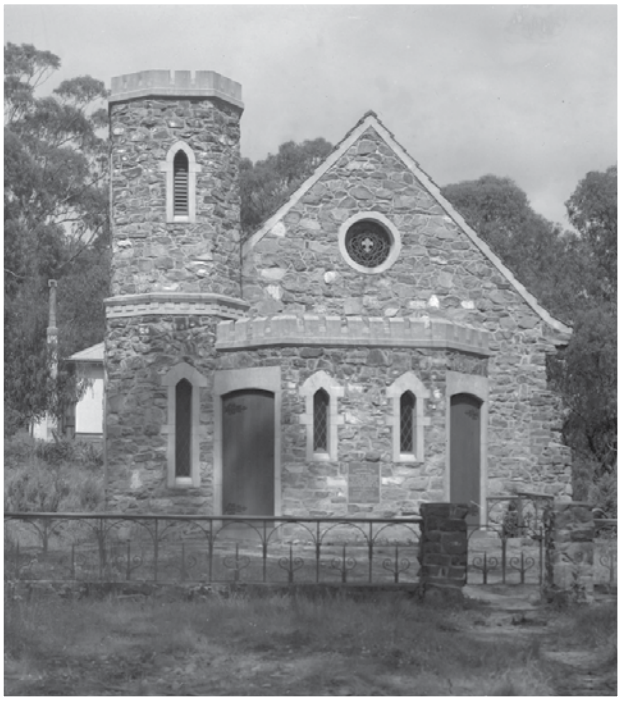


***Figure 10**: “Carlotta Tye Memorial Church”, Selby, Vic. (Source: Rose Stereograph Co., State Library Victoria)*



***Figure 11**: King Billy, Bob Wandin and Family 1891 (Source: reg. no. P1741, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection, included with WWCHAC permission).*

The cultural heritage of the Yarra Ranges is not a collection of separate histories, but a **rich mosaic of connection** to Country, Community, and place. This landscape holds the Deep Time of First Peoples’ presence layered with stories of post-contact settlement and migration. Each layer is shaped by the same mountains, forests, waterways and weather patterns that have guided life here for tens of thousands of years.

First Peoples have lived in relationship with the land, water, and sky of the Yarra Ranges for tens of thousands of years. Their cultural heritage is embedded in every part of Country and continues through story, ceremony, language, land management and stewardship. Sections of **Coranderrk land** were gradually returned to the Wurundjeri people from the 1990s and today the **Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation** manages Coranderrk with a focus on land and cultural heritage management, environmental conservation, self-determination, cultural revitalisation and education. Coranderrk remains a powerful symbol of resilience, activism, and cultural continuity. It stands as a reminder that the story of First Peoples in the Yarra Ranges is not one of disappearance, but of survival, adaptation, and ongoing custodianship.

Cultural heritage since the 1930s has also been shaped powerfully by the region's landscapes. European settlers established farms, timber mills, guesthouses and horticultural industries that become defining features of early township life. These communities brought with them not only new forms of agriculture and architecture, but **traditions, faith practices, social institutions and cultural expressions** that blended with the realities of the Australian landscape. In the decades that followed, migrants from Europe, Asia and other regions, made the Yarra Ranges their home. Some were drawn by employment in agriculture, wine-growing, hospitality or manufacturing, others sought refuge and new opportunities. These communities brought languages, food traditions, arts, beliefs and skills, **enriching the cultural fabric** of the region. All these cultural traditions continue to shape township identities, alongside **new local identities** formed around art, creativity, wellbeing and alternative lifestyles.

These **layers of heritage are carried forward** by groups such as the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network, township and historical societies, Probus clubs, RSLs, CFAs, vineyards, community associations and local businesses. Each group maintains traditions and memories that speak to the experience of people who built lives here. Today, the Yarra Ranges is a place where ancient traditions and more recent histories co-exist within a shared landscape. The enduring connection of First Peoples to Country, alongside the diverse stories of settlement and migration, form a living heritage that continues to grow, adapt, and **shape the identity of the region**.

Cultural heritage is protected under heritage legislation and the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, primarily through the Heritage Overlay. Traditional Owner knowledge and leadership are central to recognising and caring for cultural heritage values.

Cultivating Community – Poon Kee's Garden Legacy



Main Street, Lilydale looking West from Olinda Creek. Poon Kee's shop was in the double storey building on the left (Source: reg. no. 13950, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)

Market gardener Poon Kee became a cherished figure in the Lilydale community. He ran a green grocer's shop beside Olinda Creek, selling fresh produce grown in and around his shop. In a town with few Chinese residents, his presence was notable and warmly embraced. His store, housed in a late-Victorian brick building on Main Street, is now heritage-listed for its historical and architectural significance.

Poon Kee's legacy reflects the contribution of early Chinese migrants to regional commerce and culture, and his easy-going manner left a lasting impression on generations of Lilydale locals. Today, Poon Kee is honoured with an edible garden planted along Olinda Creek in Lilydale.

5.3. Tangible heritage

Tangible heritage in the Yarra Ranges includes the **physical traces of cultural life**, both ancient and more recent, that hold cultural, historical, and spiritual significance for communities past and present and continue to shape the region's identity.

Mateship in the Environment – Living Tributes



Avenue of Honour, Coldstream. The planting was carried out in July 1918 and Dame Nellie Melba planted the first tree (Source: reg. no. P4942, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)

The Kokoda Track Memorial Walk, known as the "1000 Steps," is a powerful blend of natural and cultural heritage nestled in the Dandenong Ranges National Park. Honouring Australian soldiers who fought along the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea during World War II, the trail features commemorative plaques that share stories of courage, endurance, mateship, and sacrifice. Set within the forest, the walk stands as a living memorial, fostering remembrance, education, and appreciation of Australia's wartime legacy.

Numerous Avenues of Honour planted with European trees exist across the Yarra Ranges and commemorate local service in wartime. For example, Yarra Glen's Avenue of Honour, planted along Bell Street, honours soldiers alongside the formal memorial and remains a poignant symbol of remembrance and community pride.

Timber on the Edge: Disasters That Shaped a Forest Industry



The Ada No.2 mill near Powelltown after the 1939 bushfires (Source: Percy Robert Sims photographer, State Library Victoria).

The 1939 Black Friday fires resulted in a terrible loss of life of 71 people in remote sawmill locations, devastated vast stands of Mountain Ash (Victoria's most valuable hardwood), and destroyed 69 sawmills and millions of acres of ash forest. The fire crippled the timber industry and new regulations were passed requiring all mills to be in towns; a decision which resulted in the end of timber tramways and isolated sawmilling settlements.

Subsequent disasters reinforced this vulnerability: the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires burned large areas of state forest, again wiping out Mountain Ash resources and contributing to long-term industry contraction across the region. More recently, the 2021 storms caused unprecedented tree loss across the Dandenong Ranges, toppling thousands of mature trees including commercial species, further disrupting timber supply chains already under pressure from bushfire loss and the planned closure of native forest harvesting in 2024. The timber industry remains a significant part of the heritage of Yarra Ranges, with timber mills, townships and residences, like the Powelltown Mill company cottages, considered as valuable built heritage.

Built heritage refers to **human-made structures and features** of cultural, historical, or architectural significance such as buildings, streetscapes, industrial sites, parks, gardens, war memorials, plaques and commemorative tree plantings. There are 443 entries in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, including private residences; public buildings such as schools and halls, churches, cemeteries, shops, hotels and guest houses; and infrastructure such as mills, railway stations and bridges, mines and sections of the water supply system.

Archaeological heritage encompasses both surface and subsurface features, including building footings, artefacts and remnants of past activity. Archaeological precincts, like the Lilydale Railway Station, are listed on the Victorian Heritage Database. Scarred trees, tool scatters, oven mounds, rock shelters, and sacred sites are First Peoples' tangible heritage that are **living connections** to ancestors, storylines, and knowledge systems that continue to guide cultural practice today. These places tell stories of settlement, industry, migration, and community life, shaped by the landscapes in which they sit.

Protection may be provided through statutory mechanisms such as the Heritage Overlay and other planning controls, heritage studies, conservation management plans, asset management practices and informed decision-making. Ongoing conservation, maintenance and interpretation help ensure tangible heritage remains accessible and valued by future generations.

5.4. Movable heritage

Movable heritage refers to objects of cultural, historical, or social significance that are **not fixed to a location**. These include artworks, tools, clothing, documents, archaeological artefacts, ceremonial items, and vehicles, held in both **public collections and private ownership**.

For First Peoples, movable heritage includes **cultural objects** such as tools, woven items, artworks, and ceremonial items that carry deep connections to Country, identity, and tradition. These objects are part of living cultural practices and are often used in education, storytelling, and community life.

Heritage collections are preserved and managed by museums, galleries, libraries, archives, historical societies, and community organisations. Volunteer-run historical societies, cultural groups, and community museums in the region, **collectively care for more than 100,000 significant heritage items**. Other community organisations, such as Returned Services League (RSL) branches, sporting clubs, schools, and music groups, also hold important collections that reflect local stories and identities.

Yarra Ranges Council is custodian of several significant collections, including the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum's 15,000+ heritage items, the Shire Art Collection, and the McLeod Gift Collection of over 600 First Peoples and Oceanic cultural items. These collections are managed in accordance with the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act, the International Council of Museums guidelines, and the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries. Council also manages public artworks, statues, monuments, and memorials across the region some of which fall under Heritage and Significant Landscape Overlays.

Located in Lilydale, the **Yarra Ranges Regional Museum** (YRRM) is an award-winning museum dedicated to sharing the rich cultural heritage and contemporary life of the region. As one of the few municipal museums in Australia with a dedicated focus on local heritage, YRRM stands as a distinctive institution that recognises the value of preserving and celebrating regional stories. Home to **diverse cultural collections**, YRRM offers a dynamic program of exhibitions, education, public and digital programs that connect visitors with the past while inspiring conversations about our shared future. Since opening in 2011, YRRM has welcomed over 200,000 visitors physically through its doors, with an online reach of more than one million annually through digital programs, online collection services and social media. The Lilydale & District Historical Society was instrumental in establishing YRRM. Honouring this legacy, the museum continues to work in close partnership with community collecting organisations, artists, creatives, researchers, First Peoples and community partner organisations to ensure it reflects the diverse voices that make up the region in its collections and activities. This includes providing support and guidance for the region's many volunteer-run museums and historical societies.

Where Melbourne Went to Breathe



Lorna Doone guest house, Sassafras (Source: reg. no. 10621, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)

The Yarra Ranges became a destination for those wanting to escape the city. From the late-19th century onwards, people came to the region to find leisure, relaxation and connection natural beauty.

The Dandenongs, Healesville and Warburton became popular retreats leading to the rise of grand guest houses and modest weekenders. Guest houses offered formal dining, ballrooms, tennis courts and scenic walks, while weekenders provided simple bungalows for lower-middle-class families.

Some made the move permanent establishing iconic properties with architectural elegance and landscaped gardens like Burnham Beeches and Dame Melba's Coombe Cottage. Places like Edna Walling's Bickleigh Vale Village and the commune at Sunnyside became havens for artists, writers and creatives.

More humble escapes also became popular with camping grounds and auto parks offering affordable escapes in nature.



Wall of artworks at Dr. Elef Jorgensen's home, Belgrave
(Source: reg. no. 12940, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).

Melba Remembered – Heritage in Letters and Lace



'A Toast to Melba' exhibition, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum (Source: Sean Paris, 2025)

Yarra Ranges Regional Museum holds an internationally significant collection of Dame Nellie Melba material, started by Lilydale & District Historical Society and Lady Pamela Vestey, Melba's only granddaughter. Varied and well-preserved, the collection traces Melba's rise from humble beginnings to global stardom, complementing national and private collections.

The collection includes rare letters, photographs, and personal items, some offering fresh insights beyond published biographies. The 2025 A Toast to Melba exhibition brought this legacy to life, showcasing Melba's artistry, activism, and identity. Complementing national collections, the Museum's holdings continue to shape public understanding and future storytelling of Australia's most celebrated soprano.

5.5. Intangible heritage

Intangible heritage refers to the **non-physical aspects of culture** that are passed down through generations such as traditions, practices, expressions, knowledge, stories, ceremonies, festivals, rituals, and skills. These living traditions **help maintain cultural diversity, foster a sense of belonging, and connect communities across time**.

For First Peoples, intangible heritage is deeply embedded in **Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing**. Cultural knowledge, lore, language, storylines, ceremonies, and land management practices such as cultural burning are **traditions that are inseparable from Country** and continue to guide cultural identity, community wellbeing, and environmental stewardship.

Language revitalisation efforts across the region are helping to preserve and strengthen language and oral traditions, which continue to shape understanding of the landscape and relationships within it.



Figure 12: *Yarra Ranges Regional Museum (Source: Sean Paris)*



Figure 13: *Firesticks program, Wurundjeri cultural burn, 2025 (Source: Yarra Ranges Council)*

Long-running traditions and practices form part of the intangible heritage of the Yarra Ranges. There are many **festivals and events** in the region like the Lilydale Agricultural and Horticultural Show, Tesselaar Tulip Festival and Belgrave Lantern Festival that have run for decades. Annual ANZAC and Remembrance Day services continue to allow communities to reflect on the values of courage, endurance, and mateship, and ensure that the sacrifices of those who have served are not forgotten.



Figure 14: Kalorama-Mt Dandenong Fire Brigade preparing for post-2021 storm clean up/emergency response (Source: uncatalogued, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).

The region also has a strong tradition of creativity and contemplation that has long attracted **artists, writers and spiritual seekers** to the region and continues to do so. Intangible heritage also emerges in times of challenge. The Yarra Ranges has a strong legacy of community-led response and recovery during fires, storms and other emergencies, with these skills and shared experience being passed on across generations including within organisations like the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and State Emergency Service (SES).

As intangible heritage cannot be protected through physical planning controls alone, its safeguarding relies on documentation, recording, transmission of knowledge, community participation, education, cultural practice and ongoing support for tradition bearers and knowledge holders.

Though often unseen, intangible **heritage is sustained through memory, intergenerational transfer and the ongoing practice of traditions**. Together, the enduring traditions of First Peoples and the diverse customs of settler and migrant communities ensure the cultural life of the Yarra Ranges remains dynamic, resilient and deeply rooted in place.



Figure 15: Prize-winning goat, Lilydale Show (undated) (Source: reg. no. 13704, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)

From Sleeping to Speaking – The Revival of Murrum Turrukurruk

For Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung women, our purpose is simply to continue our Ancestors' journey as they live inside us and they speak through us via Language.

Ceremony is the other way that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung women and girls continue the Ancestors' journey and remain connected firmly to Country and Culture. Wurundjeri women do this through the Murrum Turrukurruk ceremony, a coming-of-age ceremony for our young women. Due to the effects of invasion and the attempted genocide of First Peoples and Culture in Australia, ceremonies ceased and Language was not spoken every day. Language and ceremony have been sleeping for five generations in my family and we needed to stop this happening for a sixth generation. This was done through the revival of Murrum Turrukurruk when in 2014 around twenty young Wurundjeri women and girls, along with a couple of girls from other Language Groups, went through the ceremony.

This was the first time it was done in over 185 years. Older Wurundjeri women, including two Elders who had not been through ceremony before, also went through with the young women. This in an instant broke that transgenerational cycle of trauma and smashed the colonial frameworks that attempted to destroy our Culture.

Ref: Mandy Nicholson, Balit Bagurrk: Strong Women of the Yarra Ranges

ANZAC Spirit – Service, Sacrifice and Connection



Sister Yeaman Bust unveiling, Montrose, May 2025 (Source: Yarra Ranges Council)

In Montrose, the new statue of Sister Mary Agnes Yeaman now stands as a tribute to the many nurses who served with strength and compassion. In Seville, crowds recently gathered to honour George Ingram VC, Australia's last Victoria Cross recipient of WWI, whose bravery remains a touchstone for the community. And in Lilydale, research by the Lilydale & District Historical Society told the story of how Private Edwin Poyner's letters home in wartime reveal a young man's enduring love for family, friends, and his hometown.

Together, these stories embody the ANZAC spirit and remind us why every RSL hall and memorial across the region remains a place of gratitude and deep meaning.

5.6. Heritage tourism

Heritage tourism focuses on experiencing places, stories, activities, and traditions that represent the past and present cultural identity of a community or region. It includes visits to historic sites, cultural landscapes, museums, heritage buildings, heritage trails, and participation in festivals, ceremonies and traditional practices. Heritage tourism **fosters appreciation of cultural values, supports local economies, and contributes to the conservation of heritage places and traditions**.

The Yarra Ranges is a **renowned heritage tourism destination** offering visitors a rich blend of natural beauty, cultural depth and historical significance. Key attractions include the Puffing Billy Railway, Healesville Sanctuary, Gulf Station (National Trust of Australia – Victoria), Mont de Lancey Historic Homestead, Upper Yarra Museum, Yarra Valley Railway, walking and cycling trails along heritage tram and train rails, ngurrak barring | RidgeWalk and other heritage trails, heritage wineries and vineyards, and iconic landscapes, forests and gardens.

Heritage tourism in the region provides opportunities to engage with First Peoples' **living culture and connection to Country**, through cultural sites, storytelling, and programs that share traditional knowledge and practices.

By connecting people with the stories and places that shape the Yarra Ranges, heritage tourism deepens understanding of the region's cultural identity while contributing to its **ongoing vitality**.

Sustainable heritage tourism relies on balancing access, interpretation and economic opportunities with the conservation of heritage values in accordance with guiding documents like the Burra Charter, Riga Charter and International Cultural Tourism Charter.



***Figure 16**: White cockatoos and young visitors at Healesville Sanctuary, 1946 (Source: Victorian Railways, State Library Victoria, H91.330/4575)*

Puffing Billy – Heritage on the Move

Puffing Billy Railway was built as a 2' 6" narrow-gauge railway to serve the needs of local communities and their economies in what were at that time, remote and difficult areas to access.

Commencing operation in 1900, with a focus on transporting timber, potatoes and livestock, Puffing Billy Railway was embraced by holiday makers visiting the Dandenong Ranges during the 1920s which saw the addition of the open-air passenger carriages that started the unique 'sitting on the sills' experience that visitors still enjoy today.

A landslide in 1953 interrupted services and contributed to the railway's formal closure in 1954. In the years after, a community-led campaign ultimately restored the railway as a heritage attraction. It has become one of



Puffing Billy Railway c1950-1954, photographer Percy Spiden (Source: State Library of Victoria).

Victoria's top international tourist attractions, with approximately 500,000 visitors annually, and is one of a small number of visitor attractions in Victoria governed by its own Act.

The trestle bridges on the railway line and the daily operation of the train stand as a lasting symbol of Puffing Billy Railway's significance.

Part C: Developing the Strategy

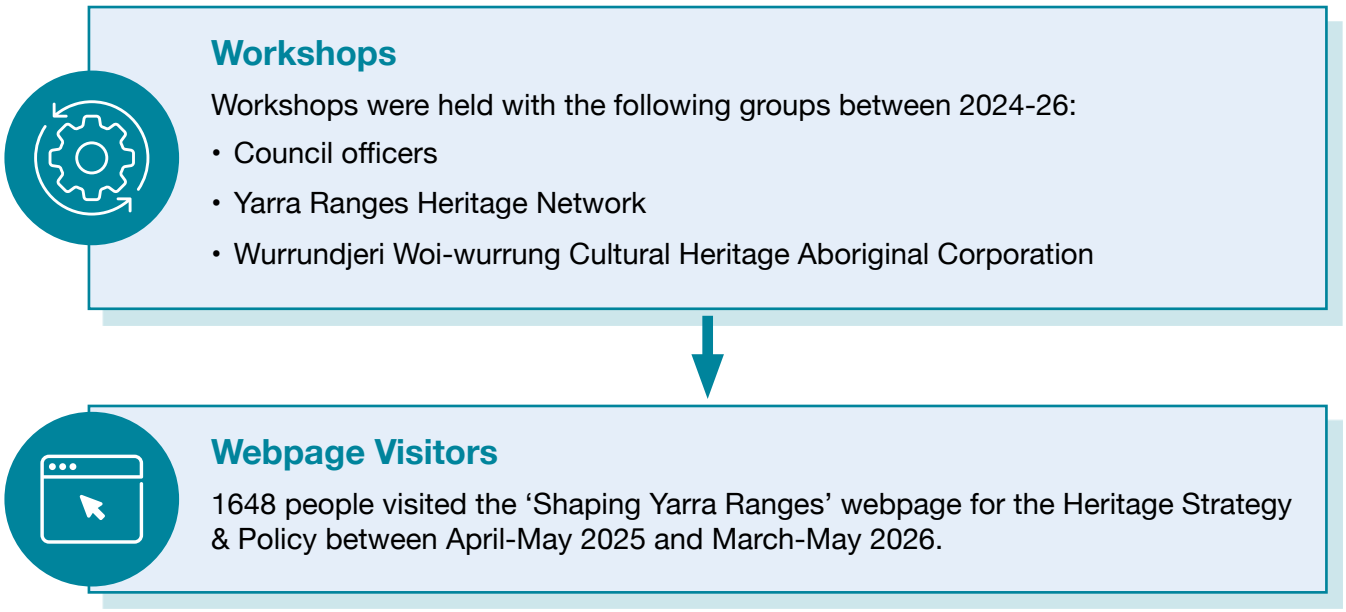
6. Stakeholder and Community Engagement

This strategy has been developed through **staged consultation** with stakeholders in the Yarra Ranges community, including First Peoples, specifically the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWWCHAC) Policy and Partnerships Committee, the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network and Council Officers. The broader community also had the opportunity to participate by making contributions to the 'Shaping Yarra Ranges' webpage, through surveys, providing feedback through submissions and on social media.

By listening to stakeholders and community members, we have **identified important places, topics and historical themes** in the Yarra Ranges, as well as **key issues, challenges and opportunities** relating to heritage. The Action Plan builds on this to develop a path forward for heritage over the next 10 years.

Pictured below is a summary of the community's involvement through the engagement period and overall project process. The community gave feedback in a variety of ways.

6.1. How the Community were involved



Promotion at Community Events

Council engaged with the community about this project at local events as part of the Community Engagement Roadshow Program, including:

- Montrose FNC Girls Day Out
- Kalorama Chestnut Festival
- Coldstream Pump Track
- Healesville Homegrown Festival and
- Dutch Heritage Celebration in Monbulk

Summary Video on YouTube

Was viewed 128 times

Strategy and Policy Document Downloads

786 downloads between 26 March to 10 May 2026

Shaping Page Contributions

110 contributions which includes survey comments

Followers

44 followers of the Shaping Page

Submissions

7 written submissions were received



Warburton, ca. 1909 (Source: State Library of Victoria).

Alternative Living in the Ranges – A Legacy of Ingenuity



Horatio Jones' house, Tecoma (Source: Yarra Ranges Council)

The Horatio Jones house in Tecoma is a rare and evocative example of Depression-era ingenuity and resilience. Constructed by a Gallipoli veteran whose family had fallen into hardship, the home was built using discarded kerosene tins—many still bearing their original labels—demonstrating a resourceful use of modest, vernacular materials during a time of economic struggle.

The unconventional structure stands as a symbol of creativity, and adaptation in the face of adversity. For the region, alternative living is not a singular concept, but rather a diverse tapestry woven from Indigenous ways of living, post-war settlements, wellbeing lifestyles, and contemporary initiatives focused on sustainability, community resilience, and cultural expression.

7. What the community told us

Participants in the workshops provided feedback on **key concerns and priorities** for heritage in the Yarra Ranges. A high-level summary of the feedback is provided below, while sections 7.1 and 7.2 provide detail on heritage achievements, issues, challenges and opportunities.

Community participation over both stages of consultation on the Draft Heritage Strategy and Policy provided a range of feedback through workshops, surveys and submissions.

Stage 1 consultation

Included stakeholder workshops between 2024-25 and community consultation dedicated to understanding what heritage means and feedback on key concerns and priorities for heritage in the Yarra Ranges. It was also through this consultation process that the Draft Heritage Strategy and Policy documents were able to be put together.

Participants in the workshops provided feedback on key concerns and priorities for heritage in the Yarra Ranges.

When asked **what heritage means**, we heard that heritage includes Country, landscapes, biodiversity, trees, built heritage, intangible heritage, post-colonial heritage industries, plaques and memorials, public art, collections and material culture.

The **need for heritage practice to evolve to reflect changing societal values and priorities** was emphasised. Examples included truth-telling around First Peoples histories, appropriate renaming of places, and balancing heritage protection with other issues of concern such as environmental performance, sustainability and housing.

There is a need to further support First Peoples' heritage management and cultural activities, and to raise public awareness about the importance of **Caring for Country**.

Warburton's Wellness Legacy – Weet-Bix and Australia's Health Industry



Sanitarium Health Food Co. Building (Source: Yarra Ranges Council)

Warburton in the Upper Yarra underwent a dramatic physical and social change from pioneer timber town, to health and manufacturing centre when the Seventh Day Adventists came to town.

Recognising the health benefits of the area, they bought land in 1906 and lived in tents while building a dam on Rocky Creek to supply a private hydro-electric generator. Then they built the Signs Printing Company, a Sanitarium Home (later hospital) and by 1925 a health foods factory that specialised in making Granose biscuits (later Weetbix) until it closed in 1997.

The much-loved Sanitarium Health Food Co. building constructed between 1936 and 1939, is an important example of European-influenced Modern architecture in Victoria. In 1940 it won the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Street Architecture Award, the first awarded to a building outside the metropolitan area.

Heritage protection was raised as an issue by several groups. Feedback from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation was that **natural heritage** such as forests and waterways (particularly the Birrarung) are critical to the story of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and need to be protected. It was recognised that often there are **gaps in what statutory heritage legislation can protect**, and that many buildings have already been lost. **Demolition by neglect** remains an ongoing challenge. Similarly, there is a need for forward-planning when it comes to the **protection of collections**, including those belonging to local history and heritage groups, particularly when these groups close.

More support needs to be provided to **private property owners** to assist their understanding of heritage obligations. Within Council, access to expert heritage advice could also be improved.

The **crisis in community heritage** affects the sustainability of local history and heritage groups. While the groups have extensive knowledge and expertise, and provide support to one another, **challenges** were identified including storage, digitisation, significance assessments, maintaining the volunteer workforce, succession planning, and improving public awareness. Local history groups often carry **large volumes of valuable information and collections**; however, they sometimes remain boxed and inaccessible, and digitising content can be expensive and requires tech-literacy.

Heritage documentation held by Council is out-of-date and needs updating, including the Yarra Ranges Heritage Study, statements of significance, and the Thematic Environmental History. There is also a **lack of policies, guidelines and strategies** for managing heritage.

Opportunities to improve **communication** about heritage were identified. This includes internal communication between Council departments, and with external groups such as the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network.

While the dedication of Council Officers was recognised, there is a need for increased skills and training for Council staff whose work intersects with, but is not focused on, heritage.

There are many **opportunities** for heritage promotion and education including sharing the stories of key places; use of First Peoples' languages and histories; public art; and raising the digital profile. Ensuring a diverse representation of people, cultures and stories was highlighted.

A detailed summary of this engagement can be found in the Heritage Strategy Engagement and Directions Paper. November 2025.

Stage 2 consultation

The Drafts of the Yarra Ranges Heritage Strategy and Policy were put on public exhibition between 26 March to 10 May 2026, where the central themes of "Have we got it right?" and "Is anything missing?" helped frame the feedback. The community was invited to share their thoughts through written submissions, survey responses and key stakeholder workshop participation.

The community were invited to consider How well do you think the draft Heritage Strategy and Policy has addressed the following key focus areas?" of the strategy actions – Knowing, Being and Doing.

The most common themes we heard from the written comments, submissions and meetings were:

Diversity and Representation – Including:

- Better alignment required between Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage language and content and the need for broader cultural representation.
- The better inclusion of libraries, churches, and non-Indigenous cultures
- Better interpretation, representation and signage
- Stories that are left out and truth-telling, cultural stories, seasonal stories.
- Heritage tourism and natural heritage representation needs greater emphasis

The role of Heritage Networks – including:

- Declining groups and legacy challenges
- Attracting younger people to participate in heritage matters.
- Preserving knowledge and digitisation
- Involvement in decision making

Action implementation and resource concerns – including

- Support for a Heritage Advisor at Council
- Concerns about how the strategy and policy will be applied.
- Clearer and more concrete examples in the action plan is needed

Management and Protection of Heritage Places – including:

- Advocacy against demolition by neglect.
- Forward-planning when it comes to the protection of collections, including those belonging to local history and heritage groups, particularly when these groups close.

A detailed summary of this engagement can be found in the Stage 2 Engagement Report, July 2026.

7.1. Heritage strengths and achievements

A range of strengths and achievements were highlighted in stakeholder workshops:

- Acknowledgement and celebration of **First Peoples' heritage**.
- **Return of Coranderrk to First Peoples' management**, and inclusion of Coranderrk in the National Heritage List.
- Yarra Ranges Council was the **first Australian government body to issue a formal apology** to the Stolen Generations in 1997. This apology was part of a broader Statement of Commitment to First Peoples and laid the groundwork for the Council's reconciliation efforts.
- Establishment of Council's **Indigenous Advisory Committee**.
- **Firesticks Program** of cultural burns.
- Lilydale **Indigenous Story Finding Project**.
- First council in Australia to include a partial Heritage Councils' Value of History statement in every Council agenda.
- Completion of the **Shire of Yarra Ranges Heritage Study** (2000) and Thematic Environmental History.
- Inclusion of 443 heritage places in the Schedule to the **Heritage Overlay** of the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme and 26 places in the **Victorian Heritage Register**.
- Information available on Council's 'History and heritage' **webpage** for the community.
- The long-standing presence of local history and heritage groups, and the **Yarra Ranges Heritage Network**, is a unique strength of the Yarra Ranges.
- Appointment of **Community Heritage Officer** and **ongoing support** provided by Council to local history and heritage groups.
- Development of **Yarra Ranges Regional Museum**, which builds on the **strong foundations laid by the Museum of Lillydale** (established by the Lilydale & District Historical Society in 1976).
- Appointment of Victoria's **first municipal museum curator** (for the Museum of Lillydale) in 1989.
- **Celebration and promotion of heritage** through Yarra Ranges Regional Museum exhibitions and programs, heritage interpretation and public art.
- **Ngurrak barring | Ridge Walk**, a 39-kilometre walking trail through the Dandenong Ranges that celebrates the area's history and heritage with permanent artworks, land art, architectural nodes and heritage interpretation.
- **Heritage tourism attractions** such as Healesville Sanctuary, Puffing Billy Railway and Coombe Cottage.

'It is about background. It's about seeing what people did in the olden times. Heritage could still be here now'

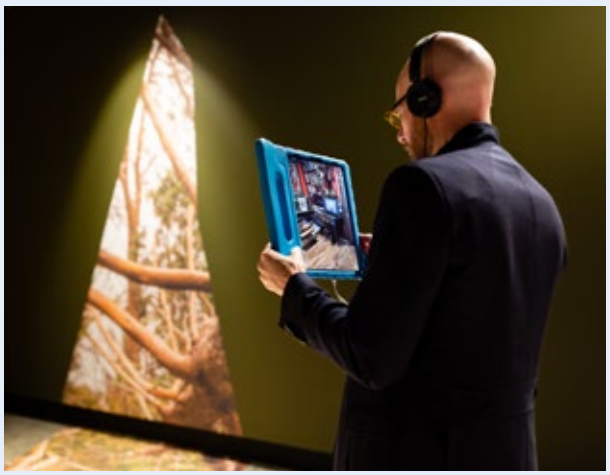
'It's important to get to see how things worked in the past'

St Patrick's Primary School students

Making Sense of Disaster – Heritage and Climate Change

Floods, fires, storms, landslips: the Yarra Ranges has a long heritage of disaster and emergency response. *The Hard Place/ Good Place: Yarra Ranges* project at Yarra Ranges Regional Museum captured the lived experiences of young people in the region impacted by the 2021 storm event, transforming personal memories into immersive Augmented Reality (AR) narratives.

These digital stories offered a powerful form of intangible heritage, preserving emotional responses to disaster and the resilience of communities. Through voice-led journeys and 3D environments, the project connected place, trauma, and healing. Exhibited locally and internationally, with audio stories acquired into the Museum's collection, it reflects broader experiences of environmental crises across Australia, ensuring that these stories remain part of our collective cultural memory and understanding of place.



Hard Place/Good Place: Yarra Ranges' exhibition, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, a collaboration with The Big Anxiety, University of New South Wales, 2022 (Source: Cathy Ronalds)

7.2. Key issues, challenges and opportunities

Stakeholder and community engagement helped to highlight key heritage issues, challenges, and opportunities, which are later reflected in the Action Plan.

Key issues and challenges	Opportunities
Need for education to improve public awareness about First Peoples heritage and the interrelationship of heritage, Country, the environment, language and the lives of contemporary First Peoples.	Increase the use of First Peoples languages, stories and knowledge in heritage interpretation, signage and public art. Develop a First Peoples' place naming strategy.
Need for improved support for the protection and management of First Peoples heritage and Country.	Clarified and improved consultation processes with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs).
First Peoples' understandings of heritage and Deep Time history are not integrated into heritage documentation (e.g. statements of significance).	Work with First Peoples to document heritage. Promote truth telling for heritage places.
Lack of Cultural Safety protocols for projects involving First Peoples heritage and consultation with First Peoples.	Work with Indigenous Advisory Committee and RAPs to develop Cultural Safety protocols.
Yarra Ranges Heritage Study (2000) and statements of significance for heritage places do not conform to contemporary standards and expectations.	Undertake heritage review to update studies and statements of significance, with a focus on identified gaps such as: • First Peoples heritage • Significant views/vistas • Twentieth-century themes and places • More information detailing conservation management and guidelines for protected places in statements of significance and citations.
Difficulties in accessing heritage advice and identifying heritage knowledge-holders within Council, and lack of co-ordination across Council teams.	Develop heritage awareness across the organisation. Confirming roles, responsibilities and processes in relation to heritage within Council. Review arrangements for heritage advisory services and explore the feasibility of appointing an in-house heritage adviser.
Communications gap between Council and community heritage/history groups.	Develop a protocol for communication on heritage protection matters with heritage and other community organisations in the region. Undertake consultation with community heritage/history groups as part of any heritage study review.

Key issues and challenges	Opportunities
Lack of up-to-date data on Council's heritage assets (e.g. buildings, public heritage interpretation, monuments).	Develop a database of Council owned or managed heritage assets with considerations for their management.
Poor condition of some heritage buildings in private ownership, 'demolition by neglect' and lack of understanding by heritage property owners of their obligations in looking after heritage places.	Review current supports and advice provided to owners of heritage places. Develop a handbook for owners of heritage properties.
Tension between balancing the need for heritage protection with the need for compliance upgrades and improving environmental performance in buildings (in the context of broader climatic and environmental threats).	Prepare guidelines on managing universal access, compliance upgrades, and environmental performance in Council owned or managed heritage buildings and places.
The crisis in community heritage – many local heritage and history groups are facing challenges including: • Lack of appropriate storage, significance assessments and digitisation of collections • Declining volunteer numbers • Organisational sustainability • Lack of knowledge about adhering to governance/policies • Limited public awareness of the groups • Risk of loss of community heritage collections and accumulated knowledge if groups close (as was seen with the recent closure of the Yarra Glen & District History Group)	Support groups in developing skills and knowledge in areas such as collection management, governance, financial management, accessing support and working with First Peoples. Develop protocols for supporting history and heritage groups in crisis.
Lack of investment in digital infrastructure to support digital heritage exhibitions, interpretation or projects.	Development of the Council heritage webpage and Yarra Ranges Regional Museum website to better support digital heritage projects.
Untapped opportunities in heritage promotion, storytelling, tourism and partnerships.	Support heritage tourism opportunities and partnerships.
Gaps in heritage representation, equity and inclusion, and in addressing shared heritage values, under-represented and difficult histories.	Prepare process and best practice guidelines to ensure equitable and inclusive representation for heritage interpretation and other projects. Proactively develop heritage interpretation projects to fill gaps and redress past biases, promote shared heritage values, and address under-represented and/or difficult histories.

Nangenala – Honouring the Past, Shaping the Future

Nangenala Cultural Heritage Centre is owned by the WWCHAC who, at the time of writing, were in the process of planning the new cultural centre near Healesville Sanctuary.

The centre is planned to include exhibition, educational, cultural and ceremonial spaces.

Programs will cover themes such as Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as Traditional Owners of Country; Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung achievements, resistance and resilience; cultural traditions and ceremonies; connections to ancestors; Native Title and Treaty; the impacts of colonisation; and the history of Coranderrk, dispossession, and massacres of Aboriginal people.

As well as providing a space for truth-telling about the past, Nangenala will look to the future for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Country.

Part D: Delivering the Strategy

8. Action Plan

Council will lead the delivery of this Heritage Strategy in partnership with Traditional Owners, Heritage Victoria, community groups, and other key stakeholders.

The **Action Plan** responds to the issues, challenges, and opportunities identified through consultation and outlined in *Section 6: What We Heard*. It is structured around **three strategic focus areas**, each with long-term goals, to guide Council's work over the next ten years. The desired outcomes and supporting actions are grounded in the **Heritage Policy Principles** and will drive continuous improvement in heritage practice, management, and engagement across the municipality.

The **Focus Areas** bring together **First Peoples' knowledge systems** with **Heritage Victoria's recommended key themes**, as follows:

1. Knowing

2. Being, Protecting and Supporting

3. Doing, Communicating and Promoting

Heritage Victoria's Guidelines for municipal heritage strategies specifies that actions be included under four key themes:

Knowing (i.e. identifying, assessing and documenting heritage places).

Protecting (i.e. securing statutory protection for significant places, developing policy/ guidelines to assist decision making, appropriate management).

Supporting (i.e. incentives, advisory services, financial assistance).

Communicating and promoting (i.e. measures to raise awareness and appreciation of the heritage of the area).

Knowing, Being, and Doing are the three elements of a holistic framework in First Peoples' knowledge systems that demonstrate the interconnectedness of Country, culture, and spirituality, encompassing traditional knowledge, perspectives, and practices.

Knowing is how people perceive and understand the world. It encompasses beliefs, stories, accumulated bodies of knowledge, and wisdom informed by tens of thousands of years of observation and practice. Ways of Knowing are deeply embedded in culture, spirituality, land, and community.

Being is connected to identity, community, spirituality, and connection to Country. It is a deeply ingrained and holistic worldview that shapes how First Peoples understand themselves, their relationships, and their place within the universe. It's not just a philosophical concept—it's a lived reality, woven into every aspect of life, from family and community to land and spirit.

Doing represents the integration of Knowledge and Being, it encompasses rituals, actions, and daily practices that uphold cultural values such as Respect, Caring, and Sharing. These are reflected in language, art, imagery, technology, traditions and ceremony, land management practices, social organisation and structures.

This integrated framework bridges cultural and institutional approaches to heritage, ensuring the Strategy is both **culturally grounded and policy aligned**. It recognises that meaningful heritage outcomes emerge when Indigenous, Western knowledge and other knowledge systems work together, combining deep cultural understanding with contemporary management and planning tools.

Resourcing and Delivery

This Strategy establishes Council's priorities for heritage over the next ten years and provides a **framework for coordinated action** across Council, partner organisations and the community. The Strategy itself does not allocate funding to individual actions.

Implementation will be supported through Council's **annual business planning and budget processes**, with actions delivered through a combination of **existing operational resources and external funding opportunities or partnerships**. Many actions will also benefit from collaboration with Traditional Owners, community groups, historical societies, government agencies and other partners.

Council acknowledges that the delivery of some actions will be **influenced by available resources and competing priorities**. Where additional resources are required, Council will seek external funding opportunities and advocate for investment to support the achievement of priority heritage outcomes. The Action Plan is therefore intended to be flexible, allowing projects to be refined, prioritised and delivered over time.

Bukkertillibe to Cave Hill – Creation and Industry Collide



Cave Hill Quarry, Lilydale c.1920 (Source: reg. no. 10526, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection)

According to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung tradition Bukkertillibe, a deep cavern, was formed when the sky-deity Bunjil became angry when the people did things that displeased him. In a rage he caused a star to fall from the sky and strike the earth creating a hole, this served as a strict warning to follow lores and traditions.

This sacred site became the Cave Hill Limestone Quarry in 1878, owned and operated by David Mitchell, father of Dame Nellie Melba. Mitchell's quarry became one of Victoria's most significant industrial sites, supplying lime for major buildings and employing generations of locals. Bukkertillibe to quarry reflects the collision of cultural heritage and colonial industry, reminding us that all histories rest on Country. The site is now being developed as a residential estate, adding another layer of heritage to its history.



Monbulk Women's Football Team, 1956 (Source: reg. no. 13789, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).



Little hostess tea set given to Jane Poyner of Willowbank
(Source: reg. no. 6617.28, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).

8.1. Focus Area 1: Knowing

Understanding, researching, and documenting heritage

Why is this a focus area?

Effective heritage protection and interpretation rely on a **strong foundation of knowledge**. Past heritage practice has often reflected dominant narratives, resulting in the under-representation of diverse histories, cultures, and experiences. This has led to gaps in our collective understanding of the region's history and heritage, particularly in areas relating to First Nations' histories, migrant communities, women's histories, minority groups and lesser-known local stories.

By prioritising research, documentation, and knowledge-sharing, we can **address these gaps** and ensure that heritage protection is inclusive, evidence-based, and reflective of the full breadth of our community's past. This work also supports future decision-making, interpretation, and education, helping communities connect with and value their heritage.



Figure 17: *Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, c1895, photographer unknown (Source: reg. no. 9505, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum Collection, included with WWCHAC permission).*



Goal 1: Deepen Understanding of the Region's Heritage (Policy Principle 5)

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
1 First Peoples Cultural Knowledge Cultural values recordings and assessments are standard practice, with cultural knowledge appropriately managed and shared in accordance with First Peoples' guidance.	• Continue to work with First Peoples to commission cultural values recordings/ assessments to understand and document cultural knowledge about places in the Yarra Ranges. • In partnership with Traditional Owners, develop approaches for managing and sharing cultural knowledge, including determining what information is appropriate for public access and what should remain restricted (sharing of appropriate cultural heritage information can foster respect, care and protection of heritage places, while ensuring sensitive places and knowledge are not unnecessarily publicised).	Priority In Progress **Status** Ongoing	Lead: Indigenous Development Support: Design & Place, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum	Partially existing operational resources Seek additional funding
2 Inclusive Histories and Truth Telling Under-represented and difficult histories and heritage in the region are documented and understood, with truth-telling embedded in heritage practice.	• Create opportunities for research to expand knowledge and awareness of diverse histories and heritage in the region. • Develop partnerships with universities to enable applied research projects and student placement opportunities.	Opportunity **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum	Partially existing operational resources Seek additional funding

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
3 Heritage Studies and Reviews An ongoing program of Heritage Reviews, with supporting citations, provides comprehensive place-based knowledge and understanding.	• Deliver a rolling Heritage Review and Heritage Overlay Assessment Program aligned with place-based planning projects to ensure local heritage protections remain current, transparent and evidence based. • Review the *Yarra Ranges Heritage Study (2000)*, for gaps including, First Peoples' heritage, natural heritage, significant views and vistas, twentieth-century themes and places, and other under-represented heritage. • Review existing citations and place assessments to ensure they reflect contemporary heritage standards and community values. Consider internal heritage values for places with existing external protection. • Review and consider recommendations from previous Heritage Studies and assessments that were not adopted. • Undertake Heritage Overlay assessments in conjunction with place-based planning initiatives, such as structure plans, place plans or township planning projects. • Implement recommendations arising from the above work through amendments to the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme.	Priority In Progress **Status** Ongoing	Lead: Design & Place Support: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum	Partially existing operational resources Seek additional funding

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
4 Public Heritage Interpretation Database Database/catalogue of Council owned or managed public heritage assets (such as interpretation signage, trails etc. (but not heritage buildings, places, trees and landscapes) exists and supports asset activation.	• Review and collate existing documentation of Council owned or managed public heritage interpretation assets. • Develop a database for ongoing recording of information about ownership, provenance, location, condition, access, management/ maintenance plans, and end-of-life plans for each asset to be used by relevant Council departments. • Develop a plan for updates to the database to ensure information remains accurate and complete.	Opportunity **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum (for database development) Support: Design & Place, Cultural Programs, Resilient Environment, Parks, Trails and Trees	Partially existing operational resources Seek additional funding

Goal 2: Advance Cultural Safety and Shared Heritage Values (Policy Principle 1)

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
5 Heritage Policy Integration Enhanced Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme which adopts the Yarra Ranges Heritage Strategy and Policy.	• Identify heritage objectives from the Strategy that should inform the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Planning Policy Framework (PPF) (and thereby flow into heritage overlays, schedules, and other planning tools). • Review the MPS and local policy, and where appropriate, incorporate high-level directions from the Heritage Strategy to provide a consistent approach and endorsement of the Heritage Strategy and Policy into the Planning Scheme framework.	Priority **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Design & Place	Existing operational resources
6 First Peoples' Heritage in Planning First Peoples' understandings of heritage are integrated into heritage documentation.	• Integrate First Peoples' perspectives into heritage listings. • Heritage Overlay significance assessments and other relevant statutory protection documentation to capture shared heritage values.	Priority **Status** Ongoing	Lead: Design & Place Support: Indigenous Development Team, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum	Partially existing operational resources Seek additional funding

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
7 First Peoples' Places Interpreted	• Work with the IAC, RAPs and other stakeholders to develop and/or enhance interpretation of places with First Peoples' heritage values, • Integrate First Peoples' heritage, storytelling, languages, seasonal knowledge and information about contemporary First Peoples' cultural knowledge into place planning, place naming and heritage interpretation, • Ensure that Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property agreements are implemented for the use of First Peoples' intellectual property.	Opportunity **Status** Medium (4-6 years)	Lead: Indigenous Development Team	Support: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, Design & Place Existing operational resources

8.2. Focus Area 2: Being, Protecting and Supporting

Safeguarding heritage and enabling inclusive, sustainable practices

Why is this a focus area?

Heritage is **not only about the past**. It is a living, evolving part of community identity and wellbeing. The theme of *Being, Protecting and Supporting* recognises the deep and enduring relationships people have with place, culture, and each other. It acknowledges that heritage is actively experienced, nurtured, and sustained in everyday life.

This focus area responds to the need to protect cultural integrity and support practices that ensure **heritage remains relevant and resilient**. Sustainability is key here, while also acknowledging that for Indigenous people, sustainability is just living. By fostering environments where heritage is respected and actively lived, we strengthen cultural continuity, support community wellbeing, and ensure that heritage protection is inclusive, adaptive, sustainable and **future-focused**.



The Wilken brothers of Kilsyth, 1915 (Source: reg. no. 12963, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).

Goal 3: Champion Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Heritage (Policy Principle 2)

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
8 Appropriate Public Heritage All new public heritage interpretation projects, whether Council or community-led, follow a consistent, best-practice process.	• Prepare processes and guidelines to ensure public heritage interpretation projects are undertaken to: ◦ Be Culturally Safe ◦ Be inclusive and representative. ◦ Tell under-represented histories, difficult histories and redress past bias in heritage.	Opportunity **Status** Short (1-2 years)	Lead: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum Support: Art in Public Places	Existing operational resources
9 Working with First Peoples Protocols and guidelines for working with First Peoples on heritage projects are established and operational.	• Prepare protocols and guidelines around Cultural Safety and First Peoples' engagement, partnership and leadership in shaping narratives for heritage projects in consultation with the IAC and RAPs.	Priority In Process **Status** Short (1-2 years)	Lead: Indigenous Development Team Support: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum	Existing operational resources
10 Heritage Expertise Heritage expertise is embedded within Council to support consistent, informed and proactive heritage management across planning, asset management, place-making and community heritage functions.	• Establish access to qualified heritage expertise, either through an internal Heritage Adviser, or an appropriately qualified external consultant, to provide strategic and statutory planning heritage advice, heritage assessments, and expert input into the management and conservation of heritage places and landscapes. • Define the Heritage Adviser's role, responsibilities and referral processes, ensuring effective collaboration and communication across strategic planning, statutory planning, asset management, capital works, infrastructure projects, community development and community heritage.	Priority **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Planning and Building Department Support: Design & Place	Existing staffing budget

Goal 4: Protect and Activate Heritage for Future Generations (Policy Principle 4)

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
11 Traditional Owner Partnerships First Peoples' heritage and Country are protected and managed through strong, ongoing partnerships with RAPs	• Continue to build relationships with RAPs in the Yarra Ranges. • Work with Council's Indigenous Advisory Committee to identify opportunities to provide support and resourcing to RAPs in protecting First Peoples' heritage and Country. • Support the development of Cultural Heritage Management Plans where required. • Continue to implement relevant actions from *Burndap Birrarung Burndap Umarkoo* (Yarra Strategic Plan). • Continue to implement *'First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries'* in the management of Council's cultural collections.	Priority **Status** Ongoing	Lead: Indigenous Development Team Support: Design and Place, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum and Resilient Environment	Existing operational budget
12 Council Leadership in Heritage Management Upgrades and changes to Council-owned or managed heritage buildings, places, trees and landscapes are guided by clear internal processes that prioritise heritage values	• Prepare guidelines on heritage considerations regarding upgrades and changes to Council-owned or managed heritage buildings, places, trees and landscapes. • Align guidelines with Council corporate objectives, policies and strategies relating to access and inclusion, sustainability and the environment, and other relevant areas. • Ensure Council Officers with responsibilities for managing universal access, compliance upgrades, energy-efficient adaptations, environmental performance, and climate-resilient landscaping are familiar with the guidelines.	Priority **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Design & Place Support: Resilient Environment	Existing operational resources

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
13 Stewardship and Conservation Owners of heritage buildings, places, trees and landscapes are recognised as important custodians of the municipality's heritage and are supported to contribute to long-term conservation	• Review and enhance the advice available to owners of heritage assets. • Promote the integrated management of built, natural and cultural heritage. • Promote and advocate for the conservation of heritage buildings, places, trees and landscapes as a sustainable practice that supports climate change mitigation through the retention and stewardship of existing heritage assets, that also contribute to neighbourhood character, local identity and cultural value. • Advocate for the prevention of demolition by neglect within the existing legislative framework. • Support the addition of cultural heritage to the Victorian Fire Risk Register as outlined in the Emergency Management Plan. • Support environmentally sustainable upgrades and climate adaptation measures that improve the energy efficiency, resilience and long-term viability of heritage buildings while respecting heritage significance.	Opportunity **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Design & Place Support: Planning and Building and Economic Development	Existing operational budget
14 Activation and Adaptive Reuse Heritage buildings and places are actively used, enhancing their cultural and community value	• Support the activation and adaptive reuse of heritage places, particularly buildings and sites that are vacant, under-utilised, or undergoing a change in use to promote their long-term conservation, environmental sustainability, community benefit, and interpretation. • Advocate for incentives and programs that support the retention and adaptive reuse of heritage places in preference to demolition and replacement.	Continue **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Economic Development & Investment Support: Property and Facilities Management, Design and Place, Creative Communities and Resilient Environment	Partially within existing operational resources Partially seek additional funding

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team Resourcing
15 Resources for Heritage Owners Owners and managers of heritage buildings and places have access to a clear, practical handbook that guides the care, maintenance, and conservation of their heritage assets.	• Prepare information, in collaboration with owners and community, to address information gaps for owners and managers of heritage places. Ensure consistency with the Burra Charter and other guiding documents. • Provide clear and accessible information on heritage legislation, Heritage Overlays and permit requirements. • Address common misconceptions around the implications of heritage listing. • Provide information on ongoing maintenance, preventative conservation, opportunities for sympathetic adaptation, sustainable building design, and environmental performance upgrades. • Detail external funding opportunities, support programs, technical advice and conservation resources. • Publish information on Council's website and actively promote to owners and managers of heritage places.	Opportunity **Status** Medium (4-6 years)	Lead: Design & Place Support: Requires multiple teams and consultants Existing operational resources

8.3. Focus Area 3: Doing, Communicating and Promoting

Engaging communities, sharing stories, and building awareness

Why is this a focus area?

Heritage is most powerful when it is **actively expressed, shared, and celebrated**. The theme of *Doing, Communicating and Promoting* recognises that heritage lives through practice: storytelling, creativity, and community engagement. It is not only preserved in archives or protected in legislation but carried forward in the ways people connect with their histories and shape their futures.

Heritage is strengthened through the ongoing process of **listening, unlearning and relearning**. Community understandings of history have been shaped by the stories that are available, those that have been remembered and passed down over time. Yet, some historical narratives are incomplete or have excluded important voices and experiences. This can be seen in misconceptions that women played only domestic roles rather than shaping communities, economies, and social change; that an area lacks cultural diversity despite the many migrant, refugee, and multicultural communities that have contributed to its identity; or that Indigenous peoples had little presence or impact in a region. Heritage practice provides opportunities to revisit narratives and engage with new evidence and perspectives. Through this process, heritage becomes a l**iving and evolving conversation** that reflects the full richness and complexity of community experience.

This focus area responds to the need for **inclusive, contemporary, and dynamic approaches** to heritage communication. It supports communities to engage with heritage in meaningful ways, fostering pride, understanding, and belonging. By promoting active participation and visibility, we ensure that heritage is not only safeguarded but embraced as a vital part of everyday life.



Ruby Milne's kitchen tea, Lilydale, 1910 (Source: reg. no. 10507, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).

Goal 5: Empower Community-Led Heritage Management and Interpretation (Policy Principle 3)

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
16 Heritage Organisations and Collections Local history and heritage groups are supported to strengthen their capacity, resilience, collaboration and community activities.	• Continue to support the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and associated schedule, particularly with skills development, training, funding opportunities and access to expert advice.	Priority **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum Support: Indigenous Development and Design & Place	Existing operational resources
	• Facilitate collaboration, resource sharing and joint projects between heritage groups and stakeholders. • Develop approaches to support organisations and collections at risk, including succession planning, and collection rationalisation and rehoming where necessary.	**Status** Medium (4-6 years)		
17 Communication Protocols with Community Heritage protection matters are communicated clearly and consistently between Council and the community.	• Develop a protocol for communicating heritage protection matters with the YRHN and community. • Establish a mechanism for community members to raise heritage matters with Council. • Publish and promote the protocols to relevant staff, the YRHN and community.	Priority **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Design & Place Support: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, Planning and Building, Customer and Communications	Existing operational resources

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
18 Effective Heritage Management Across Council Heritage roles, responsibilities, and processes are clearly defined and mapped across Council departments to ensure coordinated and effective heritage management.	• Document existing roles, responsibilities and knowledge holders in heritage at Council. • Publish roles, responsibilities and processes on Council intranet and publicise to staff. • Audit existing asset and mapping systems across Council. Add heritage triggers to these systems to improve visibility and awareness of Heritage Overlays, Significant Landscape Overlays, significant trees and heritage values. • Document triggers for works on Council-owned heritage assets to ensure heritage impact assessments are undertaken prior to works and maintenance.	Priority **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Strategy & Transformation Team	Existing operational resources
19 Community Engagement The region's heritage is actively celebrated and shared with the community through interpretation, events, media, and programming.	• Continue to develop relationships with Tourism East and other tourism organisations to embed heritage within the Yarra Ranges visitor experience for a range of audiences. • Explore and continue collaborative heritage promotion projects with stakeholders including First Peoples, local historical societies, and tourism organisations. • Continue to develop education programs for schools and community groups to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of local heritage. • Seek opportunities to showcase local heritage places in events such as the National Trust Australian Heritage Festival and Open House Melbourne.	Priority Continue **Status** Ongoing	Lead: Economy, Tourism and Culture Support: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, Customer and Communications	Existing operation resources

Desired Outcomes	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Team	Resourcing
	• Develop a proactive heritage interpretation program, in conjunction with place planning and other place-making or heritage initiatives, that uses physical, digital and interactive approaches to connect people to stories. • Support heritage-informed street and place naming projects within Council by providing historical research, collections, knowledge and thematic heritage information in partnership with RAPs, the YRHN and community. • Develop and maintain online resources, exhibitions and digitised heritage content in partnership with the YRHN, RAPs and heritage stakeholders.	Opportunity **Status** Medium (4-6 years)	Lead: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum Support: Design & Place, Economic Development, Customer and Communications	Partially existing operational resources. Seek funding for specific projects
20 Heritage on Website Council's heritage webpage and the YRRM website provide engaging, accessible, and up-to-date information that supports community connection with the region's heritage.	• Invest in digital infrastructure to improve public access to heritage information and support, YRRM digital projects and online exhibitions. • Review and Update Council's heritage webpages to improve access to heritage information.	Opportunity **Status** Short (1-3 years)	Lead: Customer and Communications Support: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum	Existing operational resources
	• Use Council and YRRM digital platforms to promote heritage places, stories, events and activities. • Promote the activities of the YRHN, RAPs and heritage stakeholders through Council's heritage webpages and related communication channels.	Opportunity **Status** Ongoing	Lead: Yarra Ranges Regional Museum Support: Customer and Communications; Creative Communities	Existing operational resources



Mount Evelyn Railway Station, 1900s, photographer unknown
(Source: reg. no. 10595, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection).

9. Monitoring and review

Progress will be regularly evaluated to ensure actions remain responsive, equitable and effective.

Implementation, monitoring, and review will entail the following steps:

- The progress and success of each individual action will be monitored by Council's Strategic Planning Department and the Economy, Tourism and Culture Department.
- At the beginning of each year, departments with responsibility for actions under the Strategy will confirm with Strategic Planning which actions will be progressed in that year. They will also provide a six-monthly update on the progress of the actions in hand and any likely delays.
- Strategic Planning will prepare a report to Councillor Forum on the key successes of the Strategy in progress, and any resulting challenges, every two years.
- Short-term priority actions will be evaluated before medium-term or longer-term actions will be considered.
- If any new actions are identified, these may be progressed during the lifetime of this Strategy based on importance, or they will become a priority for future versions of the Yarra Ranges Heritage Strategy.
- The Strategy will be reviewed at the 5-year mark in consultation with heritage stakeholders.
- A new Heritage Strategy should be developed at the 10-year mark.

From Pub to Poster – The Face of Australian Beer



Photograph of Carlton beer 1907 advertisement (Source: National Archives of Australia)

The photograph of Sam Knott enjoying a Carlton Ale at McVeigh's Hotel near Warburton is a culturally significant snapshot of early 20th-century working-class life in Victoria.

Capturing the rugged attire, speech, and spirit of a gold prospector, the image reflects social identity, advertising history, and rural pub culture. It became an enduring symbol of Australian beer marketing.

The image preserves vernacular language and humour, while its visual legacy—used widely in advertising—offers insight into changing community standards, branding, and the role of alcohol in Australian society.

References

- Australia ICOMOS, Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013 (Burra Charter).
- Australian Government, National Cultural Policy—Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place, Commonwealth of Australia, 2023.
- Australian Museums and Galleries Association – Victoria (AMaGA Victoria), Strategic Plan 2022-2025.
- Brownrigg, Jeff, Significance Assessment – Shire of Yarra Ranges, Museum of Lillydale, Melba Collection, July 2008.
- Context Pty Ltd, Shire of Yarra Ranges Heritage Study, 2000.
- Dank, D. Terraglossia, Bonnier Echo, 2025.
- European Federation of Museum and Tourist Railways, The Riga Charter, 2005.
- Hanna, B., "Ridgewalk" A History of Culture, Artists and Creativity in the Dandenong Ranges: Report - History and Analysis, 2017.
- Heritage Council of Victoria, Statement: The Value of History, https://www.historycouncilvic.org.au/statement_of_value_of_history accessed 19 December 2025.
- Heritage Council of Victoria, What is Heritage?, https://assets.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/assets/HCV_1ppA3_Poster_WhatIsHeritage.WEB.pdf accessed 22 October 2025.
- Heritage Victoria, Municipal heritage strategies: A guide for councils, State of Victoria, 2012.
- ICOMOS, International Cultural Tourism Charter, 1999.
- International Council of Museums, *Code of Ethics for Museums*, 2004.
- Kellaway, C., Farmland, forest and fern gullies – An environmental history of the Shire of Yarra Ranges, included in the Shire of Yarra Ranges Heritage Study, Context Pty Ltd, 2000.
- Lilydale & District Historical Society, Now and Then, newsletter, 3 September 2016, https://lilydalehistorical.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/09September2016Nowandthenemail.pdf, accessed 15 August 2025.
- Melbourne Water Corporation, Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo (Yarra Strategic Plan) 2022–32, February 2022.
- National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries 2.0, 2023.
- Nicholson, M., in L. Hills (ed.) *Balit Bagurrk: Strong Women of the Yarra Ranges*, 2019.
- Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Regional Authority, 'Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan', 1995
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Coop Ltd, 'Deadly Story' cultural research portal, https://deadlystory.com/, accessed 29 July 2025.
- Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, 'Aboriginal Cultural Heritage', https://www.aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/, accessed 29 July 2025.
- Victorian Heritage Database
- Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation, 'Coranderrk', https://www.coranderrk.com/, accessed 29 July 2025.
- Yarra Ranges Council, Green Wedge Management Plan, 2010.

- Yarra Ranges Council, 'Yarra Ranges Council community profile', https://profile.id.com.au/yarra-ranges/birthplace?WebID=10, accessed 30 July 2025.
- Yarra Ranges Council, 'Walk Cave Hill Quarry', https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Explore-Yarra-Ranges/Arts-and-our-creative-community/Art-projects-in-Yarra-Ranges/Art-and-Sole/Art-and-Sole-Walking-Trails/Walk-Cave-Hill-Quarry, accessed 29 August 2025.
- Yarra Ranges Council, *Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Destination Management Plan*, December 2023.
- Yarra Ranges Council and Oonah Health and Community Services Aboriginal Corporation, *Balit Bagurrk: Strong Women of the Yarra Ranges*, Yarra Ranges Council, https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Explore-Yarra-Ranges/Arts-and-our-creative-community/Art-projects-in-Yarra-Ranges/Balit-Bagurrk-Strong-Women-of-the-Yarra-Ranges, accessed 29 July 2025.
- Yarra Ranges Council and Yarra Ranges Heritage Network, Memorandum of Understanding, 2025.
- Yarra Ranges Heritage Network, *Guide to heritage in the Yarra Ranges*, Yarra Ranges Council, https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Explore-Yarra-Ranges/History-and-heritage/Guide-to-Heritage-in-the-Yarra-Ranges, accessed 29 July 2025.
- Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, Significance Assessment – Yarra Ranges Regional Museum Collection, February 2019.
- *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017*, Act number 49/2017, in force, Version 005.