

2022
VICTORIAN
ABORIGINAL

HONOUR ROLL

WARNING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this publication contains images of people who have passed away.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER



The Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll recognises some of Victoria's most inspiring and outstanding Aboriginal community members.

This year's nine inductees represent the very best of Victorian Aboriginal communities. Their achievements, past and present, are truly remarkable. Together they have contributed to a more equitable, better, and stronger future for us all. They deserve our deepest respect and gratitude for their devoted service.

Victoria's nation leading work to progress treaty and truth in Victoria would not be possible without the extraordinary efforts of community leaders, activists and individuals, including those who are rightly recognised and celebrated in the pages of the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll.

While ensuring their stories are not forgotten, the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll also provides an opportunity to celebrate and learn more about Aboriginal people, culture and history.

I thank the inductees and their families for sharing

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Daniel Andrews'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a distinct 'D' and 'A'.

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP

Premier

MESSAGE FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR FIRST PEOPLES



It is my pleasure to introduce the nine Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll inductees of 2022 and to celebrate their achievements and invaluable contributions to their communities and the state.

The Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll recognises the tireless work, commitment and strength of Aboriginal people in Victoria. It records for future generations the significant impact of the inductees' life work and shares their stories and voices with us all.

The inductees' contributions, which span from the 19th century to today, cover a diverse range of fields including the arts, education, justice, land rights, sports, health and wellbeing and support for children, young people, and families. They are role models to all Victorians and are mentors, leaders, and advocates for their communities. Their legacies are profound.

Victoria is proudly leading the nation as we make progress towards treaty, truth, justice and Aboriginal self-determination, and the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll is one way that we can bring these stories to the forefront.

I thank the inductees and their families for sharing their stories with us all and congratulate them on their achievements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Couzens', written in a cursive style.

Christine Couzens MP

Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples

Outstanding commitment to Aboriginal children and their families.



A TIRELESS ELDER DEDICATED TO HER COMMUNITY.

Aunty Elaine Taylor (Wemba-Wemba/Bunurong), was born on 28 July 1949 in Swan Hill. 'Aunty E' has two sons, two daughters, two granddaughters, six grandsons, and has fostered more than forty children and more than eight foster grandchildren.

Elaine's parents, Nancy and Jack Charles, were born on Moonahcullah Mission near Deniliquin, New South Wales, where she too spent her early years. "My grandparents and parents weren't allowed to speak language on the mission. Dad left to work outside the mission but was not allowed back. When dad got a job in the sawmills, we moved into Deniliquin. He couldn't get a house, so we lived in a hut until we got a house." Elaine's cousins were part of the Stolen Generations. "They were taken while mum was looking

after them. My aunty had six kids then. They were locked up in Deniliquin jail, including a baby in nappies, until the welfare came down from Sydney."

In 1960, Elaine with her parents and siblings, left Deniliquin for Doveton in Victoria. She attended Doveton West Primary School. When they were called derogatory names, the headmaster dealt with it at assembly, saying he wouldn't tolerate any racist comments. Elaine left school at 14 to work in a factory, putting her age up to earn more money.

In the sixties, Elaine's parents were founding members of an association which became the Dandenong & District Aborigines Cooperative Ltd (DDACL). It supported young people, particularly young men, coming up from Gippsland to go to school and do apprenticeships. With her parents, Elaine attended the first meeting of DDACL. She became a family support worker and supported victims of family violence. Elaine has been a DDACL board member for many years.

Elaine also worked as a domestic attendant at Auntie Gladys Nichols Hostel for Aboriginal young people during the sixties, which led her to the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and employment there as an adoption worker. If a family came to the attention of the Victorian Government, VACCA was informed. Elaine would work with government

case workers to establish a cultural plan with family decision making.

Through VACCA, Elaine has supported families in many more roles with regard to children in foster or kinship care. She has also advocated strongly to government to enhance VACCA's support and interventions for Aboriginal children, to enable them to have culturally safe foster care where they are supported, connected to culture and part of a caring community. Working closely with Marj Thorpe and Molly Dyer, Elaine successfully achieved the strengthening of the sections and clauses relating to Aboriginal children in Victoria's *Adoption Act (1984)*. Today, Elaine serves as a consultant Elder.

Elaine's own foster children came through VACCA or Foster Care Westernport. However, one child was left on her house doorstep, a one-month-old baby boy in a bassinet. Elaine had her own three-month-old child, Jackie, at the time. With the support of her family and a cousin she coped with both babies. When the baby's mother returned a few months later Elaine asked her why she had left him at the doorstep, and her response was: "I knew you would look after him".

Elaine is the Aboriginal Elder Chairperson of the Bubup Ngay Aboriginal Children's Panel (Panel) that was established in 2016 in response to the Victorian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young

People's recommendations from *Taskforce 1000*, a landmark review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with involvement in child protection. Caseworkers bring difficult cases to the panel for confidential advice.

Aunty Elaine is an Elder in Aboriginal family led decision-making meetings, working alongside Aboriginal VACCA convenors to support placement and supports for children known to child protection and justice services. She is also a weekly group facilitator for Aboriginal women and children, supporting women experiencing intergenerational trauma and family violence to build strong cultural connections and parenting skills.

Elaine was a recipient of the Community Regional Award for VACCA's inaugural Mollie Dyer Awards in 2018. She still works at VACCA in the southern office at Dandenong, working with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff to support Aboriginal children in out-of-home care, family services, family violence programs and cultural programs across the Southern Metropolitan Region.

Elaine has also worked across the housing, justice, and education sectors advocating for community. She worked for Aboriginal Hostels Ltd, in the Shepparton, Mildura and W.T. Onus Melbourne Hostels. She was a housing officer for the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, travelling

around Victoria supporting and advocating for Aboriginal clients who had to attend the Tenancy Tribunal to come to an agreement, and to ensure they were not left unable to meet their obligations.

Elaine was one of the first Criminal Justice Program workers in Dandenong, and she has been active within the Victorian Koori Court program since its commencement. She is a cultural member and representative of the Koori Court at Dandenong Magistrates' Court, for both adults and children. She is also on the Melbourne Koori Court and Melbourne Children's Court.

Elaine is an Elder in her local Aboriginal education consultative group and has worked as a Koorie educator, supporting students at five schools in Dandenong and the City of Casey. At Worawa Aboriginal College, Elaine worked as senior coordinator overseeing four houses and was house parent for ten girls. She has also been a Board member for the Melbourne Aboriginal Youth, Sport & Recreation Co-operative and a cultural adviser to OzChild's Cultural Panel. Through her participation, Elaine supported many Aboriginal children by training non-Aboriginal carers and staff on the importance of keeping Aboriginal kids connected to culture and family.

Elaine still provides cultural wisdom and guidance to VACCA's Aboriginal staff to support their work with children

and families. She is a powerful mentor and Elder for young Aboriginal staff, emerging community leaders, and next generations. Her legacy is also advanced through her children and grandchildren who work for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

Elaine's outstanding commitment and generosity is well known. People coming to Melbourne know that if they go to Elaine's home they would be taken in for a night or two. Her home is known as *Peppermint Lodge*.

In 2022, Elaine launched her business, Deadly Aboriginal Advocacy Service, to consolidate her advocacy services for her community. She was also honoured this year by a public art mural of her and her granddaughter on a wall near the First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing medical centre in Frankston.

Fighting for community, self-determination, health and wellbeing, housing and justice.



A LIFE DEDICATED TO HIS COMMUNITY.

Uncle Graeme 'Wilk' Austin, a proud Gunditjmara man, was born on 16 December 1949 at Warrnambool Base Hospital. His parents were Ella Austin and George Rose. He is one of 11 siblings, growing up surrounded by a large extended family.

His family lived on Framlingham Mission up until the mid-1960s, then they moved to Melbourne to join other family members and to access greater opportunities.

Passionate about sport, Graeme and his late wife Zea opened their family home to many young people. They encouraged and arranged for them to participate in Koori sporting carnivals across Victoria and weekly netball and basketball competitions, representing Aboriginal clubs including Fitzroy Stars

Netball Club and Melbourne Blacks Basketball Club.

A hardworking man throughout his life, in his early years, Graeme worked as a bricklayer and in various labouring roles.

Graeme has had a lifelong dedication to Aboriginal health and wellbeing, holding significant executive and board positions in community and sporting organisations.

Above all, he has made lasting impact on the social and emotional wellbeing of Victoria's Aboriginal community.

Graeme spent some 20 years, including 10 years as Chief Executive Officer, working for the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS). VAHS was established in 1973 to address the specific medical needs of Victorian Aboriginal communities. He is one of the Elders who worked to see VAHS evolve from its early days in Fitzroy to the four sites delivering services today. VAHS is founded upon the value that Aboriginal health means not just physical wellbeing, but also the holistic health of a person, incorporating social, emotional and cultural wellbeing. Graeme was CEO at the time of VAHS' relocation from Gertrude Street, Fitzroy to the purpose-built facility at 186 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy.

During the 1970s, VAHS went through a period of financial uncertainty,

including times when employees worked without pay to keep the service functioning. Despite this, it did not close its doors. Led by Graeme, VAHS would not let government dictate the terms of its funding. Reflecting that Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations like VAHS were never appropriately acknowledged for their work, Graeme stated: *"Our funds were never enough, or they would be cut and government would hope that we would just close our doors. But we would never let that happen. We just volunteered, worked without pay. We wouldn't allow the government to do it... We wouldn't go away. We just got stronger!"*¹

Graeme also worked as a VAHS Bringing Them Home Worker, providing support, counselling and advocacy to members of the Stolen Generations.

Graeme has been an unforgettable leader and advocate for housing, justice services, and his Country.

Graeme served as a Director of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV), and from 2006 as the Deputy Chairperson of the Board until his resignation in early 2015. He also served as a Director on the Board's Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Not long after Victoria's first Koori Court was established in 2002 under the Magistrates' Court, Broadmeadows Koori Court commenced as the first

¹ <https://www.vaccho.org.au/assets/01-RESOURCES/TOPIC-AREA/CORPORATE/A-HISTORY-OF-THE-VICTORIAN-ABORIGINAL-HEALTH-SERVICE.pdf> pp 31-32

metropolitan Koori Court. Graeme was appointed as a Koori Court Elder. In 2008, the County Court of Victoria also established a Koori Court, and he was appointed as an 'Elder or Respected Person'. He has supported many community members at risk or in prison. Graeme was also a community representative on the Northern Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee.

Graeme was an active member of his Native Title Group, and he and his family continue to have strong connections to their Gunditjmara Country with family still living at Framlingham Aboriginal Trust (formerly known as Framlingham Mission).

With his strong leadership voice, Graeme advocated within national structures, as Chairperson of the former Tumbukka Regional Council, under the Commonwealth Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). Tumbukka advocated for services to improve the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Graeme is a Life Member of the Fitzroy Stars Football and Netball Club (Fitzroy Stars). He was an original member of the Fitzroy Stars, which was established in 1973. Over time, Graeme held a variety of roles at the Fitzroy Stars, including captaincy

and coaching. He was particularly interested in developing junior players, including at risk children. He was dedicated to helping young people who were at the former Baltara Reception Centre and Turana Youth Training Centre, including encouraging them to participate in Australian rules football.

In 2006, Graeme joined the Fitzroy Stars Revival Committee that later became the Fitzroy Stars Working Group and Negotiation Team, a decade long commitment that culminated in the successful revival of the Fitzroy Stars.

He has served as deputy chairperson of the Melbourne Aboriginal Youth, Sport and Recreation Co-operative Ltd (MAYSAR), established in 1982 as the Fitzroy Stars Aboriginal Community Youth Club Gymnasium Inc. by a group of founders that included several Austin family members.

His legacy at the Fitzroy Stars continued with his granddaughter becoming captain of the first ever woman's football team at the club.

Graeme's four daughters, grandchildren and extended Austin family members hold him in great affection and esteem for his dedication to community self-determination, health and wellbeing, housing and justice.

Graeme's inspiring and committed work over more than four decades to improve conditions, services and opportunities for his community is recognised and honoured to this day.

PATRICE MAHONEY OAM

INDUCTED: 2022

Lifelong dedication to community, education, arts, reconciliation and anti-racism.



A POWERFUL AND GENEROUS CHANGEMAKER.

Patrice Renee 'Muthaymiles' Mahoney was born in Canberra on 4 November 1975. She is a proud mother of five children and one granddaughter. Her connections to family and place reflect her multicultural connections from the Anaiwan Nation in New South Wales, Malta, France, Ireland and England. She grew up in Armidale, NSW, and then moved to Victoria—first to Lakes Entrance (Gunaikurnai Country), and then to the Bass Coast region (Bunurong Country), where she has lived for over 20 years.

Patrice is a powerful advocate for Aboriginal people and their cultures, and a talented, prolific artist who believes art and education are the basis of identity, self-determination and leadership. She holds a Graduate Diploma (Teaching), Bachelor of Arts (Media Art and Design), Advanced

Diploma (Business Management) and is currently undertaking a Master of Fine Art at Monash University. She is profoundly influenced by a sense of space, place, the environment, visual art and culture. She takes great inspiration from the natural environment where she lives.

When Patrice was 21 years old and wanted to get away, she closed her eyes and put her finger on a map. It landed in the sea just off Lakes Entrance, so she moved there with her two children, a foster child and two dogs. Later, she met a man whose family lived in Wonthaggi, so they moved there in 1999 with three children in tow.

Patrice found Wonthaggi depressingly monocultural. She observed how Aboriginal people were invisible in the region, compared with her hometown. Patrice couldn't see where she could fit in: *"I'd grown up in Armidale, where there was a university, and the community was a melting pot. Wonthaggi felt like the Deep South!"* She was confronted by her perception that the Bass Coast community had minimal knowledge or understanding of the Aboriginal history of the area, and limited will to learn about—let alone celebrate—local Aboriginal communities.

When Patrice's eldest son was severely bullied at a local primary school for the colour of his skin, she became even more determined to educate

the community and, in turn, break down some negative stereotypes. She wanted to help her children not experience racism, and also didn't want Aboriginal children to grow up with anger towards non-Aboriginal people as a consequence of being treated badly.

Convincing people that these issues mattered was a big challenge, especially in the context of the relatively low known number of Aboriginal people living on the Bass Coast. But Patrice persevered in the face of sometimes fierce resistance to achieve things most of us now take for granted, such as the displaying of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags alongside the flag of Australia at the Bass Coast Shire Council offices.

Patrice persuaded the council to fly the Aboriginal flag during NAIDOC Week, and hundreds of local community members complained. She wrote to councillors and the local newspaper inviting them to NAIDOC Week celebrations, but they declined to attend. Patrice continued to advocate for Bass Coast community leaders and institutions to introduce initiatives that would promote respect and celebration of Aboriginal cultures.

Patrice has dedicated her life to advancing recognition for Aboriginal people, instigating NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week celebrations and Sorry Day commemorations. She is a key

member of the Bass Coast South Gippsland Reconciliation Group. Patrice has worked with Phillip Island Nature Parks for over a decade and Bass Coast Health and Westernport Water to establish and implement their Reconciliation Action Plans. She is also a founding member of the Bass Coast Reconciliation Network, a group of major Bass Coast employers who work together to promote events, employment, understanding and opportunities for Aboriginal people in the community.

Patrice has also been a Director at Baluk Arts, a non-profit centre representing Aboriginal artists from southeast Victoria, and served on several boards and committees for Aboriginal health, education and justice organisations. In 2021, Patrice became the first Aboriginal board member of Phillip Island Nature Parks.

Patrice's many voluntary advocacy roles have been complemented by other employed positions, such as a Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) coordinator, which focussed on bridging the gap between Aboriginal people and educational institutions from kindergarten to higher learning. She particularly enjoys cultural sessions with school children, where she finds genuine rewards in sharing her professional skills and knowledge.

Patrice challenges current relationships between Aboriginal people and the broader community

in her creative work. Her practice includes painting, weaving, assembling found objects, and printmaking. She creates her work by using a multidisciplinary approach that includes expanding her knowledge through traditional ways of learning, *winanag-li* (deep listening) from an Aboriginal perspective, and her multicultural heritage.

Patrice has exhibited her work across Victoria for over 25 years in numerous solo exhibitions, including during NAIDOC Week for over two decades. In 2014, Patrice was bestowed the Victorian Indigenous Art Awards Federation University Acquisitive Award. Her group shows include the 2015 International Print Exchange (Colorado, USA) and the Koorie Art Show (Koorie Heritage Trust). Patrice's art works are found in private and public collections in Victoria, NSW, and at Boulder University in Colorado, USA. Her commissions and public art projects include the Phillip Island Nature Park Reconciliation Action Plan, Westernport Water Reconciliation Action Plan, Bass Coast Health's Maternity Unit, Wonthaggi's Lanes Projects, and an installation at Foster Community Arts Project in Foster, Victoria.

Patrice has completed many collaborative works including facilitating families and children to express culture visually through community publishing. This includes *Fun in the Water* (The Playground

Mob led by Patrice Mahoney, Casey Aboriginal Gathering Place Playgroup), which was shortlisted for the 2018 Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Awards (Indigenous Children category). Other highlights include, *Who is Your Mob?*, for the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne (with Kids Own Publishing) and publications in language for Dandenong Best Start and HIPPY Early Learning programs.

Patrice was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2020 for service to the Indigenous community of Victoria. Patrice's passions are driven by her desire for change and to achieve equality and equity, recognising that we do not all start from the same place and adjust to the imbalances. Above all, true respect and inclusion for Aboriginal people ensures that the same education and employment opportunities are available. Patrice is a powerful and generous changemaker.

Supporting community through culture, employment and secure housing.



AN EXTRAORDINARY LOCAL LEADER AND ELDER SUPPORTING COMMUNITY MEMBERS INVOLVED IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM.

Uncle Francis (Frank) Laxton was born on 17 December 1939 at Warrnambool, Victoria. At 82 years of age, Frank is a revered Gunditjmara Elder who continues to lead cultural ceremonies at significant cultural and community events, and a valued media spokesperson and cultural communicator for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Frank grew up on Framlingham Mission, within the embrace of rich Aboriginal culture. As a child, he experienced firsthand both the great joys and terrible issues faced by Victorian Aboriginal people, including racism, discrimination and poverty, and the redemptive power of strong community. He has many stories of

Framlingham, including seeing Archie Roach taken as a child. After leaving the mission, Frank drove trucks for 40 years. Later, he conducted cultural surveys for government departments as a community leader.

Frank moved to Ballarat in 1990 with his wife Rhonda and two daughters, and he joined Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC) in 1991. BADAC delivers more than 64 culturally safe programs or services and cultural events to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Ballarat, Moorabool, Hepburn, Golden Plains and into western Victoria. BADAC is a significant employer of Aboriginal people, with 150 staff, 40 per cent of whom are Aboriginal.

Many people from Framlingham moved to Ballarat and supported BADAC's activities, including Uncle Ted Lovett OAM.

A life-changing accident occurred for Frank in 2009 when he fell off a ladder and woke up in the Royal Melbourne Hospital. However, this didn't slow Frank down. He retired from work in 2014, and kept contributing to his community, particularly through BADAC.

Ballarat was a central location during the Stolen Generations decades, when children were forcibly removed from their families across Victoria and interstate and were placed in one of Ballarat's five orphanages. Transgenerational trauma still

resonates in the Ballarat Aboriginal community today. To assist his community through these times, Frank and his family fostered more than 20 children over a 10-year period.

Frank was Chairperson and a Board Director of BADAC for over 20 years. His contribution is significant and enduring. He models strong community leadership and demonstrates not only the transformative power of community, but what can be achieved by one determined person. Frank is a dedicated, driving influence for BADAC, guiding and shaping its strategic direction and services. He has said: *"Since 1991, BADAC has been a big part of my life. It has been good to me. BADAC is all about community"*.

Frank also headed up BADAC's first maintenance team and trained Aboriginal young people in work skills, including building, plastering, and painting. The team still thrives today.

Frank remains active at BADAC, supporting the Chief Executive Officer, representing BADAC in the media, and leading significant ceremonies and celebrations. He was bestowed BADAC's Elders Recognition Award in 2015.

For three decades Frank has also supported some of Victoria's most vulnerable and disenfranchised community members: Aboriginal men who have spent time in the justice

system, including those who have been incarcerated for lengthy periods.

Frank has dedicated many hours supporting those men to connect or reconnect with their Aboriginal culture, to build self-respect and pride, empowering them to make better choices in their lives and to strive for a healthier future. This included working as a crime prevention officer during 1991-1993, where Frank visited many Aboriginal men in prison.

Frank has supported those men at their most vulnerable time when exiting the prison system, sourcing accommodation, driving them to do shopping, and assisting them to navigate the many changes that occurred in society while they were incarcerated. At 82 years of age, Frank is still conducting prison visits.

For 30 years, Frank has generously given his own time and resources, and shared his culture, strength and warm heart to each person he visited, and to many other people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, from all walks of life.

In the 2021 Victorian Senior of the Year Awards, Frank was awarded a Council on the Aging Senior Achiever Award, in recognition of his extraordinary community leadership supporting Aboriginal people with culture, employment and secure housing throughout most of his adult life and into retirement. In 2022, he was nominated by the Grampians

Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and awarded an Adult and Elders Justice Award in the Victorian Aboriginal Community Justice Awards.

Frank has made a lifelong contribution to Aboriginal communities and culture. He is renowned within community for his strength and knowledge of Aboriginal culture, and his unwavering faith in people to improve their lives. Every person Frank has encountered has been lifted by his generous heart, great warmth and compassion.

Committed to supporting Stolen Generations survivors.



AN EMOTIONAL HEALER AND INSPIRATIONAL STORYTELLER

Eva Jo Edwards is a proud Boon Wurrung/Bunurong, Mutti Mutti and Yorta Yorta woman. Eva Jo was born on 8 August 1963, in Hillston, New South Wales. Eva Jo has lived in Victoria since she was an infant, and in Melbourne for 54 years. Eva Jo has six children and has generously helped with the upbringing of other children.

Aged only five, Eva Jo and her five siblings were removed from her family in Swan Hill. They were taken to Allambie Reception Centre, a former reception, treatment, classification and transit centre for children admitted into Victorian Government care. Then they were split up.

Her two older brothers were taken to Burwood Boys Home. Eva Jo, her sisters, and their baby brother were

taken to Lutheran Children's Home in Kew. Eva Jo was institutionalised for the next 13 years and she cannot remember life before this time. Today, Eva Jo has reconnected with her living siblings.

After leaving 'the homes' Eva Jo worked in many roles and for over 35 years she has worked within Aboriginal communities. She has worked to empower the lives of Aboriginal people affected by previous interventionist government policies, racism, violence, and ignorance. She has worked often under difficult circumstances to create a better life for her family and others. She has worked to promote better understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures in the broader community.

Eva Jo has worked in various roles at the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) initially as a case worker, then as senior advisor for Cultural Support Planning. She was a mentor at VACCA's Cultural Camps for young people in out of home care. Eva Jo was a client support worker at VACCA's Ngarra Jarra Noun Redress Support Service for those who have experienced sexual abuse whilst institutionalised as children.

In 2016, she was appointed as an 'Elder or Respected Person' to the Koori Courts providing cultural advice to the Magistrates' and Children's Court.

Between 2014 and 2016 she worked with the Victorian Aboriginal

Health Service (VAHS) as program co-ordinator for Family Violence Assistance.

Eva Jo was the events and community engagement officer with Connecting Home from 2010 to 2014. Connecting Home focusses on supporting Stolen Generations survivors and their children and grandchildren through their journey of healing. There she also worked with new police recruits, introducing them to social diversity in community engagement. She is still an active volunteer with Connecting Home.

Eva Jo is also an active supporter of Link-Up Victoria (part of VACCA) which assists Stolen Generations survivors to find and be reunited with their family, culture and traditional country. After a 10-year journey with Koorie Heritage Trust through the Koorie Family History Service, Eva Jo uncovered her family history in 2017. She says: 'I finally felt complete knowing who my family is and where I am connected'.

In 2018, Eva Jo was honoured with the Westfield Doncaster Local Hero Award. The accompanying \$10,000 Westfield grant was shared by Connecting Home and Link-Up.

Since 1998, Eva Jo has also worked through Birri-on, her own business. Her work has led to many speaking engagements on the impacts and effects on the Stolen Generations to the government, corporate and education sectors. An accomplished

public speaker, educator, and advocate, she has been a keynote speaker and Master of Ceremonies at many events.

She formed the dance troupe Birri-on Lakidjeka, meaning 'turning the children around', in which she and her young children performed a combination of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal dances. One of the more contemporary dances is called 'Where's My Culture'. Through a traditional style of dance, the troupe told their story of looking for their lost culture, and joyously finding it again in the finale. As a Stolen Generations survivor, Eva Jo has been recapturing the culture that was denied to her and, in the process, making that a part of her children's lives as well as enlightening the many audiences she performed for.

In 1999, Eva Jo began working with Uncle Kutcha Edwards and Aunty Cathy Dean to conduct workshops on the Stolen Generations in schools titled Banyip Kidjeka, meaning 'brother sister'. She presents 'Aboriginal Storytime' and cultural talks to kindergartens, festivals and primary schools, incorporating traditional and contemporary stories and dance, and Aboriginal history. Since then, they have educated primary, secondary and tertiary students, and corporate and community organisations about the impacts of assimilationist policies that denied Aboriginal children

their cultural heritage and created intergenerational trauma.

Eva Jo uses her Aboriginal storytime workshops to influence and engage kindergarten and primary school children. Her sessions bring traditional and contemporary stories to life with face painting and dance. She explores history, including Dreaming creation stories, and introduces children to the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian flags, whilst teaching social values.

In 2008, Eva Jo and Deb Salvagno worked together with Darebin Council to create the Koorie Night Market. It has since expanded to other local government areas in Melbourne and regional Victoria, and community festivals. Koorie Night Markets set a vibrant atmosphere showcasing and celebrating Aboriginal culture through arts, crafts, food, music and dance. They promote bridging and reconciliation between Aboriginal communities and the broader local communities and enhance cultural identity and the profile of local Aboriginal people. In 2022, a Koorie Night Market is operating through Dardi Munwurro men's healing centre in Preston.

Eva Jo's commitment, humanitarian nature and natural joy is a beacon for others as she continues her work as a courageous, tenacious and compassionate leader for her six children, grandchildren, family and

community. She has inspired and assisted many Aboriginal adults and children to lead more fulfilling, healthier lives, and helped break down barriers of misunderstanding to nurture a more cohesive community.

Eva Jo has served as a member of the Victorian Government's Stolen Generations Reparations Steering Committee since 2020, was appointed a member of the Victorian Government's Stolen Generations Advisory Committee in 2022, and recently was also appointed to the Independent Assessment Panel for Stolen Generations Reparations.

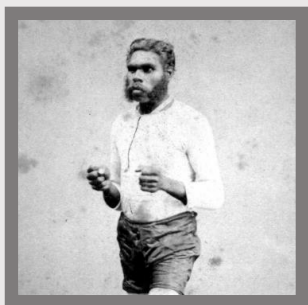
Eva Jo sees working towards equality within Aboriginal communities as a priority for the rest of her life. She works towards ensuring Stolen Generations survivors throughout Victoria are welcomed home and acknowledged, no matter where they now live and call home. She also sees a growing need for more campaigns on anti-Elder abuse and how to call it out and end it, to restore dignity and respect.

Eva Jo's legacy is of an emotional healer and an inspirational storyteller, for both the Aboriginal community and the wider community.

ALBERT (POMPEY) AUSTIN

INDUCTED: 2022

Promoting truth telling and sporting excellence across the west of Victoria.



A SKILLED TRACKER, HORSEMAN, ATHLETE AND ENTERTAINER.

Albert Austin, known as Pompey and Porne Yarriworri, was a Djab Wurrung man. He was born on 1 January 1846 at Chatsworth in western Victoria.

His story remained untold until published in *Albert 'Pompey' Austin: A Man Between Two Worlds* by Roy Hay in 2020. The book outlines Pompey's life and his amazing achievements as one of the greatest sporting all-rounders of 19th century Victoria.

Pompey's parents, Charlie and Alice, are ancestors of the Eastern Maar peoples who are Traditional Owners.² Alice was married to an Aboriginal man who was given the name Gellibrand. Newspaper reports and letters identified Gellibrand as Pompey's father.³

In his book, Hayes notes "we have no birth certificate for Pompey... born in the mid-1840s he must have just missed the peak of the invasion of the Western District of Victoria and the killing that occurred in the previous decade—but only just."⁴

Pompey grew up only a few years after Europeans arrived in western Victoria and the First Peoples fought hard to retain their country. Gellibrand was said to have been killed in a tribal conflict.⁵ Between 1834 and 1850, survivors were caught in a maelstrom in which they had been deprived of their land, country and hence their livelihood.⁶

Pompey was held on Framlingham Mission in western Victoria under the dictates of the Aboriginal Protection Act 1869 (Vic).⁷ He was roughly 21

when he married Rosanna Francis in 1867, they each signed their marriage certificate with an 'x'.⁸ They had five children.

Pompey died from tuberculosis on 7 June 1889 in a Melbourne hospital, his age given as 40 years. Rosanna and their two daughters were still living at Framlingham when the station closed in 1890.⁹

An icon in his community, his impact is felt from Victoria, across to the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Pompey travelled all over south and central Victoria playing football, running and entertaining.

He worked in the Kimberley with explorer William J. O'Donnell leading gold seekers from Wyndham to the emerging goldfields at Halls Creek. A landmark near Halls Creek is known as Pompey's Pillar.

He was a skilled Aboriginal tracker, horseman and horse breaker, footballer, cricketer and athlete. He was also possibly a boxer, racehorse owner and jockey, artist, explorer, entertainer and musician. He was

2 <https://www.footyalmanac.com.au/almanac-footy-history-albert-pompey-austin-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

3 <https://chrg.deakin.edu.au/2017/02/roy-hays-new-article-albert-pompey-austin-1846-1889-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

4 <https://www.footyalmanac.com.au/almanac-footy-history-albert-pompey-austin-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

5 <https://chrg.deakin.edu.au/2017/02/roy-hays-new-article-albert-pompey-austin-1846-1889-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

6 <https://www.footyalmanac.com.au/almanac-footy-history-albert-pompey-austin-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

7 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17430437.2020.1840555>

8 <https://chrg.deakin.edu.au/2017/02/roy-hays-new-article-albert-pompey-austin-1846-1889-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

9 <https://chrg.deakin.edu.au/2017/02/roy-hays-new-article-albert-pompey-austin-1846-1889-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

certainly a thorn in the side of those who wished to confine him.¹⁰

The first, and almost certainly the only, Aboriginal man to play senior Australian Rules Football in Victoria in the 19th century, he played—without boots—for the Geelong Football Club against Carlton Football Club on 25 May 1872.¹¹ He also played in teams for the Framlingham Mission.

Known for his athletic pedestrianism, a 19th-century form of competitive walking, he took the athletic world by storm by winning a series of meetings in the western districts. At the 1872 Geelong Friendly Societies Easter Gift races, on Easter Monday, Pompey won the Ten Pounds Grand Easter Gift. His victories at the meet included first places for the 100-, 300- and 400-yards flat races, and also the 300-yards hurdles.

In his book, Hayes notes:

“He was a superb all-round athlete on the flat, over hurdles and in long and high jumps. He took part in the Warrnambool Cricket Club’s Annual Sports on the Prince of Wales’ birthday in November 1869, winning the high jump, the pole vault and

the 220 yards hurdles, but fell at the last hurdle in the steeplechase. The next year he won the running high leap and a handicap hurdle race at the Caledonian Society’s Gathering in Warrnambool.”¹²

“Pompey Austin collected £43 in one day by winning the handicap hurdle, the steeplechase and the Christmas handicap over 880 yards at the Belfast (now Port Fairy) Athletic Sports in December 1873. That was an extraordinary sum for someone who, as far as we know, had no regular income’, equivalent to approximately 11 weeks’ wages.”¹³

“Throughout his life Pompey Austin must have alternated between absolute poverty and what for the time would have been substantial riches, if he was able to gain and hold his winnings from his athletic activities in particular.”¹⁴

Author Mary Durack wrote about him in *Kings in Grass Castles* (1959), referring to “*the prodigious Pompey who sang popular songs hot from the London music halls*”. Other reports have him entertaining crowds in Ararat playing a concertina and in

Ballarat occupying a street corner and informing the crowd of “*disquisitions on the present European situation and the probabilities of war*”.

Pompey became a well-known public figure in Ararat, Ballarat, Geelong and Melbourne. He was reported being in Barkley Street, Ararat one Saturday evening playing tunes on a concertina: “*Pompey’s musical proficiency was a surprise to a great many, as he discoursed several lively airs, principally consisting of breakdowns, jigs and reels in excellent time and in a manner that would have done credit to many an amateur...*”¹⁵

Pompey straddled two very different worlds as they collided in mid-19th century Victoria, where the impact was devastating. “*His response was to take on the white man literally at their own games and at their own cultural activities and demonstrate by his prowess that he could match them in both.*”¹⁶

Today, the Austin family has the deepest respect and affection for their ancestor known as Pompey Austin.

10 <https://chrg.deakin.edu.au/2017/02/roy-hays-new-article-albert-pompey-austin-1846-1889-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

11 <https://www.footyalmanac.com.au/almanac-footy-history-albert-pompey-austin-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

12 <https://chrg.deakin.edu.au/2017/02/roy-hays-new-article-albert-pompey-austin-1846-1889-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

13 <https://chrg.deakin.edu.au/2017/02/roy-hays-new-article-albert-pompey-austin-1846-1889-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

14 <https://chrg.deakin.edu.au/2017/02/roy-hays-new-article-albert-pompey-austin-1846-1889-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

15 Albert ‘Pompey’ Austin, 1846-1889: A Man Between Two Worlds, Roy Hay, Sports & Editorial Services Australia, page 15

16 <https://www.footyalmanac.com.au/almanac-book-review-roy-hays-albert-pompey-austin-a-man-between-two-worlds/>

MARION HANSEN

INDUCTED: 2022

Championing change in the areas of Aboriginal health, justice, housing and family violence prevention.



A HIGHLY REGARDED ELDER AND PASSIONATE SOLUTIONS SEEKER.

Aunty Marion Hansen was born 16 November 1950 on the New Mission in Moree in New South Wales in the middle of a flood and was delivered by her aunt. A Kamilaroi woman, Marion is particularly proud her birth certificate states she was born on the mission, and on her Country.

Shortly after Marion was born, the family moved back to Glen Innes, where Marion's father worked as a tracker. There, her two younger brothers were born. After the tracker work ceased, the family returned to the mission for a short time to live with her aunt. Marion went to school on the mission, a one-room building with approximately 40 children. Her parents always wanted a better life, so Marion's father soon secured railway employment as a fettler at Bellata,

south of Moree. The family lived in railway tents for nearly ten years, and during that time her two sisters were born.

Marion's family was the only Aboriginal family in Bellata. She considers living in Bellata as some of the best times in her life. Her fondest memories include joining the local children swimming, playing cricket and rounders, and raising angora rabbits and motherless lambs. She went to high school at Narrabri, 42 kilometres further south, because her parents wanted her to complete her education without the constant influence of racism, which was rife in Moree at the time.

When Marion was about 15 her father's railway job finished and the family moved to Moree. Marion secured a job as a telephonist at the Moree Post Office, where she worked until her early 20s. She and her cousin were the only two Aboriginal employees. The high Aboriginal population in Moree was subjected to harsh restrictions, with apartheid-like segregation at hotels, the pool, and movie theatres. In 1965, she witnessed Charlie Perkins come through the town on the Freedom Ride.

Having been encouraged by her mother to enter the competition, Marion won the 1969 NSW Miss NADOC (now NAIDOC) Award. Prizes included a trip to Sydney where the Lord Mayor gave her the keys to the city. In Sydney, Marion met a man and married. They moved to Brisbane where their two

sons were born, and then relocated to Melbourne in 1973. Marion then became a single parent and had one more son in 1981.

In 1975, Marion commenced work as an Aboriginal health aide (a role soon changed to Aboriginal health liaison officer) at Dandenong Hospital and St Vincent's Hospital, supporting families to safely navigate the hospital system. She stayed in this line of work until the mid-eighties and was diligent in ensuring clients understood the importance of following patient care plans and medication usage.

Along with Richard Ambrose, Marion recognised a need for residential rehabilitation services for Aboriginal people. She is a founding member of Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation (Ngwala Willumbong). She established the Winja Ulupna Women's Recovery Centre and has managed the Galiamble Men's Recovery Centre.

Marion also served 4 three-year terms at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) as regional councillor, chairperson, and Victorian commissioner (two terms). As ATSIC Victorian Commissioner, Marion worked across the state, nationally and internationally. She has represented Aboriginal people at the United Nations (UN) in New York on numerous occasions, and in Geneva, sitting across the table from government. The papers Marion presented at the

UN addressed health, substance abuse, and women's and human rights.

This role also included being a signatory to the first Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA) – the landmark justice partnership between Aboriginal communities and the Victorian Government – in 2000. The Agreement established a network of Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees (RAJACs), which formed an Aboriginal Justice Caucus to advise the government.

Between ATSIC terms, Marion was instrumental in establishing recurrent funding for Radio 3KND Kool 'N' Deadly. (As a musical aside, Marion was once part of the all-female country band, Ebon Koorines (Black Daughters), and she later joined Archie Roach's band.) She then secured funding to establish Djirra, which was initially known as the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service. Launched in 2002, Djirra offers services for Aboriginal women and young people and is now a network of seven regional offices, delivering programs across Victoria. Marion has served as Djirra's chairperson for almost 20 years.

Marion has provided influential leadership advocating for a better justice system for Victoria's Aboriginal community. She chaired the Caucus Working Group on Family Violence, established following the 2016 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, to promote self-

determination and cultural safety in the Victorian justice system's response to family violence. In 2020, as co-chair of the Caucus together with Tony Lovett, Marion presented *Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja* (Senior Leaders Talking Strong), the fourth AJA. She is also chairperson of the Southern Metropolitan RAJAC, which covers ten local government areas. In 2019, she was appointed to the Youth Parole Board of Victoria.

Following her second term as an ATSIC commissioner, Marion returned to Ngwala Willumbong as manager of residential programs, and then from 2010-2013, she worked as a project officer for the Closing the Gap initiative at the Department of Health. There, she advocated for Aboriginal Gathering Places to gain Neighbourhood House status to attract government funding.

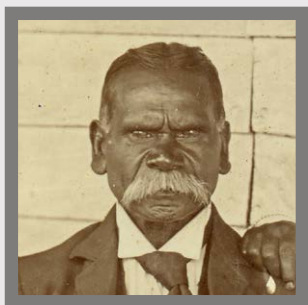
Marion retired from full-time work in 2016 to care for her son. She continues to be active for community through her roles on committees and boards. For her local community, she has been a member of the Dandenong & Districts Aborigines Co-operative Ltd for more than 30 years and she was elected to its board in 2021. Marion is also currently the chairperson of Ngwala Willumbong.

Marion is a highly regarded Elder and champion of change who enables and promotes self-determination for the Aboriginal community.

A Victorian Justice Award recipient and a winner of a 3CR Community Award, she was awarded the Frankston/Mornington Peninsula NAIDOC Elders Award in 2020 for her leadership and advocacy work.

Marion also acts as a powerful conduit between community and the Victorian Government, non-government organisations, and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. A passionate solutions seeker, Marion is clearing a path forward for all of us.

An Aboriginal land rights leader.



Source: University of Melbourne Archives¹⁷

AN ELDER WHO FOUGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE'S LAND.

Collin Hood was born circa 1836 near Hexham in Djab Wurrung Country, southwestern Victoria. His parents were King Blackwood and Mary, and they gave him the name, Merrang. His personal totem was Jallan, the whipsnake.

Over the course of his 78 years, Collin faced many adversities and personal tragedies. Despite these hardships he remained a visionary leader—first, for the Eastern Maar people in the west of Victoria and then the Gunaikurnai people in the east of Victoria.

In 1855 at the age of 19, Collin married Ageebonyee, the daughter of Ningi Burning and Nango Burn. Ageebonyee had learned to read and write as a

domestic servant for a settler family and took the English name of Nora Villiers two years prior when she was baptised, at approximately the same time Merrang became a farm hand and stockman in the area.

The original squatters of the Hexham area named their property *Merrang*, and when the Hood family purchased it in 1856 they retained the name. Collin was 20 years old when the Hood family purchased the property and he continued to work for them as a stockman. Collin assumed the Hood family name soon after, along with the first name of Collin. Station records show that Collin Hood was paid an equal wage to non-Aboriginal farm hands and was one of their most trusted and respected workers.

In 1860, Collin and Nora Hood were reputedly the first Aboriginal couple in western Victoria to apply for a government grant of land, hoping to establish themselves as farmers. Their request was initially approved and then revoked, effectively forcing them to move to the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve (Framlingham) in 1865. They had six children together before Norah died on 28 March 1871 at the age of 35.

In August 1872, at Framlingham, Collin married Louisa Lutton, née King (or Tappoke), the widowed daughter

of 'King George' and Mary.¹⁷ Born near Mount Rouse, and with three children, she and Collin had a further four children together over the next 18 years.

Collin again proved himself to be a hard and reliable worker at Framlingham, becoming head stockman by 1880. He was by then an acknowledged Elder and spokesman for the Framlingham residents. When the Aborigines Protection Board took the decision on 7 August 1879 to close Framlingham, Collin Hood was one of two Aboriginal residents who on behalf of all residents protested to the Victorian Chief Secretary (Premier), Alfred Deakin.¹⁸

Collin stated that the area had been their hunting grounds, that they hoped to be allowed to live there for the remaining years of their lives and if removed to other places would not agree.¹⁹ Collin then firmly indicated that if the decision was taken to close Framlingham they would all sit down and refuse to move.

The Aborigines Protection Board's acting general inspector Reverend Friedrich Hagenauer had visited Framlingham and claimed its residents "... had been crammed in the idea of getting a few hundred acres of land from the reserve, either as a hunting

¹⁷ University of Melbourne Archives. Image reference 1976.0013.00114

¹⁸ <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hood-collin-12988>

¹⁹ <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hood-collin-12988>

ground and small farms, and their leader Collin Hood seems very earnest in his request. But few [residents] are locals, some have already left, and the rest will soon follow”²⁰

To correct this deliberate falsehood, the settler Robert Hood encouraged Collin to make a list of the residents and their origins. This was so he could have it published and gain public support for their cause. A list was then prepared by Collin and his daughter, together with Robert, and they published it in the local Warrnambool newspaper. This list of 39 residents showed that all but one person was born in the district.

The facts collected were then used by the Victorian Member of Parliament, John Murray, to argue in Parliament against the closure of Framlingham. This manoeuvre showed Collin’s political acumen, as John Murray was an astute politician who would later succeed Alfred Deakin as Premier of Victoria. In October 1890, as a direct result of John Murray’s advocacy, Alfred Deakin announced 500 acres of Framlingham land would be permanently retained as an Aboriginal Reserve.

With the fight to save Framlingham won, there was now nothing to keep Collin there. His wife, Louisa, had

died that year and his children now lived in Gippsland. So, in early 1891, Collin moved to Ramahyuck Mission and from there moved to Lake Tyers Mission (Lake Tyers). On 17 March 1898, now aged 61, Collin married the 23-year-old widow, Helen Rivers, at Lake Tyers. Collin and Helen (née Johnson) were to have four sons and a daughter together.

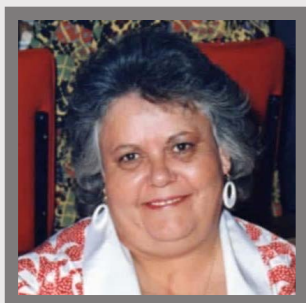
For the whole of the 22-year period he spent in Gunaikurnai Country, Collin continued the leadership role he had started in Eastern Maar Country.

Collin died on 3 May 1914 in his seventy-eighth year, with a proud legacy as one of the very first land rights activists in Victoria. As a testament to this legacy, both the Lake Tyers and Framlingham communities gained ownership of their land 56 years later as part of the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1970*. This would not have been possible without Collin’s advocacy.

To this day, the Hood family remains highly respected in both Eastern Maar and Gunaikurnai Country, with many of Collin’s descendants proudly continuing his legacy.

²⁰ <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hood-collin-12988>

Ensuring Aboriginal children in foster care are placed with Aboriginal families.



PIVOTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING WORKER AND FOSTER CARER.

Aunty Lola James was a Yorta Yorta Elder, who was born in Mooroopna, Victoria on 23 November 1941. She came from a strong line of powerful trailblazers whose work included activism, education, and access to services for Aboriginal people. She is the granddaughter of teacher, unionist and activist, Shadrach Livingstone James (inducted into the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll in 2020), and the great granddaughter of Methodist lay preacher, linguist, herbalist and teacher, Thomas Shadrach James.

Lola went to primary and secondary school in Mooroopna and spent some time working at the Ardmona Cannery, where many of her family members had worked for years. At the age of 19, she moved to Melbourne. Lola married and gave birth to six children – four

boys and two girls. She later divorced and raised her children independently.

Lola initially struggled as a single parent in the seventies. After her first two children were born, she lost her mother to cancer, and her father became more ill each day due to a brain injury he suffered on the Kokoda Trail during WWII. Lola often stated that if it weren't for the support of Melbourne Aboriginal community organisations and community members, she didn't know how she would have made it through with six children. All of her family supports were in Mooroopna and she did not have a driver licence until she began working at the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).

Lola wanted to ensure her children had a positive role model and for them to understand the importance of education, training and an impeccable work ethic. Once her youngest child was in school, Lola entered the workforce. For the next 30 years Lola built an important legacy centring on the education, health and welfare of Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Lola's professional working life started as an Aboriginal Health Worker at Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), for which she completed training at Koori Kollij to obtain professional AHW qualifications. She worked at VAHS for the next decade, providing essential health care services.

Lola was a very passionate worker, and often spoke about wanting to ensure the health and safety of rough sleepers located in Fitzroy. She was also concerned about the health and wellbeing of Elders who lived alone with minimal assistance. Lola would often attend to Elders in her own time. It also wasn't unusual for her to care for her own elderly extended family members.

While Lola was at VAHS and studying at Koori Kollij she moved her elderly father from Mooroopna to Melbourne to live with her and her children. It was a very challenging time for Lola, trying to juggle six children, a full-time job, studies, and a very unwell parent. Lola eventually left VAHS to care for her father fulltime until he required residential care.

Next, Lola worked as a Family Support Worker at the Aboriginal Advancement League before leaving to explore her true passion, child welfare at VACCA. Over the 20 years Lola was at VACCA, she was employed as a family support worker, foster care worker, cottage parent, and coordinator of what is now the Lakidjeka Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice and Support Service. She was also a dedicated VACCA volunteer (foster carer), and a VACCA Board member and member of the Foster Care Panel for many years.

Lola's work within the child welfare arena meant Aboriginal children were placed within Aboriginal families

wherever possible. When this was not possible, Lola was responsible for ensuring Aboriginal children were placed in culturally safe environments, where their culture was accepted, embraced, and celebrated.

Lola worked unstintingly for VACCA over those two decades. Before VACCA obtained sufficient funding for its programs, many of the staff worked 'on call' voluntarily, without pay. They would attend late night child protection notifications and court hearings. Notifications were often for regional Victorian clients and Lola would drive for many hours, without overnight accommodation, to support Aboriginal children. Furthermore, it's estimated that Lola personally cared for about 200 children within her own home when there were shortages of extended biological families and available foster carers. Some children stayed one or two days, some for months, and some for years. One child became a permanent family member.

For the children concerned, being taken in by Lola meant they were in a home where they were understood and free to live and breathe their cultural practices without judgement, making their removal from their biological families a little less painful. Lola's children and grandchildren are still contacted by children cared for by Lola, wanting to follow up on her, or ask questions about her and their time spent within her family.

Lola won a Foster Care Award from the then Victorian Department of Human Services for her important contribution to the foster care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It was also during this period that the Victorian Government developed a policy to ensure VACCA is notified immediately whenever an Aboriginal child comes to the attention of Child Protection. Lola's family understands this is a direct result of the vigorous education, training and campaigning of Lola and her dedicated staff at VACCA.

Lola's work within VACCA has had an enormous effect on the colleagues who worked alongside her, either within VACCA or within the Department of Human Services. She was responsible for professionally mentoring many new VACCA employees, and educated them on Aboriginal protocols, and family and community connections. She shared her knowledge and insights into the removal and reunification of Aboriginal children and their families. She was instrumental in educating all workers who worked with Aboriginal children about the impacts of child removal within Aboriginal families, and the transgenerational trauma many Aboriginal people carry, as a result of former government policies that resulted in the Stolen Generations.

In November 2016, Lola entered the Dreamtime with her family by her side at the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research

Centre in Melbourne. Lola became a posthumous inductee of the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2021. Her contribution to the health and welfare of Victoria's Aboriginal community will be forever remembered and respected. Aunty Lola's legacy continues through her family and community, and the people whose lives were enriched by having known her.

GARIILIN BA WARRAWARRAN BIIK-NYANYIN

- THE BLUES AND GREENS OF OUR COUNTRY



Artwork by Mick Harding

"The range of green leaves represent the diversity of Traditional Owners throughout Victoria and the shields that float inside them represent the resilience of our people over thousands of generations that we have been here.

The concentrated line work represents our unique symbolism that we use to explain our connection to Country here in Victoria. The wavy blue lines represent the ocean and inland waterways that surround and run through Victoria.

The subtle arcs that run through the water bodies represent the importance of water and our relationship and responsibility to it."

Our Culture, Your Culture

Mick Harding

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HONOUR ROLL

INDUCTEES

2011

Dr Alf Bamblett
William Barak
Geraldine Briggs AO
Albert 'Alby' Clarke
William Cooper
Lester Marks Harradine
Merle Jackomos OAM
Melva Johnson
Johnny Mullagh or Unaarrimin
John Stewart Murray OAM JP
Sir Douglas Nicholls KCVO OBE JP
Lorraine 'Bunta' Patten
Dorothy Peters AM
Elizabeth Pike
Archie Roach AM
Joan Robinson
Lionel Rose MBE
Nessie Skuta OAM
Alma Thorpe
Joan Vickery AO

2012

William 'Bill' Onus
Lady Gladys Nicholls
Reginald Saunders MBE
Henry 'Banjo' Clarke
Iris Lovett-Gardiner AM
Mollie Dyer AM
John 'Sandy' Atkinson AM
Eleanor Harding
Mary Atkinson
Reg Blow
Kevin Coombs OAM
Ivy Bell
William 'Lin' Onus AM
Robert 'Wally' Cooper
Linda Twite

2013

Margaret Tucker MBE
Harold Blair AM
Albert Mullett
Hyllus Maris
Fay Carter
Alfred John Henry Lovett
Leonard Charles Lovett
Frederick Amos Lovett
Edward McDonald Lovett
Herbert Stahle Lovett
Laura Bell
Herbert 'Jock' Austin
Beryl Booth
Valmai Heap

2014

Simon Wonga
Henry 'Harry' Thorpe
William Reginald Rawlings
Jack Patten
Edna Brown
Alice Thomas
Alfred 'Boydie' Turner
Winnifred Evelyn Quagliotti
Bessie Yarram
Margaret 'Dharrul' Wirrpanda
Beverley Peter
Walda Blow
Robert 'Jumbo' Pearce
Graham Atkinson
Phillip Cooper

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HONOUR ROLL

INDUCTEES

2015

Robert Wandin
Constance 'Connie' Hart
Thomas John 'Massa' Clarke
Rita Watkins
Noel Tovey AM
Patricia Ockwell
Catherine Solomon
Clive Atkinson
Nancy Harrison
Georgina Lovett-Williams
Jill Gallagher AO
Ruby Hunter
Judith Cue-Ahmat
Richard Frankland
Kutcha Edwards

2016

Angela Clarke
Glen Peters
Frances Gallagher
Clara Luttrell-Garisou
Gwen Atkinson (Thorpe)
Mary Jane Gunyuk Milawa
Barbara Walker
Judith 'Jacko' Jackson
John Baxter
Pamela Pedersen (Nicholls) OAM

2017

June Atkinson-Murray
Muriel Bamblett AM
Carolyn Briggs AM
Vicki Clark
Joyce Johnson
Diane Kerr
Eddie 'Kookaburra' Kneebone
Elizabeth Maud Morgan-Hoffman
Brien Nelson

2018

Ben 'Lanky' Manton
Norm McDonald
Johnny Lovett
Graham 'Bootsie' Thorpe
Jacqui Stewart
Geraldine Atkinson
Barb Gibson-Thorpe
Terry Garwood PSM
Cherie Marie Waight

2019

Frances Mathysen-Briggs
Edward Alfred Lovett OAM
Eleanor A Bourke
Eunice Wright
Jim Remedio
Zeta Thomson
Margaret Clarke
Helen Belle Bnads
Karen Heap
Deborah Cheetham AO

2020

Billibellary
Granny Louisa Pepper-Connolly
Shadrach Livingstone James
Eric 'Joe' McGuinness
Elsie Coates
David Anderson
Marion Pearce
Frances Bond
Larry Kanoa
Desmond Ron Smith
Grant Hansen
Karen Bryant
Sylvia (Fay) Stewart Muir

