

HISTORY OF THE TRAIL

The idea for a Wurundjeri Resource Trail arose out of the William Barak Short Story competition. This was held in Primary Schools by the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group each year from 1998 until 2007. Students in years 5 and 6 were invited to write a short story which was set in Wurundjeri times before white settlement. The Wurundjeri Resource Kit was written at this time and supplied to schools as a resource for the competition. It was realised that something more was needed to help children really imagine Wurundjeri life as it was – the trail was developed with this in mind.

The Gawa Wurundjeri Resource Trail is one of a chain of seven reserves with Wurundjeri names established by the Shire of Nillumbik in the Warrandyte-Kinglake Wildlife Corridor known as the Panton Hill Bushland Reserves. All of the reserves have walking tracks.

The Gawa Trail was developed in 2000 in a partnership between Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, the Nillumbik Shire Council and Parks Victoria. It was launched by Wurundjeri Ngurungaeta, 'Juby' Wandin on 12 August 2001 with a flag-flying, a 'Welcome to Country' and an eagle flying overhead. A coolamon (*tarnuk*) was cut from a Manna gum by Juby Wandin. This is now part of the display at the Andrew Ross Museum in Kangaroo Ground.

The lay out of the trail is the work of environmental architect Llewellyn Pritchard. Green Corps assisted in building the trail using only hand tools.

The new self-guiding markers were launched on March 30 2014. Art work border is by Wurundjeri artist Judy Wilson-Nicholson and her Worimi partner James McFadyen. Consultations for the texts were held with Bill Nicholson (Wurundjeri elder), Dean Stewart (Indigenous consultant), Tim Krasevac (Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works), and Mick Woiwod (historian and respected writer on the Wurundjeri culture and history in the Yarra Valley). Texts were researched and written by a small team from the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group: Jan Aitken, Diana Warrell and Sasha and Jane Trikojus. Designs were developed with Deadly Design; the plaques were manufactured from recycled plastic by Replas.

At the launch, Elder Uncle Bill Nicholson conducted a smoking ceremony and spoke of the significance of recognising Wurundjeri history, valuable for the Wurundjeri themselves and to all those in the Shire of Nillumbik. The Djirri Djirri Dancers performed giving traditional authenticity to the celebration of the trail.

Guided tours of the trail may be organised with the Secretary of the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group (info@nrg.org.au)