

Article for CLC Newsletter by Georgia Siderov Yr 11- FIRE Carrier student

Local Wurundjeri Immersion Experience Reflection

On Friday 29th March, the CLC FIRE Carrier Group participated in a local Wurundjeri Immersion Experience, learning about the Wurundjeri clan of the Woiworong language group on which our school is built. Guided by Wurundjeri woman, Brooke Wandin, and the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, the day entailed a visit to the Gawa trail and Coranderrk.

We were warmly welcomed upon our arrival at the Gawa trail, where we were taught about Wurundjeri people, places, history and culture. Half of the group remained with Brooke, learning about the traditional customs of her ancestors, whilst the other half ventured into the bush, discovering the uses of the surrounding natural environment. The time spent at the Gawa trail allowed us to contemplate on the profound knowledge of the Aboriginal people and their ability to maximize the use of their natural surroundings whilst also maintaining these resources.

Following a short break, we travelled to the old Coranderrk reserve, Victoria's largest and most profitable Aboriginal mission, a place which has now been handed back to Wurundjeri people. As a traditional owner of this area, Brooke spoke of the history of Coranderrk, including prominent historical figures, in particular her ancestor William Barak - a Senior Wurundjeri Elder. Through her discussion with the group, Brooke demonstrated the pride she associates with her past and displayed Coranderrk as a place where both triumphs and tragedies can be commemorated. Hearing of the symbolic past, current work and future plans at Coranderrk, we were able to witness how Barak's dream lives on today.

As part of our opportunity of being at Coranderrk, our time there included a visit to the Coranderrk cemetery. In this peaceful resting place lies William Barak and other residents from the years of the Coranderrk station. This part of the day was especially significant, allowing us to reflect on the past and how we can act in the future to work towards reconciliation. The time spent in silence in the cemetery allowed us to empathize with those who once lived on Coranderrk and through the strength of those resting in peace, empowered us to be active forces of change within our communities. For me the day was especially inspirational and special. Overall, through Brooke's teachings and the time spent at both the Gawa trail and Coranderrk, we were able to gain a deeper understanding into the Aboriginal culture and history on a local scale; an understanding which we can share with the school community through our FIRE Carrier Group.







